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Survivor Testimonies on German-Jewish ‘Mixed Marriages’
Historiography, Potentials and Challenges

Abstract

The history of ‘mixed marriages’ was for the longest time a rather neglected topic in Holocaust studies, but it has gained considerable attention since the early 1990s. This attention thus coincided with the heyday of large oral history projects. This article looks back at the role and place of oral history and survivor testimonies in the historiography of ‘mixed marriages’ and explores the potential for future research, by examining the body of such testimonies (both by the parent and the children generation) in the Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies.

Introduction

In early 2020, while searching in the vast digital collection of the Fortunoff Archive for the testimonies of Jewish survivors who had survived the Holocaust in ‘mixed marriages’ with their non-Jewish spouses, I discovered a recording of Martha S., filmed in 1984 in New York City.1 As I learnt from watching the first minutes of the testimony, her full name was Martha Saraffian née Kummermann, and she was born in 1907 to German-speaking Jewish parents in Prague. She was raised in Trutnov/Trautenau, a small town in the German-majority Bohemian borderlands near the Silesian border. In the 1930s, she met and eventually married her non-Jewish husband – a Christian German or Czech, I presumed, as the testimony had been tagged with the topical keywords “interfaith marriage”. It came as a surprise when Martha Saraffian revealed about eight minutes into the recording that her late husband had been a stateless Armenian Christian. As I listened on, I learnt that Hrand Saraffian was a survivor of the 1890s Hamidian massacres in Ottoman Turkey, and that he had come to Austria-Hungary as a child refugee and eventually settled in Bohemia/Czechoslovakia. Their marriage caused Martha Saraffian to lose her Czechoslovakian citizenship. When Nazi Germany annexed their hometown of Trutnov in the fall of 1938, Hrand and Martha Saraffian and their two young daughters were all stateless.

The unexpected revelation about Hrand Saraffian’s ethnic background made me immediately question whether the German authorities had regarded the Saraffians not only as an ‘interfaith marriage’ but as a ‘mixed marriage’ – a marriage between a

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'Jew' and an 'Aryan' – in the sense of Germany’s 1935 racial laws. After he was initially suspected of being Jewish, Hrand Saraffian was indeed classified as ‘of German blood’. The family’s ‘racial’ status was further complicated by the fact that their elder daughter was, like Martha Saraffian, a member of the Jewish community and thus considered a Geltungsjüdin. The younger daughter was registered as a Christian and thus categorised as a Mischling. Hence, the family was not considered ‘privileged’, but it nevertheless received a precarious degree of protection, while many of its close relatives, including Martha’s mother, were deported and murdered. Although it is not explicitly discussed in the testimony, the Saraffians’ apparent status as a German-Jewish ‘mixed marriage’ (rather than a Czech-Jewish mixed marriage – a difference that only existed in the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia) eventually delayed their being called up for slave labour. In 1944, both Martha and Hrand Saraffian were forced into arduous slave labour in multiple camps, some of them specifically maintained for persons in ‘mixed marriages’. Eventually, in early 1945, Martha was deported from Prague’s Hagibor camp to the Theresienstadt Ghetto. Her experiences in both camps form an important part of the testimony. Both she and her husband survived and were eventually reunited with their two daughters, who had been sheltered by non-Jewish family friends.

The testimony also touches upon the aftermath of the Holocaust and Martha Saraffian’s lifelong search for justice and compensation. Despite surviving the Holocaust in their homeland, the Saraffian family were essentially refugees who had lost their livelihood and family members, and they were left without any assistance or compensation from the Czechoslovakian state, which considered them stateless foreigners. Eventually, with international assistance, they were able to emigrate overseas.

The Saraffian family story, as told by Martha Saraffian in her testimony, is a striking example of a history that “for lack of [other] evidence, would not exist”, as Christopher Browning has put it in his reflections on Holocaust testimonies. While we can find her name in certain survivors’ databases – for example the digitised Theresienstadt Ghetto’s prisoner card file – and a number of her personal documents still exist in local Czech archives, the many layered dimensions of her story, such as her ‘mixed marriage’, the Armenian refugee background of Hrand Saraffian, the complicated status of her two daughters, and the family’s statelessness. Beyond the individual fate and unique circumstances of Hrand Saraffian, the family’s story is a powerful example of the challenges faced by German-Jewish ‘mixed marriages’ during the Holocaust.
story that a testimony reveals and which make each one worth exploring. Martha Saraffian’s interview also exemplifies how a testimony may raise entirely new research questions and lead us to explore new avenues. In this specific case, it is not only the rather rare first-generation testimony of a Jewish woman surviving in a ‘mixed marriage’ in the peripheries of Nazi Germany, but also the story of the intersection of the two paradigmatic European genocides in the history of one family. It may inspire us to rethink the relationship between the Armenian genocide and the genocide of European Jewry.8 It is also an extraordinary glimpse into the grey borderlines of the complex racialised social space of marriage established by the Nuremberg Laws and Nazi racial policies. It may lead us, for example, to further explore the question of who the ‘non-Jews’ in these German-Jewish ‘mixed marriages’ were. Who was really considered to be ‘of German blood’? Were there other cases similar to that of the Saraffians? And, if so, how were they treated by the Nazis? On a more fundamental level, when it comes to the specific implementation of the persecution of ‘mixed marriages’ in Bohemia and Moravia, the testimony provides ample evidence and clues on aspects that have only partially been explored thus far.9

Being able to find and work with this testimony and many others10 obviously depended entirely on the fact that it had been recorded in the first place,11 and that it was made available and accessible for research through indexing, cataloguing, and ultimately through digitisation. For example, at the time when I discovered this specific testimony, a full transcript was not available, but the archivists had added the descriptor “interfaith marriage”. The descriptor was thus my only way of ever finding this specific story, a seemingly banal but non-negligible fact. Most Holocaust testimonies were recorded or written down before or right at the onset of what digital historian Ian Milligan has recently named the “age of abundance” – roughly the time since the mid-1990s, when personal computers and the internet became mass phenomena.12 These testimonies were thus not ‘born-digital’. However, digitisation and, increasingly so, aggregation and the linkage between databases and repositories has profoundly changed how we can access and work with such testimonies. While the ability to record new Holocaust testimonies will sooner rather than later come to an end, the availability for research of those that already exist is dramatically increasing.13 One fundamental problem when working with such survivor accounts is, as the Fortunoff Archive acknowledges on its website, “the sheer number of available testimonies, as well as the lack of transcripts and appropriate search tools, [which] have remained a significant barrier to understanding the Holocaust from the perspective of the survivor”.14 One could perhaps add the ‘sheer length’ of these testimo-

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10 I use the term ‘testimony’ here in the broadest sense, including oral history interviews, memoir literature, and other forms of autobiographical narrations and reflections.
11 On the act of producing and collecting Holocaust testimonies, see: Noah Shenker, Reframing Holocaust Testimony, Bloomington 2015.
12 Ian Milligan, History in the Age of Abundance? How the Web is Transforming Historical Research, Montreal 2019.
13 For example, the Wiener Holocaust Library recently made over 1,000 written accounts of Holocaust eyewitnesses available online through its platform Testifying to the Truth, https://www.testifyingtothetruth.co.uk (5 November 2021).
nies to this list of obstacles. Paradoxically, digitisation has both reduced and increased this challenge. While it certainly eases access to these testimonies, especially through full-text search in transcripts, it exponentially multiplies the availability of sources, the ‘sheer number’ of results we are confronted with. A single search query can now easily yield hundreds and even thousands of results, yet only very few of these results may eventually prove to be relevant for our specific research questions and interests.

When working with the Fortunoff Archive’s collection, I was constantly confronted with this synchrony of abundance and scarcity. In this article, I reflect on some of these experiences and challenges, while exploring the body of testimonies on ‘mixed marriages’ in its repository. At the time when I conducted this research, I was primarily interested in testimonies from Germany, Austria, and Czechia – as these are the areas that fall within the scope of my research on the gendered aspects regarding the persecution of German-Jewish ‘mixed marriages’. My conclusions thus primarily pertain to this subset of testimonies and specifically to those that can be found in the Fortunoff Archive.15 There is a second dimension to the synchrony of abundance and scarcity. While watching, listening, and reading through these testimonies, I began to recognise the names and stories of survivors which I had previously read in books and articles. In some cases, testimonies (indirectly) referenced other testimonies. Likewise, even the literature on testimonies itself, as well as conferences and (fictional) films on the topic, were mentioned in some of the testimonies. This led me to rethink the interdependency of the historiography of this specific aspect of Holocaust history and the practice of giving and recording testimonies. In this article, I want to combine these two thoughts. In the first part, I will look back at the role and place of oral history and survivor testimonies in the historiography of German-Jewish ‘mixed marriages’. In the second part, I will draw on my own experiences to examine the challenges and limitations, and also the strategies, for finding such testimonies in the Fortunoff Archive and similar repositories, such as the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum’s (USHMM) digital collection and the USC Shoah Foundation’s Visual History Archive (VHA).

Oral History and the Historiography of German-Jewish ‘Mixed Marriages’

The history of the persecution of ‘mixed marriages’ was for a long time a rather neglected and minor topic in Holocaust studies, but it has gained considerable attention since the early 1990s.16 This surge in interest, especially in English- and German-language research, coincided with the heyday of large oral history projects, and survivor testimonies (both by the parent and the children generations) have been an important source for exploring this history.

It was perhaps one such testimony, the diaries of linguist Victor Klemperer, who survived the Holocaust together with his non-Jewish wife in Dresden, which increased public awareness and scholarly interest for the fate and harsh reality of Ger-

15 For comparative reasons, I also searched other collections, such as the USC Shoah Foundation’s Visual History Archive. However, this search did not amount to the systematic and ‘complete’ analysis of the relevant testimonies in these other collections.

16 The most recent and in-depth study is Maximilian Strnad, Privileg Mischehe? Handlungsräume “jüdisch ver- sippter” Familien 1933–1949, Göttingen 2021.
man Jews in ‘mixed marriages’. An edition of Klemperer’s diaries from the years 1933 to 1945 was published in Germany in 1995 and marked the beginning of several publications on the topic in the following years. Coincidentally, also in 1995, a memorial commemorating the roundup (and later release) of about 2,000 intermarried Jews and Geltungsjuden in Berlin’s Rosenstrasse in February and March 1943, and the subsequent protests of their non-Jewish relatives, was unveiled. It was the first public monument commemorating the persecution of ‘mixed marriages’ and, as it emphasised the agency of non-Jewish women, it invited the German public to identify with their resistance against the Nazi authorities. Just a year later, in 1996, Nathan Stoltzfus’s book *Resistance of the Heart*, which for the first time explored these very events in detail, was published in the United States. For his research, Stoltzfus heavily relied on interviews with survivors and witnesses whom he met from the mid-1980s in Berlin. His account of their histories empowered them in two ways: first, by putting their stories and memories centre-stage; and second, by emphasising their agency rather than their victimhood.

Also in 1996, the Fortunoff Archive’s German affiliate project at the Moses Mendelssohn Zentrum in Potsdam began recording survivor testimonies. Of the 78 interviews that were conducted in this project in 1996, the only year in which the project operated, over a third were with children growing up and surviving in intermarried families, most of them in Berlin. Many of the interviewees recalled or referred to the Rosenstrasse events in their testimonies. This reflected both the significance of these events in their own lives and the then contemporary interest in the subject. Many interviewees also stressed that it had been the protests of their family members (or their own protests, in the cases of children) which had eventually led to the release of the Jews interned in Rosenstrasse. Some of those giving testimony in Potsdam for the Fortunoff Archive had previously also been interviewed by Stoltzfus, and several gave testimony for the Shoah Foundation, which also began filming in Germany the same year. In 1998, journalist Nina Schröder published a collection of seven written testimonies, based on interviews with survivors and witnesses of the Rosenstrasse protests. The topic received renewed public and scholarly attention in 2003, when German filmmaker Margarethe von Trotta released her fictional movie *Rosenstrasse*, based on the same events and again stressing the centrality of the non-Jewish relatives’ protests. The film was accompanied by a book, which included

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18 The memorial, called the ”Block of Women”, by East German sculptor Ingeborg Hunzinger (1915–2009), had already been commissioned in the German Democratic Republic. Hunzinger herself came from a ‘mixed’ family and was persecuted as a Mischling in Nazi Germany.


20 The ‘heroes’ of his book are the non-Jewish women protesting for the release of their husbands. The degree and success of this protest were at the centre of a historians’ debate and controversy in the early 2000s.


22 While the film was critically acclaimed, there was also some backlash for its claim to ‘authenticity’ and for its narration of the events. For example, Anna M. Parkinson concluded that von Trotta’s ‘attempt to do justice to a visual representation of German women’s countermemory is overshadowed by the complexities of the memories she wishes to explore […].’ Anna M. Parkinson, Neo-Feminist Mütterfilm? The Emotional Politics of Margarethe von Trotta’s *Rosenstrasse*, in: Jaimey Fisher/Brad Prager (ed.), The Collapse of the Conventional German Film and Its Politics at the Turn of the Twenty-First Century, Detroit 2010, 109-135.
As many oral history projects, such as the Fortunoff Archive’s affiliate, were based around Berlin, and due to the increasingly narrow focus of research in the 1990s and the early 2000s on the Rosenstraße events, several survivors were interviewed time and time again. They thus achieved the status of ‘expert witnesses’ on the history of ‘mixed marriages’. For example, Hans-Oskar Löwenstein de Witt (1926–2004), the only child from one ‘mixed marriage’ who survived in Berlin, was interviewed twice by Stoltzfus in 1984 and 1989, and then by Bryan Mark Rigg in 1994. In 1996, Löwenstein de Witt was filmed by the Moses Mendelsohn Zentrum for the Fortunoff Archive and by the Shoah Foundation, and he gave another testimony for Schröder around the same time. His family history was also the key inspiration for von Trotta’s film of 2003, with the film’s main character modelled on Löwenstein de Witt’s mother. Furthermore, Löwenstein de Witt was a speaker at the 2004 Berlin conference. His testimony for the Fortunoff Archive is thus an important source for the historiography of this topic.

In the 1990s and the early 2000s there was, of course, research on ‘mixed marriages’ unrelated to Berlin or Rosenstraße. Between 1990 and 1995, German historian Beate Meyer conducted dozens of oral history interviews with children from ‘mixed families’ from Hamburg. These formed one part of the source base for her seminal study on Mischlinge, which was published in 1999. In 1992, the Documentation Centre of Austrian Resistance published a volume with Jewish survivor testimonies, the results of an oral history project that had started already in 1982, and which included the testimonies of survivors who were children from ‘mixed mar-
riages. However, this research on Austria was not picked up for a long time. Another book worth mentioning in this context – because of its heavy reliance on interviews and testimonies – is Bryan Mark Rigg’s Hitler’s Jewish Soldiers, published in 2002. Rigg conducted 430 interviews between 1994 and 1998. While his focus was on the military service of Mischlinge in the German Wehrmacht, in passing he also explored some aspects of the persecution of ‘mixed marriages’. There were even a few earlier works that also relied, to varying degrees, on testimonies and interviews, such as Alan Abrams’ Special Treatment. The Untold Story of the Survival of Thousands of Jews in Hitler’s Third Reich from 1985 and Ursula Büttner’s Die Not der Juden teilen from 1988.

As previously mentioned, more recent research since the 2010s has largely moved beyond the narrow debates at the turn of the decade before. The Rosenstraße events are no longer the focus of research; nevertheless, they remain a significant lieu de mémoire. The important role of testimonies as sources, and of oral and visual history as fundamental methods, makes this very small sub-field of Holocaust research quite different from the overall field and the latter’s long reliance on what are usually called ‘perpetrator sources’. As previously suggested, interest in the topic may have been sparked in the first place by testimonies. Another more practical reason for the reliance on testimonies was perhaps the perceived lack of traditional historical sources and archival material, a result of the specific history of this group of victims. As Nazi Germany neither passed a consolidated law or policy on such marriages, nor tasked a specific central agency or branch of the civil service with their persecution, they were quite literally the exceptions, governed by numerous (often regional) exemption clauses, special provisions, ad hoc decisions, and even case-by-case evaluations (such as the infamous ancestral and ‘race’ evaluations carried out by the Reichssippenamt). In turn, this means that the historical traces cannot be found in one or even several archival collections but are instead scattered throughout dozens of archives and collections, often hidden among the many other cases of Nazi victims.

Thus, very early attempts to tackle this persecution as legal or political history have, despite their importance as ground-breaking literature, remained unsatisfactory. Contrary to a widely cited claim by Aleida Assmann that “survivors as witnesses do not, as a rule, add to our knowledge of factual history”, it was most likely the testimonies that provided the key facts. At the end of his book, Stoltzfus remarks that, when he came to East Berlin in the 1980s looking for sources for his dissertation, he initially could find hardly any. After several media reports about his research ap-

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30 Bryan Mark Rigg, Hitler’s Jewish Soldiers. The Untold Story of Nazi Racial Laws and Men of Jewish Decent in the German Military, Lawrence 2002.
31 Alan Abrams, Special Treatment. The Untold Story of the Survival of Thousands of Jews in Hitler’s Third Reich, Secaucus 1985.
peared, “dozens of eyewitnesses began to call”, as he remembered, and these persons provided “another bridge across the decades”, one that the written material alone would not have done.37

This reliance on survivor testimonies has sometimes been called into question or even been criticised. In his own book on the Rosenstraße protests, Wolf Gruner emphasised that previous accounts of the events (which he was highly critical of) had primarily (and, perhaps, too much) relied on ex-post testimonies rather than critical archival studies. Nevertheless, he acknowledged the importance, for his own study, of testimonies for the “depiction and analysis” of the events.38 The archival situation is much better today than it was thirty years ago, with better indexing, partial digitisation, full-text-search available, and – most importantly – more liberal access policies in place. This is most certainly the case in Berlin, where archives and collections, scattered and divided at the end of and after the war, have been painstakingly reunited in the past three decades. Huge collections, such as the Arolsen Archives, have only very recently become easily accessible to researchers and the public. Nevertheless, ‘natural’ limitations remain regarding ‘traditional’ historical sources that we will never be able to access. This is most certainly the case when moving beyond the metropoles of the Third Reich and exploring the fate of intermarried Jews in small towns and rural areas.

Many stories, such as Martha Saraffian’s family history, would have or will remain uncovered, without testimony. As her history demonstrates, such testimonies do not just add ‘another’ story to a history that is seemingly already explored, but they often raise entirely new questions and open new avenues for research.

Finding Testimonies on ‘Mixed Marriages’ in Online Repositories

Among the thousands of recorded Holocaust survivor testimonies collected and preserved by major institutions, such as Yale University’s Fortunoff Archive, the USC Shoah Foundation’s VHA, the USHMM, Yad Vashem, and many other projects, only a tiny fraction of them were given by persons who survived in a ‘mixed marriage’.39

Considering the relatively small share of this subgroup among the pre-Holocaust European Jewish population, or among Nazi victims more broadly, this is perhaps not a great surprise. On the other hand, the majority of Central European Jews living in ‘mixed marriages’ survived the Holocaust, and their percentage among the surviving Jewry was thus considerably higher than it had been before. In post-war Germany, this was most certainly the case. In 1945, of the approximately 15,000 Jews who had survived the Holocaust in Nazi Germany, close to 90 per cent lived in a

37 Stoltzfus, Resistance, 289-291.
39 My conclusion is based on intensively working with these databases rather than a systematic evaluation, which is for various reasons hardly feasible. For example, most existing databases use systems of cataloguing, descriptions, and keywords to make testimonies accessible and searchable for the user, but these differ from repository to repository and do not follow common rules. In some cases, the full-text search of transcripts is available. There is, however, not one or two specific keywords which will yield all testimonies by intermarried Jews. Written testimonies and memories, not published as books, are perhaps more numerous than audio or video testimonies, but in many cases even harder to find and access, as they are scattered over hundreds of specialised and non-specialised libraries, museums, archives, and other institutions, and their respective catalogues.
‘mixed marriage’,40 Observing this phenomenon, Bruno Blau, a German-Jewish demographic statistician of Jewry and survivor of the Holocaust, remarked in 1948: “[t]he multitude of mixed marriages, which rightfully so were regarded as one of the biggest threats for Central Europe’s Jewry, saved it from its almost complete destruction”.41 The late arrival of large-scale oral history projects to Central Europe is perhaps one of the reasons why the number of available testimonies does not seem to reflect this. Another challenge is finding and accessing those testimonies that do exist.

To date, none of the major online databases and repositories categorise or index testimonies of either the first or the second generation specifically as ‘mixed marriages’ in the sense of the terminology of the Nazi perpetrators. We must thus rely on relatively broad search terms, topical descriptions, and index keywords such as ‘interfaith marriage’, ‘Jewish-non Jewish marriages’, and others. Some of these terms have obviously a slightly or even decidedly different meaning or are much broader in sense than the Nazi terminology. For example, a marriage between two Catholics would commonly not have been considered an interfaith marriage, even if the Nuremberg Laws deemed one of the spouses as Jewish or one of them had converted prior to the marriage. On the other hand, a civil marriage between a member of a Reform Jewish congregation and a Protestant could be considered an interfaith marriage, despite its secular nature, in the sense that both belonged to different faiths. For the Nazi authorities, however, these could have both equally been ‘mixed marriages’. The archivists who assigned the index keywords to such testimonies may have also chosen to label both as ‘interfaith marriage’, alluding to the persecution during the Holocaust, rather than making a factual statement. The categorisations and catalogues used by the large survivor testimony collections thus do not allow us to distinguish easily between the two meanings – and we certainly do not know the reasoning of the respective archivist. For the most part, these nuances in meaning seem to make little difference when initially searching these databases, as labels, keywords, and categories primarily serve to make these testimonies more accessible rather than act as scholarly categorisations. Nevertheless, awareness of the difference in meaning – and their impact on the search results – is important.

In some cases, such a categorisation or index entry may also refer to a marriage that was concluded after the Holocaust. Unless decidedly remarked upon in the description, there is currently no possibility for automatically filtering and excluding such results. The ability to systematically explore these large collections still depends on a relatively reduced system of topical subject headings (keywords) and descriptions. While full-text search and other ways of exploring these collections are increasing, they also pose the problem of even larger numbers of results that must be carefully combed through in order to find the relevant testimonies.

The collection of the Fortunoff Archive can be accessed and searched in multiple ways.42 Until recently, Orbis, Yale University Library’s catalogue, was the primary search tool. Aviary, the archive’s new integrated platform, has become the preferred and easiest entry point. The Visual Search Tool is a third way to find testimonies and refine search results. These different tools and search options may yield slightly different results, even when using the same search terms. A search for ‘interfaith marriage’ results in 131 testimonies (60 in English, 29 in German, the rest in other lan-

42 The searches for this article were conducted in May 2020; results may differ today.
guages), both in Orbis\footnote{The search was performed using Yale University Library’s Orbis Advanced search: Title(HVT) AND Subject(”interfaith marriage”).} and Aviary. Of these, 73 are also labelled ”children of interfaith marriage”; of the 29 testimonies in German (most of which were recorded in 1996 in Potsdam), 28 are tagged ”children of interfaith marriage”. These two keywords yield the most relevant results for this topic. Aviary allows for full-text search in partial and full transcripts that are constantly being added to the collection, and thus enables more refined searches, such as for ”Christian mother”, ”father Catholic”, ”intermarriage”, or ”Mischehe”, terms which may appear in the transcripts but are usually not mentioned in the descriptions. For some specific queries, results thus differ between the two main catalogues. The term ’mixed marriage’ yields 25 results in Aviary and only seven via the catalogue, which is limited to a small set of descriptive fields. Since ’interfaith marriage’ yields the same results in Orbis and Aviary, we can conclude that the term only appears in the descriptive fields but not in the available transcripts (which so far do not exist for all the testimonies). In Aviary, we can also search for the term ”interfaith marriage” in the descriptions and add a search for ’Berlin’ limited to the transcript or the index. This helps to exclude testimonies mentioning ”Berlin” that are without any relevance for this subject.

Ultimately, no search technique or tool replaces watching and examining the testimonies closely. As previously stated, not all of these 131 results pertain to ”mixed marriages” as according to Nazi definitions. Furthermore, the results are not limited to testimonies from the area of Nazi Germany ”proper”. While the Nuremberg Laws were introduced in Germany and its annexed territories only, in territories under Nazi occupation, puppet-states, and allied states, different laws and measures applied.\footnote{Cf. Wolf Gruner/Jörg Osterloh (eds.), The Greater German Reich and the Jews. Nazi Persecution Policies in the Annexed Territories 1935–1945, New York/Oxford 2015.} Nevertheless, similar statuses of ”protected mixed marriages” also existed in some of these territories, although there were often legal and practical differences. In the Occupied Eastern Territories, in Poland and the Soviet Union, the status of ”protected mixed marriages” did not exist and Mischlinge were treated as Jews.\footnote{”Jews, living in the Occupied Eastern Territories in a mixed marriage with non-Jews, are falling without regard under the definition of ”Jew” in the Occupied Eastern Territories.” Bundesarchiv Berlin, Reich Minister for the Occupied Eastern Territories, Decree on the Definition of the Term ”Jew” in the Occupied Eastern Territories, May 1942, R 18/3746 a, fol. 013068.} However, in some cases, a ”mixed marriage” facilitated the hiding of a Jewish identity or provided a degree of protection due to closer integration with the non-Jewish population. Of course, actual interfaith marriages and conversions were not unique to Germany or Austria.\footnote{For conversions to Christianity and related testimonies in the Fortunoff Archive, see: Ion Popa, Experiences of Jews Who Converted to Christianity before and during the Holocaust, in: S:I.M.O.N. 7 (2020) 1, 75-86.} This is why we also find testimonies from these territories that mention intermarriage in detail.\footnote{See, for example, HVT-3623, Aleksandra U., 12. August 1995.} While English-language testimonies (which tell about experiences in many different areas) and German-language ones (mostly referring to experiences in Germany, Austria and Czechia) are the most numerous, the results also include ones in Serbian, Croatian, Hungarian, French, Dutch, and other languages. For example, 13 of the 131 testimonies with the subject label ”interfaith marriage” were conducted in Serbian and mostly tell of the experience of persecution in Ustaša-ruled or German-occupied territories. Language alone is of course only a vague indicator. For example, one of the testimonies in French was in fact the story of an intermarried family from Germany which had fled to France.\footnote{HVT-3446, Lea A., 27 January 1996.} In another French-language testimony, the interviewee, who was born in Austria-Hungary, had
spent the interwar period in Berlin and only later went to France.49 The ‘classification’ of this testimony, tagged as ‘interfaith marriage’, is particularly challenging, as the interviewee had not been married during the Holocaust. After his liberation from Auschwitz, he returned to France and married the non-Jewish widow of his intermarried cousin who had been murdered. Although he himself did not live in a ‘mixed marriage’ during the Holocaust, his testimony also covers in part the experience of his later wife and her late Jewish husband and their ‘mixed marriage’ in France. While this complicates finding specific cases of ‘mixed marriages’ from specific regions, the positive side is that there is a lot of potential for future comparative research. It also shows how disparate such experiences could have been, how flight and migration shaped these experiences and, as a result, how complicated it is to also reconstruct the historical and factual background for interpreting these cases. It is noteworthy that, among the 131 testimonies, only one was conducted in Hebrew. This is perhaps surprising given the fact that Hebrew is the second most prevalent language in the collection.50

In addition, there are testimonies not categorised as ‘interfaith marriage’ or ‘children of interfaith marriage’ that nevertheless mention these phenomena. For example, one interviewee, a woman who was born in 1930 in Berlin and raised by two Jewish parents, mentions that three of her aunts and uncles had been married to non-Jews. Her testimony is particularly interesting because, within her own family, an array of very different experiences of ‘mixed married’ families can be observed. In one case, a non-Jewish husband divorced her aunt, forcing her into the underground.51

The Visual Search Tool allows us to explore subsets with additional criteria, such as by the gender or the location of birth of the interviewees.52 For example, 63 per cent of testimonies with the subject “interfaith marriage” were given by women, as well as 64 per cent of those with the subject “children of interfaith marriage” (overall, only 46 per cent of testimonies were given by women).53 Of the 131 testimonies, information about the birthplace (or the country of birth) of the interviewee is currently available for 117. Of these, 47 were born in Germany (21 in Berlin, two each in Bremen, Hamburg, and Munich, and the others in various cities, towns, and unspecified locations in Germany), five in Austria (of which four were born in Vienna), five in Czechia, and two, without further specification, in Czechoslovakia. Other countries include Poland (10), Serbia (10), Hungary (5), the Netherlands (5), Ukraine (5), and France (4). Certainly, the birthplace only loosely correlates with the place of residence during the Holocaust and after liberation, especially considering how political borders in Europe changed several times during the twentieth century. For example, when watching the testimonies carefully, one can find several other persons who were living in the interwar period and in the Nazi-era in Vienna but were born elsewhere, predominantly in former parts of Austria-Hungary. Sometimes multiple migrations and flight routes further complicate such stories. One interviewee, Lisa F., was born in 1909 in today’s Ukraine, then Austria-Hungary, and

50 About 433 testimonies out of over 4,500 were given in Hebrew.
51 HVT-0489, Roni B., 6 September 1984.
52 However, the results again differ between Orbis/Aviary and the Visual Search Tool, even when searching for the same topical descriptor.
53 The higher female proportion among the interviewees can only in part be explained by the larger percentage of women among all first-degree Mischlinge, which was 54 per cent according to the 1939 census. Author’s calculation based on Meyer, “Jüdische Mischlinge”, 465.
grew up in Vienna and later in Berlin in a German-speaking secular Jewish family. In 1933, she fled to Czechoslovakia still holding Austrian citizenship. In Prague, she met and married a non-Jewish German political refugee. Eventually, in 1935, the couple emigrated to France via Switzerland. After unsuccessfully trying to flee to Spain, when Germany invaded France, the couple was able to emigrate to Cuba with the help of an American committee.

The prevalence of certain birthplaces also reflects the presence and activity – or lack thereof – of Fortunoff Archive affiliate projects in certain cities. As of now, there is no possibility to specifically search for a location of residence prior to or during the Holocaust. Stories from rural and peripheral areas are most likely also underrepresented since most interviews were conducted in major cities.

The archive also includes testimonies by persons who did not experience the Holocaust themselves. Hence, among the 131 testimonies, there was also one by a person born in Nairobi, Kenya, in 1946. It turned out the interviewee’s mother was German-Jewish – although, perhaps, not living in a ‘mixed marriage’. This testimony was also an outlier in terms of the age of the interviewee. For 126 of the 131 testimonies, we know the interviewee’s birth year or date. In this case, the interviewees were born between 1902 and 1946, although in fact only this one interviewee was born after 1939, and only 16 were born after 1932. This age distribution roughly correlates with Beate Meyer’s interviews with persons persecuted as Mischlinge and Geltungsjüden who were born between 1908 and 1940, and it likely reflects the predominance of second-generation interviewees in the subset.

Since the question of ‘mixed marriages’ was in many or most cases not the focus of the interviews, which were also conducted by many different interviewers and by various affiliate projects, the relevance of some testimonies for this topic is sometimes not easy to determine. In any case, it also depends on specific interests and research questions. Furthermore, the testimonies vary considerably in length – between 45 minutes and over six hours. While most follow a relatively similar pattern, usually starting with early childhood memories and family background, they vary considerably in aspects like interview style and depth.

These issues are not specific to the Fortunoff Archive and its repository. The USHMM uses a very similar topical keyword system for its online collections. A subject search for ‘interfaith marriage’ video testimonies yields 95 results, of which eleven also carry the suffix “Germany” and four the suffix “Austria”. 60 testimonies are labelled “children of interfaith marriages” – nine with the suffix “Germany”, three with “Austria”. Due to the museum’s vast collection, additional video testimonies are ‘hidden’ inside other specialised subcollections (for example, film material used for documentations), which are harder to find and may require different search strategies. The USC Shoah Foundation’s VHA uses an entirely different keyword system, called the “index”. The index term yielding the most results for this specific case is “Jewish-non Jewish marriages” (1,657 results). An index term usually only refers to a specific segment; it is thus not necessarily the main theme of a testimony. As previously stated, the Shoah Foundation began filming at a much later date than the

54 HVT-1669, Lisa F., 18 November 1990.
55 HVT-0161, Rev. Michael V., 27 March 1980. This interview is perhaps unique, because only a fraction of it is about the family’s experience in the Holocaust and most of it is a theological discussion between the interviewer, Dori Laub, and the interviewee, Michael Vasey: ‘Through the interview alone, I could not determine whether the interviewees’ parents married prior to or after 1945.
57 USHMM collections search: Subjects and Keywords > “interfaith marriage”; Film, Audio, and Video > Video Recording; Record Type > Oral History.
Fortunoff Archive did – although the beginning of the former’s operations in Germany in 1996 coincided with that of the Fortunoff Archive’s German affiliate project and there are overlaps. While the overall number of testimonies in the VHA is larger, for this specific topic it is surprisingly similar to that of the Fortunoff Archive. In some cases, we can find testimonies by the same person in two or more repositories. For example, Hans-Oskar Löwenstein de Witt gave two testimonies in the same month: one was recorded on 5 March 1996 for the VHA and the other three weeks later, on 23 March, for the Fortunoff Archive’s affiliate.

No matter the keyword or the repository, the interviewees were in most cases children of ‘mixed marriages’, thus the second generation rather than the first, or they were other relatives of such intermarried couples. Less than a quarter of the relevant testimonies were given by the first generation. How can we explain this relatively small number of such video and audio testimonies? One rather obvious part of the explanation for this scarcity is certainly demographics. The Nazis had banned marriages between Jews and non-Jews in 1935 with their infamous “Law for the Protection of German Blood and German Honour”, and German marriage law required those wanting to get married to be twenty-one (or eighteen in exceptional cases) years of age or older. Hence, the youngest cohort that was still able to marry regularly in Germany before this law came into effect in 1935 was born around the year 1913. The average person living in a ‘mixed marriage’ was of course much older.

Age distribution also differed quite significantly from region to region. In a sample of 50 Jewish women and men living in ‘mixed marriages’ in western Austria in the year 1939, I found the median birth year to be 1893, the most prevalent 1883, the earliest 1869, and the most recent 1913. In the 1990s, everyone in this group of 50 would have already been well advanced in age. Among the testimonies in the Fortunoff Archive, the oldest first-generation interviewee was born in 1906 and the youngest in 1920.

Age also interplays with another factor: migration and/or the location of survival. Among the hundreds of thousands of Jews who were forced (and able) to leave Germany, Austria, and Czechia, there were also many who were married to non-Jewish partners. Since no exceptions for intermarried Jews existed prior to the end of 1938 (or, in other words, the concept of ‘mixed marriage’ only existed ex negativo through its banning in 1935), they were subject to the same discrimination and persecution as were all other Jews, and they were thus in many cases forced to flee and emigrate. For example, Hildegard W., who was born in 1912 in Berlin in a Protestant family, emigrated with her Jewish husband Georg, a furrier, to Switzerland in 1937 and eventually to the United States. She gave her testimony to the Fortunoff Archive in 1987.

58 For example, the Fortunoff Archive has 29 German testimonies labelled “interfaith marriage” and the VHA has 28 with the index keyword “Jewish-non Jewish marriage”. There are also overlaps.
59 VHA, Interview 11178.
60 HVT-3424, Hans L., 23 March 1996.
62 The most prevalent marriage age for men in 1939 was 25 (twelve per cent of total marriages), followed by 26, 24, and 27. Only 16 per cent of men married before the age of 25, and less than half of all men married before the age of 28. Author’s calculation based on Statistisches Reichsamt (ed.), Statistisches Jahrbuch für das Deutsche Reich 59 (1941/42), Berlin 1942, 72. According to Steven Lowenstein’s findings, in the 1930s German Jews married even later than non-Jews. Steven M. Lowenstein, Jewish Intermarriage and Conversion in Germany and Austria, in: Modern Judaism 25 (2005) 1, 23-61, here 31.
63 Author’s calculation, based on Tiroler Landesarchiv, Bundespolizeidirektion Innsbruck, Unterlagen der Amtsstelle Innsbruck, Gestapo Staatspolizeistelle Innsbruck, Judenaustransport aus Tirol/Vorarlberg, 9. September 1939.
64 HVT-0937, Hildegard W., 14 July 1987.
Generally speaking, however, intermarried Jews were presumably less likely to emigrate, or conversely more likely to stay in Germany, than were non-intermarried Jews, due to the formers’ non-Jewish family ties. When *Mischlinge* sons were drafted into the Wehrmacht in 1939, this perhaps further encouraged staying in Germany at a time of mass emigration and flight. Hence, the number of such couples remained relatively stable between 1939 and 1945 – although it certainly did decrease due to persecution, deportation, and natural deaths. While we lack the statistics, it is reasonable to assume that those who left prior to 1939 were – just like Georg and Hildegard W. – below the median age, since older, especially already retired, intermarried couples were for a variety of reasons more likely to stay. As some anti-Jewish laws and provisions also specifically targeted non-Jewish spouses, especially members of certain professions, such couples had a higher incentive to leave earlier than others. For example, intermarried non-Jews were banned from membership in the Reich Chamber of Culture, which effectively meant that writers, artists, musicians and other cultural workers found their livelihoods destroyed. Unless they received a very rare exemption, they were thus prone to emigration if they were not willing or able to change their profession. This partly explains the relatively high number of prominent intermarried writers and artists, such as Bertolt Brecht and Thomas Mann and their wives, who emigrated quite early. On the other hand, even in a highly politicised and regulated profession such as law, intermarried non-Jewish lawyers and attorneys were still allowed to practice law and thus could continue to make a living. As law is a highly localised profession, they were also more likely to stay in Germany as they would not have been able to practice law abroad. Certainly, the members of some specific professions had more reasons to leave than others, and younger couples were also more likely to leave than retirees. Unfortunately, the reasoning for ‘staying’ or ‘leaving’ Germany is rarely discussed in the testimonies analysed for this article.

The Fortunoff Archive contains testimonies on ‘mixed’ couples and families that chose to leave Europe after liberation in 1945 – such as the Saraffian family, which first emigrated to Argentina and later to the United States, or the family of Hans-Oskar Löwenstein, which emigrated to Israel before eventually returning to Germany. In the mid-1980s, when Nathan Stoltzfus was in Berlin to conduct research for his book on the Rosenstrasse protests of 1943, he was still able to interview dozens of these survivors, their children and relatives. By 1989, as he remarks in his books, many of the first generation were already in their nineties and no longer willing or able to talk, even if they had spoken with him just a few years earlier. This was, however, still seven years before the primarily United States-based interview projects started to expand to Central Europe. While the Fortunoff Archive’s forerunner began to conduct interviews in 1979 in New England and New York, and quickly expanded to other American cities and states, its German affiliate project only began filming in 1996. There was a small Czech and Slovak affiliate program which filmed

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65 This integration could also mean having Nazi Party members in the immediate family: in rare cases, even *Mischlinge* or intermarried Jews and their spouses were members of Nazi organisations. Löwenstein makes a similar argument in *Jewish Intermarriage*, 52.


67 Although the Nuremberg Laws had banned marriages between ‘persons of German and related blood’ and ‘Jews’, this law did not apply to foreigners. Hence, even in 1939 ‘mixed marriages’ – even actual interfaith marriages – took place in Germany, although on a very small scale.

between 1992 and 1996, but no Austrian one.69 The Shoah Foundation, which also commissioned interviews in Europe, was only founded in 1994, with most of the recording in Germany beginning in 1996. The systematic collection of testimonies in Europe thus began at a much later stage than in the United States, which meant that the number of potential interviewees – for this specific survivor group as well as the overall group – had already dwindled. On the other hand, we have hundreds of testimonies of the children of such mixed marriages, and even more if we also count those who mention their intermarried uncles and aunts, siblings, other family members, or even neighbours and acquaintances. These children are certainly a ‘hinge generation’.70 In many cases, they had first-hand experiences of anti-Semitic discrimination and persecution as either Mischlinge or Geltungsjuden. Sometimes, they were arrested or forced into slave labour together with their Jewish parent, such as Hans-Oskar Löwenstein, who was imprisoned in Rosenstraße together with his father. As such, they are not a ‘second generation’ in the strict sense, but rather an in-between generation. Interestingly, as Beate Meyer remarks, up until the 1980s, when members of this group had given testimony, the experience of their parents was usually the focal point of the interview or testimony.71 Nevertheless, their situation differed from that of their parents and their testimonies cannot be understood as being in lieu of their parents.

Conclusion

Looking back at the historiography of the persecution of ‘mixed marriages’, one can clearly see the important role of survivor testimonies, both for discovering and popularising the subject in the first place and as historical evidence. Until the early 2000s, survivors even played an active role in the telling and exploration of this history, especially in the context of the Rosenstraße protests. They did not just give testimony, they actively engaged in the discourse and, through this participation, the discourse also entered some of their testimonies.

In her testimony for the Fortunoff Archive, recorded in 2007, Hannelore H., who had been imprisoned in Rosenstraße in 1943 as a child from a ‘mixed marriage’, showed a clear knowledge of the contemporary German historical discourse – despite already having lived in Connecticut for many years. In her testimony, she referred to both Margarethe von Trotta’s 2003 Rosenstraße movie and to the symposium at the Zentrum für Antisemitismusforschung in 2004. She even took a stance towards both, clearly affirming her position as a witness but also as a participant in a historical discourse.72 When searching for the term ‘Rosenstraße’ in the Fortunoff Archive, one also finds a 2001 interview with a German historian who was born after the Holocaust.73 The person who referred to Rosenstraße – and mentioned Nathan Stoltzfus in this context – was not the interviewee, but the interviewer Dori Laub, one of the founders of the archive. Testimonies thus not only reveal how the discourse has shaped the memories and acts of giving testimony, but also how the topic

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69 Interviews for what would eventually become the Austrian Heritage Archive were conducted from 1996 onwards in New York City and in Israel, but not in Austria itself: https://austrianheritagearchive.at/en/content/austrian-heritage-archive (5 November 2021).
has entered public awareness and how its relevance has changed in the minds of the interviewers.

The survey of testimonies of ‘mixed marriages’ in the Fortunoff Archive revealed a surprisingly wide array of different experiences and trajectories, from many different areas, both in Nazi Germany and outside of it. Even testimonies given by survivors of the same generation, the same gender, and from the same region, such as from Bohemia, reveal vastly different experiences. Although the number of actual first-generation accounts is quite small, there is a surprisingly large body of testimonies that do mention the phenomenon and which also help to comparatively analyse these first-generation experiences. These testimonies also reveal how intermarriage has played a role in the lives of many survivors, even those who were not themselves intermarried or were not children of ‘mixed marriages’ but had intermarried relatives or tried to enter into ‘mixed marriage’ and were barred from doing so. The large number of testimonies from Eastern and Southeastern Europe, especially from Croatia and Serbia, was especially surprising and clearly demonstrates the potential for future comparative research.

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Abstract

Forced Jewish migration in the Slovak State (1939–1945) during World War II is usually approached from the perspective of the deportations to the Nazi concentration camps. Yet, the involuntary migration trajectories of persecuted Jews, even within Slovak territory, also reflected the gradual development of anti-Semitic policies and their direct consequences on everyday Jewish life in the wartime period. Numerous members of the Jewish community had experienced forced – in some cases even multi-layered – displacement both at the municipal and intra-state level even before the first transport left from Slovakia to Auschwitz on 25 March 1942. The main aim of this article is to analyse the trajectories of forced Jewish migration at the urban level. It especially considers the personal and spatial consequences of the limitations on the Jewish living space that were brought about by the restrictions on living in and renting apartments in designated zones, such as in the localities renamed after Adolf Hitler and Andrej Hlinka, the founder and first leader of the Hlinka’s Slovak People’s Party.

"I, Adolf Hó, a major official of the state railways, by the end of August [1941], have already been forced to move three times from various apartments which were Jewish property. […] For longer than three months I am trying in vain to search for any modest stable flat. Now I, as an 82-year-old and ill pensioner with my ill wife, am facing the catastrophe that again we will be kicked out onto the street this wintertime." ¹

¹ Štátny archív v Banskej Bystrici [State Archive in Banská Bystrica] (ŠABB), f. Okresný úrad v Banskej Bystrici [District Office in Banská Bystrica] (OU v BB), b. 129, without number, List Adolfa Hóa Okresnému úradu v Banskej Bystrici [Letter by Adolf Hó to the District Office in Banská Bystrica], 19 November 1941. All translations by the author.

A Jewish pensioner, a former state employee, sent this letter to the municipal authorities in Banská Bystrica in November 1941. Even though Jews being made to move out from houses and flats is usually perceived through the prism of the deportations in 1942 and 1944,² the experiences of this Jewish couple demonstrate that the continued implementation of the anti-Semitic measures had resulted also in forced relocations, and affected housing conditions and property distribution, even before the mass deportations to the Nazi concentration and extermination camps. Anti-Semitic policies gradually impacted on all spheres of everyday life of the Jewish community in Slovakia under the regime of the Hlinka’s Slovak People’s Party (Hlinkova slovenská ľudová strana, HSĽS), and housing represented only one aspect of the systematic impoverishment of Slovakia’s Jews.

The Jewish Neighbourhood

The Jewish presence in Slovakia’s city centres, including an open demonstration of religious rituals in the urban space, historically depended on contemporary conditions and the political situation. The status of the Jews in the Habsburg, later Austro-Hungarian, monarchy had been gradually changing since the rule of Joseph II (1780–1790). However, the road to their emancipation in the Hungarian part of the empire lasted until 1868, and full civil rights for the Jews were confirmed and ratified in 1895. From the last third of the nineteenth century, Jews started to live also in city centres, which consequently led to changes in the cities’ topographies and demographic structures. Jewish inhabitants then became more visible in the public sphere and took part in politics, especially during the First Czecho-Slovak Republic (1918–1938). This growing trend was dramatically halted by the shifting political discourse that was explicitly determined by the HSLS’s leaders, who succeeded in creating a single-party system already during the period of Slovak autonomy from October 1938 to March 1939. The establishment of the Slovak State – as a Nazi satellite – on 14 March 1939 confirmed and intensified this political course, and anti-semitic policies developed into a stable paradigm of the HSLS’s political programme.

Scholarly attempts to identify and analyse specifically Jewish neighbourhoods in urban spaces have more often focussed on segregated areas – ghettos. During World War II, the Nazi authorities created sealed ghettos in various locations in the occupied territories, namely in proximity to cities with a high-density Jewish population. Even though this pattern was not precisely applied in Slovakia, the state and local authorities intended to limit and take control over the Jewish living space. In practice, these measures led to restrictions on residency in certain urban zones, and – in more extreme cases – the internment of whole families in one of the three Jewish labour camps created on the territory of the Slovak state.

Exceptionally, the state authorities originally envisioned the creation of a ghetto in the capital city of Bratislava. The term ‘ghetto’ frequently appeared on the official agenda, and geographically it referred to a traditionally Jewish neighbourhood in the city. At the same time, this plan was continually spread and supported via official state propaganda. Consequently, many Jews in the capital city moved to that neighbourhood after losing permission to live or rent apartments in designated areas. This represented somewhat of a logical personal trajectory because of relatives already living in the Jewish neighbourhood. In many cases, they were forced to live together in a small, private place. For instance, the Holocaust survivor A. M., who was born in

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3 Peter Salner, Židia na Slovensku medzi tradíciou a asimiláciou [The Slovak Jews between Tradition and Assimilation], Bratislava 2000, 54.
6 Archív mesta Bratislavy [Bratislava City Archive] (AMB), Mestský notársky úrad [Municipal Notary Office] (MNÚ), b. 3033, 1881, Byty pre vojsko a štátnych zamestnancov [Apartments for the Army and Civil Servants], 15 July 1942.
7 For example, see: V Bratislave sa vytvára židovské geto [In Bratislava a Jewish Ghetto is Being Created], in: Slovak, 80, 5 April 1941; 3. Tvorí sa židovské geto v Bratislave [A Jewish Ghetto is Being Created in Bratislava], in: Gardista, 79, 5 April 1941, 5.
Bratislava in 1931, remembered the involuntary relocation of her family to the Jewish ghetto, where her uncle had a small house and he managed to build two apartments on the upper floor. Finally, the plan for the ghettoisation in Bratislava was halted by the forced displacement from the capital in 1941 and 1942 and later by the deportations to the Nazi concentration and extermination camps.

Comparing the Slovakian situation with the sealed ghettos under Nazi control, analogical responsibilities of the Jewish Council (Judenrat) were given to the Jewish Centre (Ústredňa Židov) in Slovakia. Besides the Jewish religious communities, it served as the only official Jewish institution that controlled Jewish life within the country. Even though sealed and guarded ghettos were not created in the Slovak state, an anti-semitic policy was realised step-by-step that resulted in the setting of limits on Jewish freedom of movement in the public space, forced Jewish residents to change their home addresses, and also altered the private ownership of Jewish-owned real estate.

Intra-State Relocations

The reasons for the intra-city and intra-state migrations differed broadly, from personal ones to orders by the state authorities. Taking into account the continual process of economic impoverishment that originated from restrictions in numerous professions and education and through gradual expropriation, Jews moving out of apartments was a direct consequence of their decreasing economic status, not to mention the ‘Aryanisation’ of Jewish real estate, which will be discussed later.

In contrary to the personal ‘voluntary’ moving within or even beyond state borders, forced relocations regularly occurred under the HSLS regime. One of the first anti-Jewish decrees, which made some members of the Jewish community leave their homes, was passed less than a month after the declaration of Slovak autonomy. On 4 November 1938, thousands of Jews were evicted and sent to areas on the newly established Slovak-Hungarian borders. This act followed the decision of the German and Italian authorities – as determined under the First Vienna Award – that ordered the ceding of the southern territory of Slovakia with a majority ethnic Hungarian population to the Kingdom of Hungary. Consequently, many Jews were expelled from Slovakia and were stuck in improvised internment camps in the no-man’s-land around the new borderline, in particular in Miloslavov and Velký Kýr, until December 1938. After the Slovakian authorities finally allowed the interned Jews to enter Slovakia, many of them did not have any other possibility other

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8 This house was originally located on a corner in the Vydrica quarter close to Rybné Square. It was demolished – together with a major part of a former Jewish quarter, including a synagogue – during the construction of a bridge over the Danube in late 1960s. See: Juraj Bončo/Ján Comaj, Búranie Podhradia – Stavba Mosta SNP [The Demolition of the Historic Quarter of Podhradie – Construction of the SNP Bridge], Bratislava 2010; Ivan Bútora, Kto zbúral Podhradie? Spory o Nový most a tvár Bratislavy [Who Demolished the Historic Quarter of Podhradie? Disputes over the New Bridge and the Face of Bratislava], in: Eduard Nižňanský/Ivan Bútora et al. Stratené mesto. Bratislava – Pozsony – Pressburg, Bratislava 2011, 11-154.

9 USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive (VHA), Interview with A. M., IC 27769.


11 According to the historian Eduard Nižňanský, the number of deportees in the no-man’s-land is estimated to have been 7,500 (Nižňanský, Židovská komunita, 76-79), but Michal Frankl’s recent research has doubted this calculation and shows that the figure of around 4,000 is more probable. Michal Frankl, Země nikoho 1938. Deportace za hranice občanství [No-Man’s-Land in 1938. Deportation beyond the Bounds of Citizenship], in: Forum Historiae 13 (2019) 1, 97.
than staying in refugee camps, such as in Rote Brücke, which was located near Bratislava-Patrónka.\textsuperscript{12}

Another example of the forced relocations took place in Bratislava in 1941. The so-called ‘dislocation process’\textsuperscript{13} of the Jews from Bratislava to various places in Slovakia began in October 1941 and it was originally intended to be finished in June 1942.\textsuperscript{14} It was organised by the Central Economic Office (Ústredný hospodársky úrad, ÚHU), in particular by the Department of Special Affairs of the Jewish Centre which was subordinated to the ÚHU. According to the report of the Jewish Centre, some 6,206 out of 15,102 Jews left Bratislava by the end of December 1941.\textsuperscript{15} On the one hand, the dislocation is considered to have been a rehearsal for future mass deportations and, on the other, it represented one of the state responses to the lack of housing capacity in the capital city.\textsuperscript{16} Even though municipal records had been continually providing information about long-lasting housing problems since the 1920s,\textsuperscript{17} the situation worsened when Bratislava became the administrative centre of the newly-established state. Numerous buildings for the ministries, administrative departments and offices, as well as flats for state employees, foreign diplomats, and military officers, were urgently required.\textsuperscript{18} A similar situation affected eastern Slovakia and the city of Prešov, which became a new regional administrative centre after the ceding of some border territories – including the city of Košice – to the Kingdom of Hungary in 1938.\textsuperscript{19}

The dislocation plan was ultimately not fulfilled because of the deportation to the Nazi concentration and extermination camps launched on 25 March 1942. By the time the last transport left Slovakia on 20 October 1942, almost 58,000 out of approximately 89,000 Jews had been expelled from Slovak territory. Consequently, this process dramatically impacted on urban structures and the further relocation of Jews, both on the state and local levels. Chronologically, the last forced intra-state mass migration which also affected the remaining Jewish community was caused by the approaching Red Army in the last years of World War II. The evacuation from eastern Slovakia, mainly from Šariš-Zemplín County, to western areas was realised in the spring of 1944.\textsuperscript{20}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{12} American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee Archives, f. New York Office 1933–44, f. 541, Report on the Refugee Camp in Bratislava: Rote Brücke. Special thanks to Michal Frankl for this document.
\item \textsuperscript{13} Katarína Hradská, Dislokácie Židov z Bratislavy [The Displacement of Jews from Bratislava in the Autumn of 1941], in: Jaroslava Roguľová/Maroš Hertel et al., Adepti moci a úspechu. Etablovanie elit v moderných dejinách [Candidates for Power and Success. The Formation of Elites in Modern History], Bratislava 315-324.
\item \textsuperscript{14} Katarína Hradská, Holokaust na Slovensku 8 (Úvod) [The Holocaust in Slovakia 8 (Introduction)], Bratislava 2008, 5–41, here 28.
\item \textsuperscript{15} Slovenský národný archív [Slovak National Archive] (SNA), f. Policajné riaditeľstvo [Police Directorate in Bratislava], b. 2228, f. 170/42-ZÚ/216, Dislokačná štatistika [Dislocation Statistics], 7 January 1942.
\item \textsuperscript{16} Hradská, Holokaust na Slovensku 8, 5–41, here 26.
\item \textsuperscript{17} AMB, f. Magistrát mesta Bratislavy [Municipality of Bratislava] (MMB), b. 2414, f. 25200/924 (118/2), Návrh proti rekvirovaniu bytov pre vojenských gmážistov [Proposal Against the Requisition of Apartments for Military Employees], f. 5078/924 (140/2), Zoznam deložovaných osôb [Register of Evicted Persons].
\item \textsuperscript{18} AMB, f. MNÚ, b. 3032, f. 1830, Zpráva o bytové otázke v Bratislave [Report on the Housing Issue in Bratislava].
\item \textsuperscript{19} The Prešov city commissioner, Andrej Germuška, referred to the escalation of the shortage of housing in the city, especially after the autumn of 1938, in the newspaper article: Prešov od 6. októbra 1938 [Prešov since 6 October 1938], in: Slovák, 111, 12 May 1940, 20.
\end{itemize}
Two Sides of One Coin: Regulation and Expropriation

As previously mentioned, the intention to limit and regulate Jewish living space was also caused by the lack of housing capacity in some cities. Jewish real estate was to be used to satisfy the demands of the majority society. This approach followed the HSĽS’s politics, whose main representatives promised social and economic benefits to its members and loyal supporters. In 1940, the UHU was created as the successor to the Economic Bureau of the Prime Minister’s Office (Hospodárska urádovňa predsiednictva vlády) to administrate the comprehensive process of Aryanisation. There were various types of Jewish real estate: whereas the UHU was in charge of corporate and residential properties, agricultural properties were the responsibility of the State Land Office (Státny pozemkový urad).21 The political authorities created a mechanism for how applications could be made for expropriated Jewish property and they formally legalised the whole process. Moreover, the chance to benefit from Aryanisation was also widely emphasised in official propaganda:

“This is the motto of our economic policy. Political independence must be supported by economic independence. A strong and economically independent nation can develop and grow in every single direction. Those who seek to get rich honestly are of benefit not only to themselves and their family but bring prosperity to their nation and help build the state. Now there is a unique possibility to do business. It is easy to Aryanise and improves one’s social situation. It is necessary to make use of this opportunity and to take over Jewish shops and firms. We have already covered in the press how to Aryanise. It is a pretty easy thing to do. Skills, diligence, entrepreneurship and some money are needed. Also, those without money can Aryanise. It is possible to take a loan. […] Slovaks, seize the opportunity, take advantage of the opportunity to Aryanise and take the Jewish property into your hands! You, your family, your nation and your state will benefit from it. Be diligent and enterprising! The solution of the Jewish question does not depend only on the authorities but also on you. Now is the most opportune time for a brave and successful Aryanisation”.22

Even though political representatives were proclaiming the possibility for everyone who was in favour of the ruling regime to participate in the Aryanisation, this process ultimately turned into an economic and moral failure. Corruption negatively impacted on the economic situation, and it was widely developed even among the highest political representatives of the Slovak State.23 Moreover, it soon became evident that demand exceeded supply, so the original promises of the HSĽS remained unfulfilled.

Residential property represented a specific category in the expropriation of Jewish property. In the initial phase, attention was mainly paid to corporate properties. However, that does not mean that Jews were freely allowed to stay in their apart-

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22 Arizovať! [To Aryanise!], in: Ludové noviny 5 (1940) 1.
ments. There were two parallel processes regarding the forced changes in Jewish home addresses: the limitation of the potential living area in the cities, and the preparation for the transfer of properties into 'non-Jewish' ownership.

The process which finally resulted in the expropriation of the residential real estate can be described as follows. The Aryanisation of residential properties was the job of the fifth department of the ÚHÚ. The legal decree 257/1940 Sl. z. determined that, for "severe economic and social reasons", state authorities could appoint temporary building managers.\(^\text{24}\) This position turned out to be a prestigious and requested side job because all of the potential expenses had to be covered by the original owner and the building manager could automatically live in the house.\(^\text{25}\) The requirements for potential building managers were relatively low, with professional experience not being necessary. The only criteria concerned the minimum age of twenty-four, Slovakian citizenship, and a good moral character. It was not a coincidence that special attention was paid to the fixing of the building manager’s salary. Residences run by the building managers were regularly losing on their original value and the managers often refused to pay the mortgage instalments.\(^\text{26}\) Ultimately, the nomination of the temporary building manager became the responsibility of district offices.\(^\text{27}\) There were several kinds of applicants, including private persons, organisations, and the state itself. The German ethnic minority in Slovakia represented a significant factor in the Aryanisation process, including in the applications for the positions of building managers. Complaints about non-compliance with the consensual proportion of German applicants resulted in the establishment of a special commission.\(^\text{28}\)

From 1 November 1941, Jewish real estate, excluding agricultural and corporate property, passed into state ownership.\(^\text{29}\) In contrary to corporate properties, the direct transfer of former Jewish residential property into non-Jewish ownership started in practice with a considerable delay in 1944. The turbulent and rapid Aryanisation faced severe problems and turned out to be beyond the control of the ÚHÚ. Its first head, Augustín Morávek, was forced to resign from his position in June 1942.\(^\text{30}\) The sale of Jewish real estate was organised under the charge of Morávek’s successor, Ludovít Paskovič. This process was launched only after an estimation of the prices of the Jewish properties.


\(^{25}\) For a comparison with the different tradition and position of building managers in Budapest, see: István Pál Adam, Budapest Building Managers and the Holocaust in Hungary, New York 2016.

\(^{26}\) Hlavinka, Vznik Ústredného hospodárskeho úradu, 63-92, here 87.


\(^{28}\) Ibid., here 44.

\(^{29}\) Government Regulation no. 238/1941 Sl. z., in: Slovenský zákonník, 64, 31 October 1941, 853.

Divergent Regulations of the Jewish Living Space

The targeted resettlement of Jewish households started on the municipal level in 1940. The above-mentioned mentioned legal decree no. 257/1940 Sl. z. enabled the ordering of Jewish owners to leave their apartments and the restrictions on Jews for living in and renting houses and flats in designated neighbourhoods. The practical implementation of this law can be considered as a sort of preparatory phase for the further Aryanisation process of residential real estate. Some of the first restrictions concerned the streets and squares named after the main political figures of Nazi Germany and the HSĽS, in particular Adolf Hitler and Andrej Hlinka. Initially, this principle was adopted and applied in Bratislava, but from December 1940 it was valid for the whole territory of Slovakia. The renaming of streets is one of the typical tools of the symbolical overtaking of public space by a ruling political regime. The ideological direction of the HSĽS was also demonstrated by its particular choice of Hitler and Hlinka. This kind of intervention in the public space did not have just a symbolic or declarative meaning. Consequently, Jewish residents were obliged to move from the apartments located in these areas.

The initial phase of limiting the private spaces of Jews in cities developed differently in various locales. The ĚHU consulted on the precise procedural steps with local organisations of the HSĽS and the Hlinka Guard (Hlinkova garda), administrative bodies, local political authorities, as well as representatives of the Deutsche Partei, Freiwillige Schutzstaffel, and local intelligentsia such as doctors, engineers, and notaries. The ĚHU, with the personal involvement of Morávek, organised some meetings to discuss the housing policy towards the Jews, for instance in Piešťany, Trenčín, and Prešov, in November and December 1940.

An analysis of the particular regulations which were subsequently published by the ĚHU points to different approaches in the municipalities. One of the first regulations that was adopted after these meetings pertained to the situation in the famous spa town of Piešťany. Regulations from Nitra and Topoľčany emphasised the importance of an apartment’s location – Jews were expelled from flats which directly faced streets named after Hitler or Hlinka and, in the case of Nitra, also Josef Tiso Square. Political radicalism, which was noticeable in the Šariš-Zemplín County led by Andrej Dudáš, impacted on restrictions in the city of Prešov, where Jews could not live and rent apartments in an even broader area. Moreover, Jews were allowed to rent flats in different parts of Prešov only with the permission of the Municipal Notary Office. A similar pattern was also applied in Topoľčany, where the district chief oversaw this decision-making. Considering the divergent competencies in particular cities, it is evident that the system was ambiguously centralised.

Another special regulation was enforced in Bratislava, where the struggle for housing opportunities remained imperative. Just before organising the dislocation of Jews from the capital in October 1941, Jews were officially banned from living in new buildings that had been constructed since 1920. Those Jews who were living in properties built after 1930 were forced to move out of their apartments by 30 September

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31 ĚHU regulation no. 233/1940 Úr. n., in: Úradné noviny, 51, 9 November 1940, 645.
32 ĚHU regulation no. 267/1940 Úr. n., in: Úradné noviny, 59, 21 December 1940, 740-741.
33 Hallon/Hlavinka/Nožňanský, Pozícia Ústredného hospodárskeho úradu, 11-65, here 42.
34 ĚHU regulation no. 269/1940 Ú. n., in: Úradné noviny, 59, 21 December 1940, 741.
35 ĚHU regulation no. 258/1940 Ú. n., in: Úradné noviny, 57, 7 December 1940, 714.
36 ĚHU regulation no. 274/1940 Ú. n., in: Úradné noviny, 60, 28 December 1940, 753-754.
ber 1941 and out of those built between 1920 and 1930 by 30 October 1941. This regulation was confirmed by the Municipal Notary Office two and a half weeks later. Exceptions were made only for state and public employees, doctors with official working permits, members of the board of the Jewish Centre, and foreign citizens living in their own houses. According to the Jewish Centre’s records, this regulation could have affected almost 8,000 Jewish inhabitants, and finding enough residences for their temporary placement was seen as highly problematic, if not impossible. The subsequent evictions, which started in October 1941, partially ‘solved’ the declared problem by displacing thousands of Jews to different parts of the city. It is noteworthy that, even after the evictions in 1941 and the deportations from March to October 1942, the municipal authorities called for the need to evict the rest of the Jewish community from Bratislava to stabilise the housing situation in the city.

Involuntarily ‘Wandering Jews’

The life experience of Adolf Hó, whose request I quoted in the opening paragraph of this article, reflected the permanent uncertainty and instability of people who were considered by the law to be Jews. The 82-year-old man informed the district authorities in Banská Bystrica about his situation, which had been caused by the systematic and continual persecution of the Jewish community in Slovakia since October 1938. The content of Hó’s letter touched the process of impoverishment even more comprehensively. His uneasy housing situation was exacerbated by the fact that his sons had been fired from their positions in the state railways and that both Hó and his wife were suffering from various diseases. They obtained their third accommodation in the flat of his sister-in-law, where the couple lived in a single room and regularly paid rent to the temporary building manager. As was further stated in his letter, on 18 November 1941, he had been informed by J. Paška, a temporary building manager, that the latter would probably be forced to terminate the rental because of another, ‘Aryan’, applicant. A local branch of the HSĽS ultimately transferred the responsibility for resolving this situation to the building manager.

Even though the rest of the process is so far not known to me, the decreased status of Hó’s family represents an example of the impoverishment of the Jewish community in Slovakia under the HSĽS regime. It took barely three years to get the pensioner, who had been working as a state employee for 47 years, literally to the margins of society. Nevertheless, his other son Pavel, a dental technician, received a ‘yellow legitimisation’ that should have protected him and his parents from deportation in 1942. Despite this, it is likely that Adolf Hó was transferred from the concentration centre in Žilina on 22 June 1942. Files in Yad Vashem indicate that he was deported

37 ÚHÚ regulation no. 374/1940 Ú. n., in: Úradné noviny, 48, 6 September 1941, 1482.
39 AMB, f. MNÚ, b. 3029, f. 1694, Zákaz židom byvať v novostavbách [Prohibition on Jews Living in New Buildings], 17 September 1941.
40 AMB, f. MNÚ, b. 3033, f. 1854, Nutnosť deložovať židov na územie mimo Bratislavy [The Need for Evicting Jews to Outside of Bratislava], 5 January 1943.
41 See the complete transcript of the letter in: Eduard Nižňanský/Michala Lônčíková, Dejiny židovskej komunity v Banskej Bystrici [The History of the Jewish Community in Banská Bystrica], Banská Bystrica 2016, 91.
42 ŠABB, f. OÚ v BB, b. 129, without number, List miestnej organizácie HSĽS Okresnému úradu v Banskej Bystrici [Letter of the Local Organisation of the HSĽS to the District Office in Banská Bystrica], 3 December 1941.
43 SNA, f. Ministerstvo vnútra [Ministry of Interior], b. 214, f. 106.150/42-Ir-M, Žiadost o uvoľnenie z vysťahovania [Request for a Release from Eviction], 22 June 1942.
to the Lublin district in October 1942. His further trajectory remains ambiguous but, taking into account his advanced age and health problems, it is highly probable that Adolf Hó was murdered during the Holocaust.

The case of Adolf Hó exemplifies one of the numerous stories of the unwilling resettlement of Jewish families within the same city, not to mention other cases of multi-layered displacement across the country. In his letter, Hó stated that he was expecting to change to a fourth address, but he did not specify the reasons for this. The argument simply continued to be based on the real estate trade in Jewish property. Generally speaking, it must also be said that forced displacement was sometimes also exacerbated by ‘voluntary’ move-outs that were a direct consequence of the systematic impoverishment of the Jewish population in the Slovak State. So far, the most extensive intra-city migration track record which I have come across represents the fate of the Glattstein family from Bratislava. According to a post-war rescuer and aid provider’s testimony, they changed eight apartments in total, with a continually decreasing quality of their living conditions.

Changes in the urban demographic map in Slovakia culminated after the implementation of the regulations limiting the Jewish presence in particular streets and squares. As mentioned above, the general restriction on residency in the places named after Hitler or Hlinka that was announced in December 1940 was finally applied nationwide. The realisation of this differed due to the specific approaches of the municipal authorities, and some of these misused their political power to enlarge the designated zones through legal norms. Already in early 1941, some administrative bodies stated that the regulation was unclear, and they raised doubts about how to adequately proceed with it.

The main controversy lay in the unclear categorisation of the apartments situated in the restricted living spaces. That specifically meant whether the enforced restriction was to be valid only for the street- or also for the courtyard-facing housing units, which turned out to be a crucial concern in many cases. Secondly, the symbolic political overtaking of the public space meant that zones named after Hitler and Hlinka were located in central parts of the municipalities, in particular often the largest and longest streets with a high density of Jewish residents. On the one hand, the city centre could be considered as a prestigious address, but on the other, old buildings did not necessarily meet the criteria for satisfactory living standards and required hygienic improvements. At the same time, imprecise specifications and the confusing realisation of these measures opened the opportunities for Jewish residents to negotiate with the local authorities.
The Case of Kežmarok

An efficient strategy as initiated from below is exemplified by the activities of the Jewish community leadership from the eastern Slovakian city of Kežmarok, which has historically been multi-ethnic with a large German minority. According to the census from 1940, the Jewish community represented 14.35 per cent of the city’s population.49 Some 491 Jewish residents then lived in Hlinka Square and in Hitler Street in 120 flats (31 of which were street- and 89 of which were courtyard-facing).50 On 30 December 1940, immediately after the announcement of the regulation no. 267/1940 Úr. n. on the restriction on Jews living in the streets and squares named after Andrej Hlinka and Adolf Hitler in all towns and villages in Slovakia,51 representatives of the autonomous orthodox Jewish community and the branch of the Jewish Centre in Kežmarok sent some comments to the municipality, which described the current situation and the impossibility of implementing the adopted measure in its entirety. In the opening paragraph, the Jewish representatives emphasised their will to cooperate in fulfilling the task of relocating Jewish households, but they additionally proposed two major changes. They asked to apply the restriction only to street-facing flats and to a certain part of the main Hlinka Square. In both instances, they substantiated their claims with precedents from other cities, such Prešov, Nitra, Topoľčany, and Piešťany. A core argument was the lack of other housing opportunities for Jewish residents in the city.52 Whereas there was a shortage of housing units in many cities, such as in the above-mentioned cases of Bratislava or Prešov, the situation in Kežmarok was quite the opposite. In addition, it was supposed that, after the construction of military barracks, numerous apartments would remain empty even if Jews were not moved out from the designated zones.53

Most of these remarks were taken into consideration and the government commissioner of Kežmarok city (Vládny komisár mesta), Martin Longa, adopted them into his response to the ÚHÚ. Moreover, Longa pointed out the economic aspect of the required procedure, because approximately 30 per cent of apartment taxes came from the flats which were rented just by the Jews in Hlinka Square and in Hitler Street. Longa also stated that a radical realisation of the plan for the evictions could negatively impact on the Christian house owners in these localities, in particular those who were existentially dependent on rental incomes.54 The subsequent reaction showed that these remarks were considered to be relevant: The head of the ÚHU, Morávek, approved a proposed reduction of the designated area in Hlinka Square55 and recommended that Jews should move out from the courtyard-facing

49 ŠAPO-PP, f. ÚÚ v KK, b. 49, f. 15/41 prez., Sčítanie ľudu 1940 [1940 Census].
50 ŠAPO-PP, f. ÚÚ v KK, b. 49, f. 15/41 prez., Stanovisko mesta Kežmarku ku vyhláške ÚHÚ zo dňa 14. decembra 1940 o zákaze bývať Židom na uliciach a námestíach Andreja Hlinku a Adolfa Hitlera [Attitude of the Government Commissioner of Kežmarok City to the ÚHU Regulation of 14 December 1940 Regarding the Restriction on Jews Living in the Streets and Squares Named after Andrej Hlinka and Adolf Hitler], 30 December 1940.
51 ÚHU Regulation no. 267/1940 Úr. n., in: Úradné noviny, 59, 21 December 1940, 740-741.
52 ŠAPO-PP, f. ÚÚ v KK, b. 49, f. 15/41 prez., Stanovisko mesta Kežmarku ku vyhláške ÚHÚ zo dňa 14. decembra 1940 o zákaze bývať Židom na uliciach a námestíach Andreja Hlinku a Adolfa Hitlera [Attitude of the Government Commissioner of Kežmarok City to the ÚHU Regulation of 14 December 1940 Regarding the Restriction on Jews Living in the Streets and Squares Named after Andrej Hlinka and Adolf Hitler], 11 January 1941.
53 ŠAPO-PP, f. ÚÚ v KK, b. 49, f. 15/41 prez., Zákaz bývať Židom na Hlinkovom námestí a Hitlerovej ulici [Restriction on Jews Living in Hlinka Square and Hitler Street], 31 March 1941.
flats only when a Christian potential tenant appeared. In this particular case, a direct and rational argumentation of the Jewish representatives, as well as the proposed solution, was accepted by the government commissioner Longa. However, such an approach was generally not respected by all of the local authorities. Longa was officially criticised by the municipal notary for writing to the UHU to exempt some parts of Hlinka Square from the restriction, a request which was allegedly sent without the municipal notary’s knowledge. In the municipal notary’s words, Longa’s request faced public criticism, and the municipal notary proposed that the government commissioner’s written intervention should have only been sent with the notary’s signature. This situation demonstrated that two local authorities did not reach a consensus on this subject, and the municipal notary evoked a dispute on competence. Longa was several times publicly accused of helping the Jews in Kežmarok, for instance in the case of the businessman Bergmann that was reported on in the local German periodical *Karpathen-Post*. In 1943, Longa resigned from his position and he was replaced as the city commissioner by the ethnic German Matthias Nitsch.

The dispute on competence, as well as a precise interpretation of the regulation, somewhat represented the key issue for the local political authorities. In praxis, though, there were almost 500 Jews who should have theoretically moved out of their apartments by the end of March 1941. This deadline was, according to the municipal notary’s report, tensely expected by ‘Aryan circles’. Despite the above-mentioned factors, housing opportunities in the city were very limited for the Jewish community. Institutional negotiations were accompanied by divergent individual responses to the situation. Some of the affected Jewish households tried to balance the adopted measures by taking advantage of gaps in their wording. In some cases from Kežmarok, Jewish residents moved out only from the rooms which faced the street and kept living in the back parts of the same flat. Others decided to rent the front rooms to ‘Aryan’ subtenants. The municipal notary noted the case of A. Gruber, who allegedly rented two rooms to a former local high-ranking member of the Communist Party, J. Ruber.

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56 ŠAPO-PP, f. OÚ v KK, b. 49, f. 15/41 prez., Stáhovanie Židov z dvorných bytov Hlinkovej ulice a Hlinkovho námestia ako i z Hitlerovej ulice a Hitlerovho námestia [Moving Jews Out from the Courtyard-Facing Housing Units in Hlinka Street and Square and Hitler Street and Square], 6 March 1941.

57 ŠAPO-PP, f. OÚ v KK, b. 49, f. 1/41 prez., Mesiacná periodická správa Obecného notárskeho úradu pre mesto Kežmarok (okres Kežmarok) pre Ústrednú štátnej bezpečnosti za mesiac apríl 1941 [Monthly Periodical Report of the Municipal Notary Office of the City of Kežmarok (Kežmarok District) for the State Security Headquarters for April 1941], 30 April 1941.


60 ŠAPO-PP, f. OÚ v KK, b. 49, no. 1/41 prez., Situáčná zpráva Obecného notárskeho úradu pre mesto Kežmarok (okres Kežmarok) pre Ústrednú štátnej bezpečnosti za mesiac február [Situational Report of the Municipal Notary Office for the City of Kežmarok (Kežmarok District) for the State Security Headquarters for February 1941], 27 February 1941.

61 ŠAPO-PP, f. OÚ v KK, b. 49, no. 15/41 prez., Obecný notársky úrad pre mesto Kežmarok (okres Kežmarok) Okresnému úradu v Kežmarku o stáhovaní židov z dvorných bytov Hlinkoveho námestia a Hitlerovej ulice [Municipal Notary Office of the City of Kežmarok (Kežmarok District) to the District Office in Kežmarok about Moving Jews Out from the Courtyard-Facing Housing Units in Hlinka Square and Hitler Street], 3 April 1941.
Another pragmatic and reasonable Jewish response was the attempt to satisfy the housing requirements of potential candidates by offering them an alternative apartment instead of the requested one. Mrs. Glücksmannová lived in a courtyard-facing flat in 72 Hlinka Square and J. Kromka, a tax officer in Kežmarok, officially declared his interest in moving into this place. At the same time, O. Böttcher, a policeman in Kežmarok, asked for an appropriate apartment for himself. Both demands were fulfilled by Glücksmannová and her son, Dr. E. Glücksmann, a secretary of the local Jewish religious community. Glücksmann left a double-room flat at 6 Lányi Martínova Street for Böttcher, and Kromka moved into Böttcher’s previous flat in Ľubica, a nearby village. Based on these circumstances, Glücksmannová asked to continue to live in her flat in Hlinka Square because she was old and seriously ill and would not be able to move in a short time.62

Engineering the Jewish Absence

The above cases epitomised the general situation and the problems that were had by Jewish households at the ‘incriminated’ addresses. The expectations of the majority society were not immediately fulfilled in Kežmarok as well as in other places. The most influential daily newspaper in Slovakia, Slovák, reported that not all of the designated apartments had been emptied by 1 April 1941, even under the threat of penalty. One Jewish resident, whose case served as a ‘cautionary example’ that was spread by the media, paid a fine of 300 Slovak crowns. 63 Furthermore, in a report to the District Office in Kežmarok dated 27 February 1941, the municipal notary stated that Jews who had been ordered to move out from the designated apartments in the city centre were not doing anything about that because they supposedly did not have other places to go to. 64 Considering Tim Cole’s concept of binary Jewish ‘presence’ and ‘absence’, 65 it seems that the main intention of the Slovak authorities was predominantly focussed on the ‘absence’ aspect. Jews were ordered to leave their apartments according to the wording of the adopted measures, but without any specification of their new residential addresses. Even with regards to the attempt to create a somewhat unsealed ghetto in Bratislava, I am not aware that Jews were rigorously instructed to settle down there.

To conclude, the engineering of the Jewish living space in the Slovak State resulted in significant limits, restrictions, and multiple ways of forced intra-state migration, starting from the municipal level. This multi-layered process affected many of the Jewish families more than once, even before the deportations to the Nazi concentration and extermination camps beyond the Slovak borders. The analysed cases illustrate the role of housing policy in the systematic persecution of the Jewish community and point out some selected noteworthy ‘nomadic fates’ that did not even involve stepping out of a single city, such as those of the Hó and Glattstein families. The study shows that the symbolic occupation of the public space in Slovakia was realised in favour of the official ideological doctrine, and it had a much more significant

62 ŠAPO-PP, f. OÚ v KK, b. 49, no. 15/41 prez., List Okresnému úradu v Kežmarku [Letter to the District Office in Kežmarok], 8 April 1941.
63 Nechceli sa vystaviť [They did not Want to Move Out], in: Slovák, 86, Easter 1941, 18.
64 ŠAPO-PP, f. OÚ v KK, b. 49, no. 1/41 prez., Situáciu zpráva Obecného notárského úradu pre mesto Kežmarok (okres Kežmarok) pre Ustredné štátnej bezpečnosti za mesiac február [Situational Report of the Municipal Notary Office of the City of Kežmarok (Kežmarok District) for the State Security Headquarters for February 1941], 27 February 1941.
impact on everyday Jewish life than just the changing of street signs. Analysing trajectories of the forced Jewish migration from below could make Holocaust research more complex by rethinking the aspects which have been usually overlooked in recent scholarship in Slovakia, such as the involuntary changing of home address and its spatial and social consequences.

In contrast to the personal stories of the persecuted Jewish victims, the analysed aspects of the anti-Semitic policy that was applied in Slovakia also reveal the limits of the state system. Even though political representatives created a legal basis to cope with housing capacity by targeting the properties owned or inhabited by Jewish citizens, the implementation of these regulations faced numerous problems and concerns already in its initial stage. The responsible authorities had to additionally adapt the rules in order to reflect the contemporary situation in certain cities and towns. In the frame of the functionalism-intentionalism debate, research on forced Jewish migration at the municipal level in the Slovak State would support the functionalist perspective. However, the research results are more complex than this duality suggests. Disputes about regional competence resulted in an inconsistent system and varied decision-making, and the power to move Jews from the designated urban areas shifted among various regional and local political representatives. Similarly, their attitudes towards the impoverished Jews varied on a large scale, from acting even more harshly than the law determined, to attempts to negotiate with the state authorities to ensure at least more tolerable conditions.

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Roland Clark

Oskar Scheuer and Student Fraternities in Vienna
Negotiating Jewish Difference

Abstract

A dermatologist by training, Franz Oskar Scheuer (1876–c.1941) renounced his Jewish ancestry in order to embrace the German nationalism associated with the student fraternities Fidelitas and Allemannia. As the editor of the magazine *Deutsche Hochschule* (German University) between 1910 and 1922, Scheuer found himself at the centre of debates over Jewish difference, Zionism, Germanness, and anti-semitism. After criticising Vienna's Zionists before the First World War, Scheuer argued for the importance of tolerating Jews once Austria's fraternities became increasingly anti-semitic. His polemics and his use of historical research provide valuable insights into the delicate balance that nationalist Germans of Jewish descent had to maintain during the first decades of the twentieth century.

Born to Jewish parents in Moravia, Franz Oskar Scheuer (1876–c.1941) became a leading publicist, historian, and advocate for student organisations in Vienna and Central Europe. He published numerous articles and several books, edited a magazine, and built a famous library dedicated to student fraternities. Scheuer lived in Vienna and identified himself neither as Jewish nor Austrian, but as German. As a graduate member (*ein alter Herr*) of the liberal student fraternities Fidelitas and Allemannia, Scheuer promoted an explicitly German national (*deutschnational*) agenda within Austrian student politics. He argued that the German identity of the fraternity was more important than the ancestry of individual members, positioning himself and his magazine, *Deutsche Hochschule* (German University), in opposition to those who fought for the inclusion of Jewish fraternities and voices within the public sphere. His position became less and less tenable after the First World War, when militant anti-semitism became normal in Austrian student politics. He used his substantial knowledge of the history of the fraternities to construct an alternative approach to student identity politics that was both *deutschnational* and tolerant. At the same time, Scheuer’s professional work in dermatology and sexology situated him within a much more cosmopolitan and ‘Jewish’ milieu. He published intensive-ly on medical topics only when not engaged in student politics; his oscillation between dermatology, sexology, and student history was a reflection of the extent to which Vienna’s fluctuating attitudes towards Jews allowed him to excel in different fields at various times. Scheuer thus displayed what Till van Rahden calls “situational ethnicity”, as Scheuer emphasised his Germanness and Jewishness at different periods during his life and in different public and professional contexts.¹

As someone who had explicitly renounced Judaism, Scheuer saw himself first and foremost as German, only identifying as Jewish when he had no other choice. His career problematises the scholarly consensus on how people of Jewish descent identified and performed ethnicity in interwar Austria. Articulating the majority view, Robert Wistrich has argued that “the Austrian Jews of 1900 were Austrian above all in the sense of loyalty to a supra-national dynasty rather than identification with a ‘national’ community.”

Nation and empire were two different things in Austria-Hungary, and individuals could comfortably remain loyal to both the Jewish nation and the Austro-Hungarian Empire, adopting German language and customs as part of imperial culture without sacrificing loyalty to the Jewish nation. Not everyone was a nationalist, though. As Tara Zahra writes, Jews in Vienna “identified more strongly with religious, class, local, regional, professional, or familial communities, or even with the Austrian dynasty, than with a single nation.” But Scheuer and those like him did identify primarily with a single nation. Before the First World War they argued vehemently for their inclusion within the German nation, and after the war they fought to reimage Germanness within Austria as a community that could and should include people of Jewish descent.

Scheuer’s biography suggests that in some ways the choices available to Viennese Jews were similar to those open to Jews in Germany where, as Tim Grady notes, Jews “spanned the political spectrum; they were certainly never just in the liberal political camp. Their numbers may have been small, but Jews could be left-wing radicals, passionate conservatives or even in some cases right-wing agitators.” With the increasing number of ‘Staatsbürger jüdischen Unglaubens’ (citizens of Jewish irreligion) in Central Europe, assimilated, non-practicing Jews like Walter Rathenau – an engineer, journalist, industrialist, and statesman in Germany – could claim to be “of the Jewish tribe” at the same time that they affirmed that “my people is the German people, my home is the German lands, my confession is the German faith.” Jews participated in some of the most violent aspects of German colonialism in Africa, engaged in German settlement programmes in Eastern Europe, formed nationalist veterans associations, and even joined right-wing paramilitary groups such as the Freikorps. As Philipp Nielsen points out, none of this was remarkable in Germany before roughly 1924, when the style of right-wing conservatism associated with the old empire waned and was replaced with a more emphatically racist and anti-Semitic style of völkisch nationalism. Scheuer’s biography forces us to consider the extent to which some Viennese Jews also clung to German nationalism instead of embracing an Austrian national identity.

The alienation of politically conservative Jews began slightly earlier in Austria, catalysed by the pressing need to define Austrianess in the new republic. Both Jews and non-Jews alike used what Lisa Silverman calls “Jewish difference” as a means of nego-

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7 Nielsen, Between Heimat and Hatred, 8, 257-258.
tiating the boundaries of a new national identity. "Jewish difference", Silverman writes, "refers to the dialectical, hierarchical framework that encompasses the relationship between the socially constructed categories of 'Jew' and 'non-Jew'." As well as reminding us that there is no inherent, essential thing called 'Jewishness', the term focuses our attention on the changing cultural meanings that Jewishness had for contemporaries. Therefore, when I refer to Scheuer as Jewish, it is to highlight the fact that Austrians considered his Jewish ancestry significant. More Jews converted to Christianity in Vienna than anywhere else in the empire, but even if one renounced religion and assimilated into Viennese society, as Steven Beller points out, "the presence in the family past of Jewish ancestors was liable to mean that one started with a view of the world which was substantially different from that of others who were not of Jewish descent". Scheuer attacked Vienna's Zionists during the 1910s and then spent the 1920s articulating what he believed the attitude of the student fraternities towards Jewish difference should have been. As such, he provides valuable evidence regarding how nationalist Austrians of Jewish descent were and were not able to identify.

Scheuer has largely been ignored by historians, except for three invaluable biographical articles by Harald Seewan and Gregor Gatscher-Riedl. Both Seewan and Gatscher-Riedl approach Scheuer as a historian of Austrian fraternities and highlight his somewhat antiquarian contributions to a complex field of study. Gatscher-Riedl in particular uses Scheuer's life and writings as a window into the history of the fraternities themselves. While acknowledging a substantial debt to Seewan and Gatscher-Riedl, this article analyses Scheuer's polemics to shed new light on the growing discussion regarding Germans and Austrians of Jewish descent who were committed to German nationalist causes. Reading Scheuer's writings as attempts to clarify the ambiguities of Jewish difference in a rapidly evolving environment, it reveals the contingencies involved in national identification during this period, while also suggesting that the lived experience of Jewishness was both more complex and less divisive than the sharp binaries preserved in Scheuer's public writings imply.

**Becoming German, 1896–1911**

Scheuer grew up in the Moravian town of Znaim (Czech: Znojmo). Znaim was a majority German-speaking town (76.5 per cent of the population were German speakers in 1910), and Marsha Rozenblit writes that, during this period, "Moravian Jews spoke German and participated in the German community, but they always formed a separate group within it, and not primarily because of antisemitism. Rather, the unique demographic structure of Jewish life in this mixed-language province sustained both Jewish loyalty to the German language and Jewish distinctiveness within the German community".

Nonetheless, they voted for German liberals against Czech nationalists, and even Jewish schools were run in German. Jews had only been granted residency in Znaim in 1848, forming an Israelite Cultural Association with its own cemetery and place of worship in the late 1860s. The 1890 census estimated the town’s small Jewish population at only 674 people, which grew to 771 people, or four per cent of the population, in 1910. According to municipal documents, Scheuer’s father was a “shopkeeper and junk dealer”. Vienna was the cultural centre for Moravian Jews, and they migrated there much more often than to geographically closer Prague. Scheuer studied medicine at the University of Vienna in 1896 and became active in the Fidelitas Burschenschaft (student fraternity) there during his student years. Despite Karl Lueger’s re-election as mayor in 1897, organised anti-semitism was more muted during the fin-de-siècle than it had been for the past twenty years, even though anti-semitic sentiments were still widespread in Viennese society. The proportion of Jewish students at the University of Vienna was declining gradually during the second half of the 1890s, but this was a result of increasing student numbers across the board rather than a significant decrease in the actual number of Jews. In the Faculty of Medicine, where Scheuer studied, 48 per cent of students were of Jewish descent in 1890, and anti-semitic commentators were vocal about the ‘Jewification’ of Habsburg academia.

As Gatscher-Riedl demonstrates, Scheuer’s involvement in fraternity life brought him into a thriving, lively, and exclusive community based on shared educational and cultural accomplishments. After graduating from high school, Scheuer joined Thaya, a vacation fraternity (Ferialverbindung) for students studying in Vienna and Prague. Dieter Hecht describes vacation fraternities as “a way of carrying over structural and ideological aspects of student life into the vacations”. Members engaged in many of the same cultural activities that they enjoyed during semester, such as duelling, organising lectures, and wearing their fraternity uniforms. Thaya celebrated deutschnational values, but without excluding Jews or other minorities. They sported red, green and gold colours and their motto was “Germanness and Liberty – our standard, honour and faith – our emblem!” In addition to taking part in Thaya’s cultural and charitable activities, a local newspaper reported that Scheuer gave a “side-splitting” lecture to the association dressed in women’s clothes, during which he delivered one punch line after another.

Scheuer made a number of important connections through Thaya, including a close friendship with the writer Karl Hans Strobl, who also came from Znaim. Strobl’s novels about his student days in Prague emphasise the Germanic identity of fraternities. The protagonists in *Die Vaclavbude* (1902), for example, are attacked as Germans by nationalist Czechs because they wore their fraternity colours. Scheuer

12 Ibid., 77-120, here 86-87.
continued his studies at the German University in Prague in 1900, joining the Allmannia Burschenschaft there. Language and nationality politics in Prague were quite different to those in Znaim. In Prague during the late nineteenth century, Jews vacillated between embracing German or Czech language and culture, with most deciding in favour of Czech for political reasons. Scheuer chose a German identity as a Moravian and a member of a deutschnational fraternity, thus aligning himself more closely with Prague’s German cultural sphere than its Jewish one. As Pieter Judson notes, in the Austro-Hungarian Empire expressing Germanness was about being part of a local cultural and linguistic community and did not necessarily involve a desire for unification with the new German nation-state created in 1871. At the same time, the language one spoke had political implications, and during the early years of the twentieth century the state began to recognise ‘nations’ as political communities rather than just linguistic groupings.

After graduating in 1903, Scheuer moved back to Vienna, where he began a specialisation in dermatology and venereal disease – subjects that were intimately connected in the early twentieth century – at the Rudolfsstiftung Hospital. He formally renounced Judaism in 1906, and in 1908 he married Emmy Carolina Fränkel, who also left Judaism the year she married Scheuer. The couple had two daughters. They settled near the hospital in the city’s third district, Landstraße, where relatively few Jews lived and which was a decidedly ‘non-Jewish’ space. Here he worked under the mentorship of Franz Mraček, a leading authority on syphilis, but Scheuer left the hospital to set up his own practice in 1909. As Gatscher-Riedl suggests, this may have been because he had been passed over as Mraček’s successor when Mraček died in 1908.

Scheuer began publishing studies in specialist medical journals almost as soon as he set out on his own, with six articles on gonorrhoea and syphilis appearing in 1909 alone. Scheuer’s treatments were somewhat experimental, such as his suggestion that the best way to treat chronic gonorrhoea in men was to insert a vibrator deep into the urethra. Vibration would clear away the mucus, he said, allowing the doctor to inject an ointment at the root of the infection. Alert to the possibilities of sensationalism and publicity, in 1911 he introduced a bearded lady by the name of Hedwig Koschinski to Vienna’s medical community, promoting her as “a true miracle of nature”. Over twenty years later, he went on to write a book on human hairiness, presumably

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26 Gatscher-Riedl, Wien als frühes Zentrum, 11-32, here 15.
inspired by Koschinski.\textsuperscript{29} Scheuer published three books on venereal disease in 1910 and 1911, but after this he stopped writing for a medical audience for almost twenty years, turning his attention towards student history.\textsuperscript{30} Sexology was a relatively new field of study in the early twentieth century, and the majority of its pioneers were either German or Austrian Jews.\textsuperscript{31} As individuals such as Otto Weininger explored the boundaries of masculinity and femininity in turn-of-the-century Vienna, they simultaneously reflected on the Jewish Question.\textsuperscript{32} Except when such research was explicitly anti-semitic, anti-semites frequently expressed their distaste – even open opposition – to scientific research on sexuality and venereal disease.\textsuperscript{33} Scheuer’s turn away from publishing on these topics was thus also a turn away from a scientific field marked as ‘Jewish’ towards a more explicitly ‘German’ speciality.

\textbf{German-Jewish Liberalism, 1910–1919}

In October 1910, Scheuer launched \textit{Deutsche Hochschule: Blätter für deutsch-nationale und freisinnige Farbenstudenten in Österreich} (The German University: A Broadsheet for German National and Liberal Fraternity Students in Austria) under his editorship. His most important collaborator on \textit{Deutsche Hochschule} was Paul Kisch, a writer of Jewish descent from Prague who was a member of the Saxonia fraternity. Kisch completed a doctorate on German literature under the supervision of August Sauer and took up a job as editor of the \textit{Neue Freie Presse} after the First World War. Fraternity life was as formative for Kisch as it was for Scheuer, and in a letter by Kisch to his brother Egon, a communist, in November 1910, he wrote that “I am very attached to my fraternity and, despite your scorn and mockery … I will not allow myself to appear completely unjustified on this point nor to allow myself to be misled. I will even help it in accordance with ‘my abilities’.”\textsuperscript{34} Paul Kisch remained a convinced German nationalist up until he was deported to Theresienstadt in 1943, en route to Auschwitz.

A monthly magazine, editions of \textit{Deutsche Hochschule} ran at twelve pages, filled with articles concerning the history of student fraternities, reflections on pressing concerns, long bibliographies on the history of fraternities and universities, short reviews of new books, and announcements of meetings and other gatherings. In 1910, a six-month subscription originally cost four Kronen in Austria-Hungary or four Marks in Germany. The price remained steady throughout the war but increased together with inflation to six Marks (= six Austro-Hungarian Kronen) in 1919 and to twelve Marks (= twenty-four Austro-Hungarian Kronen) in 1921. Initially, it also included advertisements for bookstores and cafes, but these disappeared after the first few issues. Scheuer’s opening editorial made it clear that his magazine

\textsuperscript{29} Oskar Franz Scheuer, Die Behaarung des Menschen. Eine sexual- und konstitutionswissenschaftliche Abhandlung, Leipzig 1933.
\textsuperscript{30} Oskar Scheuer, Hautkrankheiten sexuellen Ursprungs bei Frauen, Vienna 1910; Oskar Scheuer, Die Syphilis der Unschuldigen (Syphilis insontium), Vienna 1910; Oskar Scheuer, Taschenbuch für die Behandlung der Hautkrankheiten für praktische Ärzte, Vienna 1911.
\textsuperscript{33} Gewaltsamkeiten auf der ganzen Linie, in: Neue Freie Presse, 5 February 1923, 1, 7.
was aimed at the widest possible student audience, but that it also embraced the *deutschnational* rhetoric about being engaged in a national struggle:

“The idea of creating a magazine that would support our students in their struggle to establish the position of the German people in Austria, as a stronghold of academic freedom and for the beauty of old-fashioned student traditions, and to look after their interests in the most decisive manner, fell on fertile ground on all sides. The *Deutsche Hochschule* – the subtitle is only preliminary – is planned as an organ of all German, conservative, [and] liberal corporations (fraternities and associations). In the course of time it should become a forum for our interests, a place for free speech, [and] a link between young and old*.”

In 1910, Scheuer clearly saw no potential conflict between his own “interests” and those of the “German, conservative, [and] liberal corporations”. By “conservative”, Scheuer meant the fraternities that embraced fencing and duelling, not that they were necessarily politically conservative. Similarly, Viennese “Liberalism” in this period should not be reduced to a politics that championed notions such as individual liberty, freedom of speech, and equality before the law, as they were expressed by thinkers such as John Locke or John Stuart Mills. From the 1880s onwards, Viennese Liberals embraced German nationalism as the core value of their movement in an effort to broaden their support base, which had previously been restricted to the urban bourgeoisie. At the same time, Austrian Liberals had no exclusive rights to German nationalism, which was associated with a large variety of political creeds. The label ‘German’ carried specifically regionalist connotations in Tyrol, for example, whereas in Vienna it was largely synonymous with liberal anti-clericalism.

Scheuer explained that “*deutschnational* and liberal” meant fighting for the German Volk against the “un-German materialism” of the times, but that “every German is welcome in our ranks regardless of origin, party or belief; including the Jewish student, who is a German by homeland and language, by upbringing and attitudes and wants to practice his Germanness. There is no fundamental Jewish question for us.” Indeed, despite occasionally discussing Jewishness, the central binary that *Deutsche Hochschule* was concerned with during its first years was German/Czech, not German/Jew, perhaps as a result of Scheuer’s experiences in Prague. Scheuer and Kisch took their commitment to freedom of speech seriously, even publishing articles by Kisch’s brother Egon which reflected quite different political sympathies to their own. In doing so, they were reiterating a stance on free speech that the liberal fraternities such as Fidelitas had taken during the ‘Wahrmund Affair’ in 1908. Then, right-wing student groups and their political allies had attempted to remove the belligerent professor of Catholic canon law, Ludwig Wahrmund, from the

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35 Oskar Scheuer, Das erste Wort, in: Deutsche Hochschule, 1 (1910) 1, 1.
38 Judson, When Is a Diaspora Not a Diaspora?, 219-247, here 226.
39 P., Deutschnational und freisinnig, in: Deutsche Hochschule, 1 (1910) 1, 2.
41 Egon Erwin Kisch, Alt-Prager Mensurlokale, in: Deutsche Hochschule, 1 (1911) 8, 87-88; Egon Erwin Kisch, Herr Karl Kraus, in: Deutsche Hochschule, 4 (1913) 1, 6-7.
University of Innsbruck because of his repeatedly anti-Catholic public statements.42 The attempt to censor him, Scheuer claimed, was “a clerical bid to violate the universities”.

Early twentieth century Vienna was home to Jews of a variety of political persuasions, and even those groups which identified primarily according to Jewishness, such as the Jewish Community Organisation of Vienna (Israelitische Kultusgemeinde Wien, IKG), the Union of German-Austrian Jews, and various Zionist organisations, were all bitterly divided by factionalism. When one considers converts and assimilated Jews with no religious confession, the political compass becomes even more complex. As Scott Spector argues, Vienna’s Jews did not locate themselves on a spectrum suspended somewhere between assimilation and difference.44 Rather, their relationship to Jewish difference also intersected with other subjectivities such as class, gender, age, and politics. For Scheuer, the challenge was to reconcile his commitments to the student fraternities and to German nationalism with his liberalism and his Jewish ancestry.

Speaking simultaneously to anti-semites and Jews, Scheuer carefully navigated Viennese politics while maintaining a strong, independent editorial stance that was vehemently opposed to what he called “the invariably chauvinistic and intolerant behaviour of Zionism”.43 Even though organised anti-semitism must have worried him, before 1926 he only ever printed his disagreements with other Jews and never those with anti-semites. In an article from 1913, he complained that the city’s “black Jews” – Austrians of Jewish descent who embraced German nationalism – had been excluded from the Zionist Congress which took place in Vienna that year. In the same piece, he bitterly reflected that baptised Jews were not welcome within activist Jewish circles.46 Zionism was strongest among Jewish students, who encountered violent anti-semitism on a daily basis and who had been educated in the same spirit as Theodor Herzl. However, as Scheuer pointed out, not all students of Jewish descent were Zionists.47 He ridiculed attempts by Jewish students to have Judaism recognised by the university as a nation rather than as a religion. “From our perspective it would be welcome if the law finally clarified the difference between German and Jewish members of the Mosaic religion”, he wrote.

“...That would come in very handy for our Jewish members [of deutschnationale fraternities], because they would then be able to officially document their Germanness and would finally no longer be lumped together with the Jewish nationalists. But maybe the Jewish nationals will identify themselves by a ‘yellow patch’ if their other badges are not enough for them.”48

In 1913, Scheuer published a series of articles containing nothing but quotations from famous assimilated Jews who were in favour of embracing German culture and identity, which he believed should have been sufficient to refute the Zionists.49 In the

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43 Scheuer, Die Burschenschaft Fidelitas, 106.
45 Zum Kapitel ‘Deutschtsam und Judentum’, in: Deutsche Hochschule, 3 (1913) 8, 90.
46 Oskar Scheuer, Nacklänge zum Wiener Zionistenkongreß, in: Deutsche Hochschule, 4 (1913) 1, 3.
47 Pauley, From Prejudice to Persecution, 221.
words of Gabriel Reisser, a leading advocate for Jewish emancipation in nineteenth
century Hamburg, reprinted approvingly by Scheuer,

\begin{quote}
\textit{Einen Vater in den Höhen,}
A single father in the heavens,

\textit{Eine Mutter haben wir,}
A single mother have we dear,

\textit{Gott, ihn, aller Wesen Vater,}
God, begetter of all beings,

\textit{Deutschland unsere Mutter hier.}
Germany, our mother here.\textsuperscript{50}
\end{quote}

Should he be forced to choose between Jewishness and Germanness, Scheuer
affirmed in January 1919 that “our homeland, language, and education all make us
German”. Consequently, he said, he felt no compulsion arguing with Jews over issues
he felt strongly about. Scheuer wrote:

“For Jewish members among the national-liberal student body who have al-
ways been open and honest in word and deed – despite hatred and chal-
lenges left and right – most of the gentlemen only had a sneering smile. So
we want to be on our guard. And nothing and nobody should prevent us
from attacking things worth fighting about just as sharply with Germans of
the Jewish faith as with any other German”.\textsuperscript{51}

Even if Scheuer and Tisch felt that their Jewishness was irrelevant, their enemies
disagreed. As early as 1913, people had begun attacking the “Semitic character” of
\textit{Deutsche Hochschule} and calling them “Jewish liberals” whose vision of the student
fraternities was a “fossil”. Scheuer responded by saying that there was nothing old-
fashioned about being a lover of liberty, and by quoting a maxim from Georg von
Schönerer that “I must regard it as deeply shameful when – and this is a fact – cheek
is the one and only guideline for the conduct of those suitable for public life”.\textsuperscript{52}
Scheuer’s response is instructive. He published the accusations but refused to re-
spond to them directly. Instead, he claimed that his values were more important than
his ancestry and identified himself with an old German nationalist famous for his
anti-semitism. Scheuer wanted his readers to see him as an advocate for the German
national cause, not as a Jew. Among other things, he began publishing short studies
on famous Germans who had been members of, or who had written positively about,
fraternity life, including Richard Wagner, Friedrich Nietzsche, and Otto von Bismarck.\textsuperscript{53} He later extended these studies and brought them out in pamphlet form,
the message consistently being that fraternities were crucial for developing German
culture and manners among young people.\textsuperscript{54}

An ideal opportunity came to display \textit{Deutsche Hochschule}’s patriotism when the
First World War broke out in 1914. Paul Kisch wrote:

“Fellow students, in battle and around the campfire, remember all the jour-
nneys of German warriors to the East for more than a thousand years. Again,
it is not only necessary to protect the holy homeland, but also to draw deep
furrows in new territory with sharp swords, to spread the seeds of German-
ness that they might bear fruit”.\textsuperscript{55}

\textsuperscript{50} Deutschum und Judentum, in: Deutsche Hochschule, 3 (1913) 5, 52.
\textsuperscript{51} Oskar Scheuer, Deutschum und Judentum, in: Deutsche Hochschule, 9 (1919) 1-2, 5-6.
\textsuperscript{52} Oskar Scheuer, Wir und die Deutschen Hochschulstimmen aus der Ostrmark, in: Deutsche Hochschule,
4 (1913) 2, 17-18.
\textsuperscript{53} Oskar Scheuer, Friedrich Nietzsche als Burschenschafter, in: Deutsche Hochschule, 1 (1911) 11-12, 122-125;
Oskar Scheuer, Vom jungen Bismarck, in: Deutsche Hochschule, 2 (1912) 5, 41-43; Oskar Scheuer, Richard
Wagner über die Burschenschaft, in: Deutsche Hochschule, 5 (1915) 5-6, 31.
\textsuperscript{54} Oskar Scheuer, Richard Wagner als Student, Vienna 1920; Oskar Scheuer, Heinrich Heine als Student, Bonn
1922; Oskar Scheuer, Friedrich Nietzsche als Student, Bonn 1923; Oskar Scheuer, Theodor Körner als Student,
Bonn 1924.
\textsuperscript{55} Paul Kisch, Deutschösterreich und der Krieg, in: Deutsche Hochschule, 4 (1914) 11-12, 126.
Scheuer printed the names of “the heroes who have died for the Fatherland” on the front page of every issue throughout the war, listing their military ranks as well as the names of their fraternities along with occasional short biographies. He also published the names and fraternities of students who enlisted, as if they were fighting with and for their fraternities rather than for the empire. All mentions of Jewish difference disappeared from Deutsche Hochschule during the war as expressions of patriotism filled the magazine’s pages. Scheuer received the Red Cross Decoration, Second Class, and the Gold Merit Cross with Crown for bravery during the Italian campaign.56 For his part, Paul Kisch became a war correspondent writing anti-Czech propaganda.57 Despite its patriotism, Deutsche Hochschule did not escape the censor’s knife and at least one article entitled “Miscellaneous” was cut at the last minute, the magazine being forced to leave the space blank.58

In June 1919, an article on “Viennese Bibliophiles” mentioned that “Dr. Oskar Scheuer has student literature”, showing that he had by then opened his famous library to the public.59 Totalling 30,000 volumes at its height, Scheuer’s library included fraternity records and membership lists, memoirs, songbooks, poetry, plays, literature, and speeches. It also contained rare unpublished manuscripts dating back to the Wartburg Festival of 1817, when large numbers of fraternity students embraced German nationalism as a core part of their corporate identity.60 When finances forced him to sell his library in 1936, he offered it to the University of Vienna for 25,000 to 30,000 schillings before finally selling it to the University of Würzburg a year later.61

Confronting Anti-Semitism, 1919–1927

In 1919, however, student anti-semitism intensified, marginalising people like Scheuer as student politics reoriented itself around the Deutsche Studentenschaft (German Student Union). This was formed in the wake of the First World War, when students began to feel the need for a single organisation representing students across the German-speaking lands. Student groups from Berlin, Bonn, Frankfurt, Göttingen, and Marburg took place in a “German Student Day” at the University of Frankfurt in 1917, which was followed by another meeting in Berlin the following year.62 Anti-semitic students in Austria began forming their own alliances at the beginning of 1918, and that summer the Liberal fraternities created an association of like-minded groups that could unite around Germanness, liberalism, and a common inclusive position on “the Jewish question”.63 Convinced that Austria’s future lay in joining a greater German state, in November the German fraternities of all political

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57 Petrbok, Der andere Kisch, 79-100, here 87, n. 17.
persuasions gathered at the University of Vienna for a common demonstration, only to see it appropriated by anti-semitic students hoping to limit the numbers of foreign students and teachers at Austrian universities.\textsuperscript{64} Anti-semitic students were making similar demands at the University of Innsbruck in 1918, and that year the University of Graz officially limited the number of 'non-Aryan' students allowed to study there.\textsuperscript{65} Now a university within the Austrian nation-state rather than a regional university within a multinational empire, the University of Graz no longer wished to attract students from non-German backgrounds – such as Hungarians, Romanians, Serbs, and Ukrainians – who had regularly studied in Cisleithanian universities before the war. Conveniently, restricting 'non-Aryans' on the grounds of managing immigration quotas simultaneously gave the university authorities the ability to limit the number of Jewish students, regardless of where they came from. Anti-semitic violence became increasingly common in Austrian – and especially Viennese – universities over the next few years, culminating in a wave of protests in November 1923 which demanded a numerus clausus rule restricting the number of Jewish students at all Austrian universities.\textsuperscript{66}

A decision by the Austrian government in early 1919 to create a new higher education committee further complicated matters. Liberal fraternities such as Fidelitas, which Scheuer belonged to, saw the committee as an attempt to limit the "international" character of the universities, which they believed was also being threatened by the anti-semitic fraternities.\textsuperscript{67} The German Student Union was officially formed in Würzburg in July 1919, claiming to represent students from across Germany, Austria, and Czechoslovakia on 'all patriotic, social, and cultural issues relating to the student body'.\textsuperscript{68} When Jewish and socialist groups protested that they were not being represented by the German Student Union, the governing bodies of Vienna's universities ignored these groups and granted the Union the exclusive right to speak on behalf of all students.\textsuperscript{69} Liberal fraternities in Austria bitterly defended their right to welcome Jewish members if they so wished, and the argument continued well into 1920, although the anti-semites held by far the majority position in the Union.\textsuperscript{70} At the same time, the Liberals maintained a hostile attitude towards Zionist fraternities, which they saw as troublemakers and as deliberately provoking anti-semitic attacks.\textsuperscript{71} Not all previously tolerant fraternities were as principled as Fidelitas. Scheuer had been a member of Allemannia during his time in Prague, and the Graz branch of Allemannia radicalised during 1919, turning solidly anti-semitic after some internal debates.\textsuperscript{72}

\textsuperscript{64} Wiedersehensbummel, in: Fremden-Blatt, 1 December 1918, 5; Scheuer, Die Burschenschaft Fidelitas, 141.
\textsuperscript{66} Die Horty-Buben in Wien, in: Jüdische Korrespondenz, 30 April 1920, 1; Die Universität für zwei Tage ge- sperrt, in: Wiener Morgenzeitung, 28 April 1920, 4; Der Kampf um den Numerus Clausus, in: Wiener Morgenzeitung, 1 November 1923, 3; Der Hochschul-Skandal, in: Wiener Morgenzeitung, 20 November 1923, 3.
\textsuperscript{67} Das Memorandum der national-freiheitlichen Studentenschaft in der Hochschulfrage, 19 February 1919, in: Deutsche Hochschule, 9 (1919) 3–4, March–April, 1.
\textsuperscript{68} Das Erste Jahr, 56.
\textsuperscript{69} Archives of the Universität für Bodenkultur Wien (BOKU), Rektorat der k. k. Hochschule für Bodenkultur in Wien. 1856/19, S. 17. Archives of the Technische Universität Wien (TUW), RZ, 1854/1925–26, S. 24–60.
\textsuperscript{70} Hein, Studentischer Antisemitismus, 73–74.
\textsuperscript{71} Scheuer, Die Burschenschaft Fidelitas, 146–149
Most propaganda from the German Student Union was anti-Semitic. As one pamphlet explained to new members in 1924:

"Life means struggle, and struggle is war. Our liberal bourgeoisie must finally realise that we are in a struggle, that we Germans are fighting and that we are fighting life and death, and that there is therefore no quiet, comfortable, leisurely life! Just as we curse the neglect of the race which drove us into Jewish rule during its night watch, which sold everything to the Jews: citizenship, honour, profession, nobility, daughters, etc., which plunged the German people to the abyss of destruction, just as the coming generation will curse us, that we drive ourselves even deeper into Jewish slavery in shallow disdain and un-German aversion to struggle".73

Fidelitas clashed with some of the more exclusively racist fraternities over the Jewish question, but also over other issues. In 1919, Fidelitas abandoned the designation of association (Verbindung) and reincorporated as a fraternity (Burschenschaft).74 Another fraternity, Olympia, objected on the grounds that only the "traditional" Burschenschaften were allowed to call themselves this.75 Scheuer refuted Olympia’s claim in his 1927 book on the history of Fidelitas, pointing out that it was one of the oldest fraternities in Vienna:

“The present-day fraternity of Fidelitas was founded on 1 October 1876. Until then, just fifty colour-bearing corporations had tried to gain a firm foothold on the floor of Viennese universities. Only fifteen of them succeeded in doing so, which still exist and flourish today. Fidelitas is the sixteenth conservative student body in Vienna”.76

Scheuer also quoted a satirical distinction from 1879 which suggested that "the Corps believe that the Fatherland is that place where it is best to be hooligans, whereas the Burschenschaften are of the opinion that it is best to be a hooligan where the Fatherland is".77 There was, that is, not a big difference between Corps, Verbindungen, and Burschenschaften: all were oriented first and foremost towards German nationalism and cherished the freedom to misbehave when it suited them.78 Tensions between Fidelitas and the anti-Semitic fraternities had been simmering since 1896, when a number of anti-Semitic fraternities signed the Waidhof Decision of 1896, stating that Jews could not fight duels because they did not understand the concept of honour, thus striking at a core element of fraternity culture.79 Part of the problem in 1919 was that Fidelitas stood alongside those who resisted attempts to exclude Jews from the German Student Union. When the Reading and Speaking Hall of German Students in Vienna attempted to oppose “the increasing politicisation of university life by student parties organised along the lines of ‘race’ or class”, it soon found itself without a place to meet.80 Fidelitas came to its rescue by offering its own restaurant to

73 Kreis VIII (Deutschösterreich) der Deutschen Studentenschaft, Programm für das kommende Studienjahr 1924/25, Vienna 1924, 3.
74 Archives of the Universität Wien (UW), Dosar Akademischer Senat der Universität Wien, Zl. 742/1918-19.
75 Ibid., Zl. 1004/1919-20.
76 Scheuer, Die Burschenschaft Fidelitas, 9 f.
77 Ibid., 11.
80 TUW, Fond Vereinen, Dosar Lese- und Rede halle deutsche Studenten in Wien (national-freiheitlicher), f. 19, 36.
the Hall, but this could only be temporary as the fraternity also needed the space for its own events.81

The intensification of anti-semitism with the fraternities forced Scheuer to shift his attention from attacking Zionists to combatting student anti-semitism head on. He followed his 1926 study of Fidelitas with a book entitled Fraternities and the Jewish Question: Racial Antisemitism in the German Student Union (1927), which expanded on an argument he had first made in 1914, namely that the Austrian student movement had not been anti-semitic before 1883.82 Rhetoric about ‘Christendom’ was central to the fraternities of the early nineteenth century, Scheuer claimed, but never extended to excluding Jews. Scheuer wrote history both out of antiquarian interests, such as with his 1914 history of the hat, and in order to undermine claims to historical right being made in the present.83 He insisted that, “[i]f today German fraternities invoke an anti-semitism that supposedly already prevailed in the primordial fraternity, this vocation is a historical lie. At the time, neither theoretically nor practically was there any trace of modern racial anti-semitism.”84 Scheuer maintained that anti-semitism had infiltrated Austrian fraternities during the early 1880s, coming from sources based outside of the universities, a conclusion also reached by more recent historians such as Robert Hein.85 “Not only was there no antisemitism in the German fraternities at the end of the seventies”, Scheuer wrote.

“[i]here was no Jewish Question in the German universities at all. The Corps had numerous Jews who were faithful brothers and staunch fences. A new anti-Jewish movement was encouraged in Germany only a few years after the foundation of the Reich, based on widespread antisemitic propaganda. Its presence in public life soon ebbed, but it had a long-lasting effect on the universities, above all through its spread into Austria.”86

Scheuer argued that the racist fraternities had abandoned the values and traditions of the fraternity movement when they embraced anti-semitism. “Antisemitism and its activity under the sign of the swastika is nothing more than the expression of an opposition to freedom and the symbol of a retrogressive party principle”, he stated, suggesting that only Fidelitas and the other Liberal fraternities were maintaining the authentic spirit of the fraternity movement.87

Conclusion

Scheuer turned his back on the polemics surrounding Jewish difference at the end of the 1920s, shifting his attention again to studies on sexuality. Anti-semitism had made it impossible for him to cultivate his public persona as a German liberal through the fraternities, leaving him free to embrace the ‘Jewish’ science of sexology once again. Scheuer’s first book on the topic, The Love Life of the German Student in the Course of Time (1920), had been a contribution to what he called “sexual psychology” and appeared alongside other pioneering works of psychoanalysis, such as Sieg-

81 Letter to the Rector, 1 November 1924, ibid., f. 42-44.
83 Oskar F. Scheuer, Der Hut und seine Geschichte. Eine kulturgeschichtliche Monographie, Vienna 1914.
85 Hein, Studentischer Antisemitismus, 78.
86 Scheuer, Burschenschaft und Judenfrage, 38.
87 Ibid., 68.
fried Placzek’s *Friendship and Sexuality* (1917) and Enoch Heinrich Kisch’s *The Sexual Infidelity of Women* (1917). Scheuer investigated the role of schools as institutions in shaping adolescent sexuality, the impact of medieval Christianity and the Reformation, as well as problems of early modern students visiting “disreputable houses” or engaging in “virgin robbery”. Once it reached the twentieth century, the book focussed increasingly on the problem of venereal disease and of how to properly educate young people about sex. Scheuer wrote extensively about sexuality from 1928 onwards, working together with Felix Leopold Wangen on the sexuality of corpulent women in *The Luscious Woman* (1928), with the essayist Rudolf Lothar on “The Moral History of Cuddling” (1928), and with the novelist Otto Soyka on the sense of touch (1930), alongside one of Scheuer’s major works, *Intimate Advice: The Sex Lives of Women*.91

Lest we create too stark a contrast between the ‘German’ Scheuer who wrote about the masculine world of student fraternities and the ‘Jewish’ Scheuer who studied the secrets of female eroticism, an insightful article written in 1910 by his wife, Emmy Scheuer, reminds us that women played important roles in fraternity life as well. Speaking of “the old wife” (die alte Frau – a play on the term for a man who remained connected to the fraternities after graduation, ein alter Herr), she wrote about playing a maternal role to young men in the fraternities, introducing them to life “in the big city” and teaching them how to dress and behave like gentlemen.92 Her comments suggest that both Scheuer and his wife were more than just publicists and writers. By making his library available to students and by publicising their events through his magazine, Scheuer remained actively engaged in the social life of the fraternity, serving as a mentor as well as a mouthpiece for the students. Ultimately, the hegemony of exclusive, violent anti-Semitism closed this outlet for Scheuer’s German nationalism to him entirely. After being forced to sell his library for financial reasons during the late 1930s, he and his wife were deported to the Łódź Ghetto on 19 October 1941, paying 125 Reichsmarks for the journey.93 The Viennese police later assumed that he died in Auschwitz, but reliable records of his place of death are not available.94

Negotiating Jewish difference preoccupied Scheuer between 1913 and 1927, when he published his first attacks on Vienna’s Zionists and then on his fraternity’s anti-Semitic rivals. Yet, despite what his publications suggest, it was not only through Jewish difference that he identified socially and politically. His boyhood friend Karl Hans Strobl, who moved steadily towards Nazism during the 1920s, dedicated a poem to Scheuer on his fiftieth birthday. Entitled “Oskar Scheuer through Fifty Semesters of Life” (1926), the poem showed that some friendships transcended politics

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88 Both books were among those advertised at the end of Scheuer’s work. Siegfried Placzek, *Freundschaft und Sexualität*, Bonn 1917; Enoch Heinrich Kisch, *Die sexuelle Untreue der Frau*, Bonn 1917.
90 Ibid., 62 ff.
93 Arolsen Archives, International Center on Nazi Persecution, Deportation List Vienna, 19 October 1941, f. 1; Dokumentationsarchiv des österreichischen Widerstandes, Auszug aus der Transportliste, Wien/Litzmannstadt, 19 October 1941, f. 23.
and that Jewish difference was not everything. Scheuer’s life and writings help complicate our vision of Austrians of Jewish descent by demonstrating that identities were complex at the best of times and inscrutable at others. For people like Oskar Scheuer and Paul Kisch, wholeheartedly embracing German nationalism was not enough to save them from the gas chambers of Auschwitz, but it did place them at the heart of bitter nationalist debates over what it meant to be Austrian in the early years of the First Republic.

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95 Gatscher-Riedl, Wien als frühes Zentrum, 11-32, here 22.
Paula Oppermann

Everyday Anti-Semitism in Interwar Latvia
Experiences and Expressions through the Lens of Oral History

Abstract

This article examines forms of anti-semitism in interwar Latvia. Based mainly on testimonies from Jewish and non-Jewish witnesses, it investigates how exclusionary practices by non-Jews were expressed and impacted on people in their everyday life. Latvia had no anti-semitic legislation in the 1920s and 1930s, but state structures facilitated societal anti-semitism, which was more widespread than scholarship has recognised. The Jews in Latvia were affected regardless of societal standing, linguistic, or religious affiliation. Animosities existed among all ethnic groups to a degree, but attacks against Jews were of a different quality. Despite frequent interaction which sometimes turned into ‘inter-ethnic’ affection, the majority of society did not perceive the Jews as fellow compatriots.

Introduction

When asked about their youth in Latvia before World War II, Jewish1 survivors of the Holocaust often articulated diametrically opposed memories. While Frank Gordon recalled that “the two decades of independent Latvia’s existence are remembered by both Latvians and Jews as the ‘good years’”;2 Ruvin Fridman was convinced that anti-semitism “was taken as part of the – of the – of, of the scene … We never felt in Eastern Europe, no Jew ever felt that he was home, never”.3 How can two men who were born in the same decade and grew up in the same city express such different memories of their home country?

The question about the level, quality, and endurance of anti-semitism in Latvia before World War II has been tackled by historians for decades. The phenomenon has too often, however, been marginalised as a pretext to the events that followed during the Soviet and German occupations. Those scholars who have investigated interwar anti-semitism have mostly focussed on the radicalisation of political elites. This article examines forms and expressions of anti-semitic attitudes among the Latvian general public and how or whether exclusionary practices impacted on people in their everyday lives.

1 Defining people through the ethnic categories of ‘Jews’, ‘Germans’ or ‘Latvians’ is problematic, but the terms will be deployed here according to how the witnesses defined themselves and others. I thereby follow Max Weber’s approach, which does not try to discuss whether ethnic communities exist but acknowledges the fact that people perceive themselves as being part of these. Max Weber, Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft. Grundriss der Verstehenden Soziologie. Zwei Teile in einem Band. Die Zweitausendems Klassiker-Bibliothek, Frankfurt am Main 2010, 307. Since Weber, the discussions about ethnicity and race have exploded, but his approach is still acknowledged by experts in the field. Rogers Brubaker, Ethnicity, Race, and Nationalism, in: Annual Review of Sociology 35 (2009) 1, 21-42.
2 Frank Gordon, Latvians and Jews between Germany and Russia, Stockholm 1990, 15-16.
Historiography and Research Questions

When research on the Holocaust and its prehistory in the Baltics intensified in the 1990s, it was argued that the majority society had been indifferent or positive towards the Jews before World War II. Andrew Ezergailis assumed so because, after Latvia established its independence in 1918, there was little physical violence, no anti-Jewish legislation, and Latvia welcomed refugees from Germany and the annexed territories after 1933. Margers Vestermanis considered anti-semitism to have been mainly an urban phenomenon among intellectuals. Katrin Reichelt saw a fragile, but mostly friendly, coexistence among Jews and Latvians and claimed that anti-semitism was usually limited to verbal attacks. This rather harmonious picture was not drawn by Aivars Stranga and Leo Dribins, who provided studies about anti-semitism and Jews in Latvia and revealed waves of violence during the Latvian War of Independence from 1918 to 1920. They also illustrated the rise of anti-semitic organisations from the mid-1920s and analysed anti-semitic newspapers that were widespread before the coup d’etat of the nationalist Farmers’ Union of Kārlis Ulmanis in 1934. The two scholars emphasised that, while Latvians historically had a negative attitude towards Germans, only Jews became victims of physical violence.

Recognising that Latvia was not free of anti-semitism, scholars attempted to qualify the kind of anti-semitism that was to be found in Latvia in the interwar period. Vestermanis emphasised the economic greed of the Latvian bourgeoisie. Dribins defined a political, religious, and economic anti-semitism among intellectual circles, and Aivars Stranga elaborated on the difference between the racial anti-semitism of the Latvian fascists and the political anti-semitism of the authoritarian regime. Matthew Kott examined how the fascist organisation Pērkonkrusts (Thunder Cross) that was founded in the early 1930s based its ideology on a Völkisch racism and anti-semitism. Inesis Feldmanis scrutinised the anti-semitism of the Baltic German National Socialist movement after Hitler gained power in Germany. These works provide an essential understanding of mechanisms of Latvian politics in the interwar period, but they deal mostly with intellectuals.

One reason for this focus on public intellectuals and politicians is that the most frequently used sources – newspapers and official documents – mainly illustrate dis-

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6 Ibid., 80.
8 Katrin Reichelt, Lettland unter deutscher Besatzung 1941–1944. Der lettische Anteil am Holocaust (= Dokumente, Texte, Materialien 78), Berlin 2011, 37–52.
10 Dribins, Antisemitisms, 85.
11 Vestermanis, Der lettische Anteil, 438.
12 Svetlana Bogojavlenska summarised the discussion among historians about the level and nature of Latvian anti-semitism in her book Die jüdische Gesellschaft in Kurland und Riga. 1793–1915, Paderborn 2012, 2–3.
courses among an elite and its attempts to approach an audience.\textsuperscript{15} The use of testimonies has often been limited to Jewish memoirs and remains very focussed on published autobiographies. These tend to represent selected perceptions of the mostly German-speaking, intellectual middle class.\textsuperscript{16} Many witnesses, however, did not have the means to write about and publish their experiences. In an attempt to make also their voices heard, the use of oral history has become more popular in research on Latvian history. Ilze Boldane and Irena Saleniece studied the attitude of Latvians towards other ethnic groups and based their investigations on interviews. Saleniece concluded that “contemporaries bear witness to the positive attitude of Latvians towards Jews in Latvia before World War II, when these ‘others’ were perceived more as ‘one of us’ than as strangers.”\textsuperscript{17} Boldane came to a similar conclusion that Latvians tended to see Jews as part of their local community since they were very present in social and economic life.\textsuperscript{18} At the same time, however, they perceived them as different – a phenomenon which Boldane calls “citādie savējie”, meaning ‘own others’.\textsuperscript{19}

While these two authors revealed the non-Jewish perspective, Iosif Rochko examined memories of different inhabitants of the city of Daugavpils in the eastern province of Latgale. Non-Jewish witnesses remembered relations as positive, but additional sources document frequent cases of vandalism, street fights, the desecration of cemeteries, and anti-semitism among Latvians as well as Poles.\textsuperscript{20} Rochko’s work demonstrates that memories were diametrically opposed among Jews and non-Jews. Since the focus of his study was on memories of World War II, he only briefly looked into the interwar period. His work is the starting point for this article, which will illustrate the attitude between Latvia’s Jewish and non-Jewish citizens in the 1930s. Beyond exploring individual perceptions, the article will reveal patterns of exclusionary practices in various spheres of everyday life.

**Methodological Implications and Sources**

Oral history projects as efforts to reveal history ‘from below’ have received increasing attention since the 1980s, and historians have come to acknowledge interviews as valuable additional sources.\textsuperscript{21} Conversations with witnesses of past events can provide evidence not contained in official documentation. They can serve to correct information given in other sources and, perhaps most importantly, shed light on how witnesses perceive and describe experiences.\textsuperscript{22} Since it is the aim of this article to

\textsuperscript{15} There are exceptions, such as the broad neglect of a referendum to change the law on citizenship in 1927, which was directed mainly against Jews. Dribins interprets this as evidence that, while it was very present, anti-semitic hate speech was most often not supported by the majority population. Dribins, Antisemītisms, 93.

\textsuperscript{16} In her evaluation of the interwar period, Reichelt relies upon five written memoirs, arguing that others mentioning problems between Jews and Latvians have to be considered with reservations. Reichelt, Lettland, 51.


\textsuperscript{19} Boldāne, Etnisko Stereotipu Veidošanās, 90.

\textsuperscript{20} Iosif Rochko, “Они были нашими соседями…” из истории холокоста в Даугавпилсе [“They Were Our Neighbours …” From the History of the Holocaust in Daugavpils], in: Евреи в меняющемся мире. Материалы 6-й международной конференции [Jews in a Changing World. Materials from the 6th International Conference], Riga 2009, 351-381, here 353.


illustrate how Latvia’s Jewish citizens perceived and interacted with their non-Jewish neighbours, the article is based on a first-hand analysis of oral history interviews, with few additions from secondary literature. In order to gain a nuanced picture, interviews with Jewish and non-Jewish witnesses were juxtaposed. After a thorough examination of interviews from the collections of different institutions, testimonies were selected as case studies if the interviewees were born or grew up in Latvia and if the testimonies provided extended insights into the interviewees’ lives before World War II. Furthermore, a gender balance was desired. Since Latvia was in the interwar period a multi-ethnic state, interviews with witnesses who defined themselves as Russian and Polish were also included.

Twelve interviews from the USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive (VHA) and five from the Fortunoff Archive serve as case studies in this article. The VHA has become one of the largest and most widely used archives of its kind. Its benefits and weaknesses have been discussed extensively. Due to the strict structure, predefined questions, short duration, and sometimes ill-informed interviewers, the conversations often lack depth and space for the witnesses to provide detailed information, problems which were also encountered in the research for this article. On the other hand, the high level of structuring makes the interviews easier to compare. The approach of the Fortunoff Archive, which has only in recent years raised more interest thanks to the digitisation of its collection, is different. The setting and more conversational style of questioning provides the interviewees with space to express what seems important to them, and some interviews even last several hours.

The interviews from the aforementioned collections represent mainly Jewish survivors from the western parts of Latvia. Since it is the aim of this article to provide information about the situation in the whole country, interviews from the eastern region of Latgale have had to be included. Three such interviews were found in the collections of the Jewish Holocaust Centre (JHC) in Melbourne. The interviews were conducted by Philipp Maisel, a Holocaust survivor from Vilna. It was the declared aim of his project not only to document the genocide, but to rescue the “lost world” of Jewish life in Europe. Therefore, Maisel asked detailed questions about Jewish and communal life as well as political events in the years before the war, which made the interviews particularly useful for this article. The conversations are more structured than the Fortunoff Archive interviews but similarly open towards the survivors’ narratives – and equally as long.

In order to understand how differently people experienced coexistence in Latvia before the war, the interviews with Jewish survivors were juxtaposed with interviews with non-Jewish witnesses. Ever since Claude Lanzman depicted Polish peasants in

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23 Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the research was limited to those interviews that were accessible online or had been analysed by the author in previous projects.

24 The Fortunoff Archive does not disclose interviewees’ surnames. Therefore, this article only provides abbreviated surnames when referring to testimonies from this collection. This is not the case with the other archives, which provide full names that are accordingly referred to in this article.

25 A detailed analysis was presented, among others, by Christopher Browning, http://www.cornell.edu/video/holocaust-historian-christopher-browning-starachowice-factory-slave-labor-camp (1 November 2020).

26 Browning also discusses the Fortunoff Archive interviews. For an in-depth study of material from this archive, see: Nikolaus Hagen’s article in this volume.


his film *Shoah*, the role of ‘neighbours’ has received more attention. Among the most well-known undertakings to document non-Jews’ memories of the Holocaust is the project Yahad-In Unum (Together-In One). Under the guidance of the French priest Patrick Debois, the project has since the early 2000s conducted interviews with non-Jewish witnesses. Around the same time, the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM) started a similar project. Its collection “Oral History Interviews of the Latvia Documentation Project” holds more than 70 interviews with non-Jewish witnesses, conducted from 2003 to 2016. It was the declared aim of the project to ask how these people remembered the fate of the Jews in Latvia during the war. The interviewees were of value solely in their role as witnesses of the Holocaust. They were hardly asked about personal loss, fear, forced labour, or other forms of violence that they experienced, or about their life before and after the war. The interviews rarely last longer than an hour. Only nine of these interviews were selected for this article because they contain more information about the interwar period. Despite its deficiencies, the USHMM collection remains one of the few providing information about interactions between non-Jews and Jews from a non-Jewish perspective.

In the USHMM collection, interviewees from the western parts of Latvia and Riga were underrepresented. In order to analyse how non-Jews from these areas remembered the past, other collections were examined. Interviews with non-Jewish and Jewish survivors were retrieved from the collection “Mans dzīvesstāsts” (My Life Story) of the University of Latvia and from the audiovisual collection of the Museum of the Occupation of Latvia in Riga, which have been collected since the 1970s and the 1990s, respectively. The collections contain more than 8,000 interviews and, for this article, four conversations with witnesses from Riga and western Latvia were selected. The interviews are loosely structured and the interviewer gave the interviewees much time to talk about aspects they considered important. Since the witnesses were not directly asked about interactions with Jews, not all interviews contain such information. The interviews thereby reflect whether people mentioned Jews as part of their life stories or not, so sometimes the memories revealed stereotypes, or the lack of such.

A statistical exploration of the source material revealed some implications that require reflection, namely the age of the interviewees and the time of the interview. The majority of the Jewish witnesses were born earlier than the non-Jewish witnesses (Fig. 1). Thus, while the former experienced the war and pre-war periods as adolescents or adults, many of the latter were children. This has an impact on individual perceptions, as children less likely experienced or understood political topics or institutional limitations. On the other hand, recollections of children’s games, schooling, and interactions among parents are highly valuable for the examination of everyday anti-semitism, as will be elaborated.

The collections with non-Jewish interviewees were mostly created in the 2000s, while the first interviews with Jewish survivors date back to the late 1980s (Fig. 2).

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30 http://www.yahadinunum.org (15 November 2020). The interviews from Latvia are not yet accessible and could not be used for this article.
Since the Jewish interviewees were on average older, the age at the time of the interview does not differ considerably between the two groups. Jewish witnesses were on average 77 years old, while the average age of the non-Jewish witnesses was 81. The date of the interview meant, however, that at the time of the earliest interview with a Jewish survivor the war had happened some 40 years before, while for the last non-Jewish interviewee there was a gap of over 70 years. This time span increases the possibility of blurred or superimposed memories.33

Jewish life began in Latvia in the late Middle Ages and was shaped by the distinct circumstances of the different regions. Those Jews in the eastern region of Latgale were in large part refugees who had escaped the pogroms in the south-eastern parts of the Russian Empire. They were often less educated, poorer, and more religious than those in the western region.34

33 Examples of this phenomenon are presented by Nikolaus Hagen in his article published in this volume.
of Kurzeme, whose ancestors came from Poland and Lithuania and, most of all, the German-speaking lands. While the former spoke Yiddish, the latter spoke mainly German. While the German and Jewish upper classes tended to mingle, interaction between ethnic Latvians and Jews happened to a large part in the rural areas, among Latvian farmers and Jewish small traders and artisans.

In the nineteenth century, a small minority of Latvians managed to climb the economic ladder and ended up assimilating into the German elite. Among their descendants were the initiators of Latvian nationalism, which was based strongly on anti-German sentiment. While this nascent Latvian nationalism entailed elements of ethnic nationalism, most of the early Latvian nationalists were not anti-semites. In fact, a considerable number of them were motivated by socialist ideas, and when it came to the revolutionary struggle in 1905, Jewish and Latvian workers rebelled unitedly against the German and Russian ruling elites. From 1918 to 1920, Jewish soldiers fought together with Latvians for independence, and Jewish representatives convened at the constitutional assembly in 1918. Jews contributed to the building of the new state, which granted cultural autonomy to its national minorities. In the interwar Republic of Latvia, Jews ran their own political and cultural organisations, had their own schools, and Jewish politicians were members of parliament. Holocaust survivors from Riga and from western Latvia in particular remembered a vivid Jewish social life at this time. As noted above, however, Jews remained targets of harassment and violence. Officially there was no anti-semitism in the Republic of Latvia, but regulations and structures offered means of exclusion in state administration and institutions, as the example of the University of Latvia reflects.

**Institutions and Anti-Semitism**

The University of Latvia was established in 1919 and was an essential pillar of state-building. Different to other countries, there was no numerus clausus to prevent non-Latvians from entering higher education and, in fact, Jewish students were proportionately well represented. Anti-semitism was nevertheless present at the university. It culminated in December 1922, when Latvian students attacked and harassed Jewish classmates and collected more than 2000 signatures from students to

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35 The refugees were not allowed to settle there.
36 Bogojavlenska, Die jüdische Gesellschaft, 259.
37 Kott, Roots of Radicalism, 260-261.
40 Kott, Roots of Radicalism, 285.
42 Dribins, Latvijas Ebreju Kopienas.
43 VHA, Shoshana Kahn, Interview 16106, Segment 4-6, 1996 (23 November 2020); Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies (FVA), Eva G., Holocaust Testimony, 8 December 1988 (15 November 2020); Jewish Holocaust Centre (JHC), Jascha Landman, Survivor Testimony, Interview by Phillip Maisel, 29 April 1993, JHCAV00336, Phillip Maisel Testimonies Project (20 November 2020).
44 For the role of the University of Latvia in state-building, see Per Bolin, Between National and Academic Agendas. Ethnic Politics and 'National Disciplines' at the University of Latvia 1919–1940 (= Södertörn Studies in History 51), Huddinge 2012.
demand a limit on the number of Jewish students at the university.\(^{45}\) Considering that, in October 1922, 4,213 students at the university were ‘ethnically’ Latvian, the number of signatures collected was a significant outcome.\(^{46}\)

A numerus clausus was never completely introduced, but restrictions for students who had not been citizens before 1919 and language tests were applied. This resulted in a decrease of Jewish students – many of whom spoke German or Russian as their native language – from twelve per cent in 1922 to nine per cent in 1923 and 1924.\(^{47}\) Also, the implementation of oral exams exacerbated the situation for Jews, as there was little control over the decisions of the examiners, such as those of the professor of linguistics Juris Plāķis.\(^{48}\) Plāķis was an ardent anti-semite and very popular among the Latvian fraternities. As in other countries,\(^{49}\) the fraternities played a major role in anti-semitic activities, for example by excluding the Jewish fraternities from their umbrella organisation.\(^{50}\) Outside of the fraternity circles, it seems that life on campus was shaped by indifference among Jewish and non-Jewish students. Zelda-Rivka Hait recalled that, during her studies, she was only with Jewish students because Latvians were all anti-semitic and the two groups had nothing in common.\(^{51}\)

The passive exclusion of Jews also permeated other sectors of public life, and the situation in the army and state institutions stands out in survivors’ memories. The interviewees often recalled the years after the coup d’état of Kārlis Ulmanis, the leader of the nationalist Farmers’ Union. After taking power on 15 May 1934, Ulmanis established an authoritarian regime, nationalised businesses, introduced strict censorship of the media, and incarcerated political opponents from the left and the right. Jewish life was severely impacted by the nationalisation politics of the regime, but at the same time Ulmanis established strict measures against anti-semitic activities and closed chauvinist periodicals.\(^{53}\) The discussion about the character of Ulmanis’ regime and the impact on Jewish life is ongoing,\(^{54}\) and it is also reflected in the survivors’ memories.

Bernhard Press, who was born in Riga in 1917, summarised that anti-semitism in Latvia

“was rather that the Jews were separated from the rest of the life of the state. That is, they could have their schools, practice their religion, have their newspapers, have theatres, and so on and so on. But they could not work in the public service; there were practically, with very few exceptions, no Jewish

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46 Bolin, Between National, 138.
47 Ibid., 158.
52 FVA, Isaac Z., Holocaust Testimony, 1 August 1990 (2 December 2020).
53 Stranga, Kārļa Ulmaņa Režīms.
54 Aivars Stranga notes that, while Ulmanis’ politics were not outwardly anti-semitic, his private writings reflected increasing radicalisation against Jews. Ibid.
police officers, no Jewish post employees, no judges, no doctors in, in state – state hospitals … So they were excluded from public life.”

Other survivors also noted the absence of Jews in state positions and the fact that there was just one Jewish policeman in the whole of Latvia. Margers Vestermanis, born in Riga in 1925 and a pioneer of Holocaust research in Latvia, remembered that “for the only time in the history of Latvia, which then existed already for 20 years, in the independent state, there was only one Jewish policeman, a participant of the War of Independence, as it was called at the time. The boys ran after him: ‘look, a Jew, a Jewish cop!’”

The absence of Jews in state positions has been confirmed by scholars. Andrew Ezergailis considered the explanation to lie in the fact that recruitment for the civil service was based on nepotism within the Latvian fraternities, and because of this other minorities were also underrepresented. The absence of Jewish policemen in particular caused insecurity among the Jewish community, especially as the Latvian police was not free of anti-Jewish sentiment. It especially monitored Jewish activities and would sometimes, instead of helping Jews, arrest them when they were in trouble with local anti-semites. “You could feel it [anti-semitism] everywhere, if you had to go to a police station, or – everywhere you could feel it”, remembered Yakob Basner.

The examples provided reflect that, although officially the Latvian state granted equality and freedom to the Jewish minority, there were public spheres that they could not enter. The political structure gave way for individual and social anti-semitic deeds, but not all survivors would later recall this. Such ‘forgetting’ results from the hidden character of this anti-semitism, but it might also be explained by the age of the interviewees. For those who were children in the interwar period, other forms of exclusion were much more present.

Social Interaction and Social Anti-Semitism

Many memories were connected to school and education. The school system in Latvia was shaped by its mixed character: cultural autonomy for the minorities entailed supervision of schools, so next to the state-run schools there were those teaching in German, Hebrew, or Russian. Parents’ choice of a school was influenced not only by religious or linguistic affiliations. Frank Gordon, for example, went to the prestigious Riga French Lycée, a state school that was attended by children from various backgrounds.

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62 Basner. Interview. Segment 16-17.
63 Mendelsohn, The Jews, 251.
64 Gordon, Latvians and Jews, 20.
send their children to schools with German as the main language of instruction. For many of those among the German-speaking Jewish upper-middle class circles in Kurzeme and Riga who considered themselves as part of the German culture, it was also a natural choice.65

Jewish interviewees think of their time in German schools overall positively, but they also mention experiences of anti-semitism. Jazeps Eiduss was on good terms with his German classmates in a prestigious German gymnasium. Nevertheless, he and his Jewish peers were reminded regularly by teachers that “you are only guests in this school and you should behave like guests.”66 Other witnesses remembered the radicalisation after the rise of the Nazi Party in Germany. Morris Halle attended the First German Primary School in Riga. He recalled that there were always “small problems”, but that his parents considered this the “introduction to life” for him. After 1933, however, it got so bad that his parents decided to send him to a Jewish school.67 None of the survivors provide details about what was done to them, but Percy Gurwitz recalled that “a ring of icy cold soon closed around the Jews, which made it unbearable for them to stay.”68

The rise of the National Socialist ideology in German schools coincided with the establishment of the authoritarian regime in Latvia. After the coup d’état in May 1934, all schools were centralised under one administrative body that oversaw education politics. The minorities were allowed to send one representative to this council. This was a problem for the Jewish community, which was not only linguistically heterogenous but also had different religious and political currents. Beforehand, different Jewish schools had taught different interpretations of Judaism. Now they could only send one representative from the Agudas Jisroel (Union of Israel), a conservative religious organisation. After the coup, it was the only Jewish body that was allowed to operate and to organise Jewish school life.69 Agudas Jisroel represented a minority in the Jewish community, and some liberal parents preferred to send their children to Latvian schools instead.70 There, the children were also targets of anti-semitic bullying. A non-Jewish witness recalled that they would make fun of them and that some pupils did not want to sit next to a Jew.71

The majority of Jewish children attended schools that were under the supervision of the Jewish community.72 Sometimes they were attacked by pupils from Latvian schools. Ruvin Fridman remembered that “we would not dare walk in the street with a kippa, we had a cap. We put on a, a – every school had its own student cap, you know – the, the, just some gentile kids would pass by and tear down, you know, the, the cap, and calling us ‘you dirty Jew’, and give us a smack, or a kick, or – and chase us.”73

68 Gurwitz, Zähl nicht nur; 20; Hait, Interview, Segment 12.
69 Karlis Ulmanis and the leader of Agudas Jisroel were on good terms. Stranga, Kārla Ulmaņa režīms.
70 Stranga, Kārla Ulmaņa režīms.
72 Mendelsohn, The Jews of East Central Europe, 251.
73 Fridman, Interview, Segment 29.
Others shared this experience of harassment and attacks, and of being called ‘dirty Jew’ in public. Harry Daniller remembered that when he was ten or eleven years old, Latvian youngsters attacked him and his friends in a park in Riga, and older Jewish boys had to help them. A witness from Liepaja remembered that members of the Pērkonkrusts harassed Jewish men on the streets. Pērkonkrusts supporters also attacked Jewish youth camps and members of the Zionist movement.

Zionists were targeted because they symbolised for Latvian nationalists the idea that Jews were not loyal to the Latvian state, a trope present since the early days of the Republic of Latvia. That perception manifested itself in everyday life situations. For example, Yacob Basner grew up in a Yiddish-speaking household and only learned Latvian at school. When he was five years old, he had to go to hospital and did not understand what the Latvian nurse told him. She got angry and, according to Basner’s mother, shouted in Latvian: “don’t know Latvian - go to Palestine!”

Zionism did indeed gain increasing popularity in Latvia in the interwar period, which was also due to the fact that Jews did not feel accepted by the majority society. Jazeps Eiduss recalled how his cousin turned towards Zionism in the late 1930s and left for Palestine:

“But he later told me that he had wanted to be Latvian with all his heart. He thought in Latvian, he joined the scouts, but at some point he realised that he was treated well, but Latvians would never consider him his own. He would never become a Latvian, and then he turned over, and he became – ‘I am a Jew and I will be a Jewish nationalist’. He says he did the right thing, because there he was recognised as [among] his own. In Latvia he was not [among] his own.”

Zelda-Rivka Hait expressed her feelings towards Zionism similarly. As a student, she was an ardent Zionist, and this was why during her studies she had no non-Jewish friends. She recalled that all she wanted was to finish her education and go to Palestine, and this dream she could not share with non-Jews. About Latvians she said: “I could not find any common language with Latvians, I knew they were antisemitic and there was nothing to talk with them about.” She also referred to the anti-semitic Latvian folk songs. Other sources confirm her memory of a folk song that nationalists used to sing with the altered text “throw the Jews into the river” instead of “throw the nets into the river”.

Hait’s feeling of a general and omnipresent anti-semitism was shared by other survivors. Some considered it harmless while others viewed it more seriously, as the quotation by Ruvin Fridman cited at the start of this article demonstrates. Non-Jew-

74 JHC, Vitali Wotinsky, Survivor Testimony, 00:13-00:20, Interview by Freda Hodge, 24 March 2016, JHCAVA4189; VHA, Ernest Jacobs, 45220, Segment 22, Interview by Joanna Buchan, 21 June 1998 (6 January 2021); VHA, Sam Zelikson, 8002, Segment 7, Interview by Leslie Fass, 26 October 1995 (6 January 2021).
75 VHA, Harry Daniller, 19008, Segment 8, Interview by Marcie Goodman, 20 August 1996 (18 December 2019).
76 FVA, G., Interview, Segment 3.
77 VHA, Gilel’ Gordin, 6416, Segment 15, Interview by Irena Motkin, 9 November 1995 (2 February 2020).
78 Oppermann, More Than a Means.
80 Basner, Interview, Segment 16.
81 NMV, Eiduss, 1789.
82 Hait, Interview, Segment 23.
83 Ibid.
84 Vestermanis, Der lettische Anteil, 440-441.
85 Gordon, Latvians and Jews; VHA, Frieda Ende, Segment 3-5, 775, Interview by Tina E. Tito, 1 February 1995 (18 February 2020).
ish witnesses also confirmed that “of course … without the [German] occupation this would never have happened, but in principle, there was antisemitism here”, as Nikolajs Neilands from Riga remembered.86

Anti-semitism and prejudices could exist parallelly or together with friendship and trust. Since children went to different schools, ‘mixed’ friendships often developed among neighbours. They were remembered by Jewish and non-Jewish witnesses. David P. grew up in Riga. He recalled that, in general, Latvians were known as anti-semites, but he never experienced anti-semitism himself, and he played with his Latvian friends every day.87 Jacob Basner’s two best friends were Latvian boys living next door, they even spoke a little Yiddish.88 Avram S. from Jekabpils remembered that his Latvian friends came to visit him and eat apple kugel.89 Frieda Ende’s best friends were twins from a Baltic German family next door.90 Zofia Zuyeva, from a village in eastern Latvia, was friends with the sons of a Jewish family and their parents were very close. A certain Mr. Rivkin lent her family money so they could buy land, and the families maintained their friendship beyond World War II.91 Vladislav Gaga, from the small eastern town of Viški, talked about how his parents played cards with their Jewish friends, and about how one Jewish friend taught his mother to play the guitar.92 Marjans Barščeviskis, from a Polish family in the same village, remembered that after high holidays the Jewish neighbours brought food to share.93

Friendship proved not to be an ultimate bulwark against anti-semitism: Several witnesses expressed disappointment about Latvian friends who turned their backs on them when the Germans invaded Latvia in 1941.94 There were, however, also examples of solidarity, especially among people who had been very close to each other. The case of Frieda Ende from Liepaja is an extreme example of the potential of personal affection. After Ende’s father had died, her family experienced financial difficulties and rented a room to a Latvian lodger, a Pērkonkrusts member. Asked whether he did not have a problem living with Jewish people, Ende remembered “no, he thought we were the nicest people”. He used to eat together with them and kiss her mother on the cheek. After the Germans occupied Latvia, this man would save their lives twice.95

Ende’s saviour was an exception and rescuing her did not stop him from collaborating in the murder of others. Most Pērkonkrusts members in 1941 did not help Jewish people known to them, as the example of Maly Kohn shows. Kohn attended a teachers’ college before the war. She had Pērkonkrusts members among her colleagues there, and they would always reassure her that “Maly, for us you do not have
to be worried, because we all will look after you." 96 Under German occupation, a Pērkonkrusts member tried to abduct – and potentially rape – her, but a German officer stopped him. The Latvian later returned to the Kohns’ house, took their jewellery, and abused her parents. 97

The cases of Kohn and Ende reflect how in some cases the level of affection and interaction was pivotal for the development of relationships between Jews and non-Jews. In a country as multi-ethnic as Latvia, interaction among the groups was inevitable, but close relationships were rare. This is best reflected at the level of inter-marriage, which remained very low among all ethnic groups in the country. 98 If it happened, the couple involved was a target of gossip and raised eyebrows. 99 Relations between Jews and non-Jews therefore most often remained on a professional level.

**Economic Interaction and Anti-Semitism**

Marģers Vestermanis emphasised that economic anti-semitism developed among the Latvian bourgeoisie from the end of the nineteenth century, as they perceived the Jews as competitors. 100 Others noted that Jews disproportionately owned many businesses and were therefore targets of anti-semitism. Due to the historical situation of being restricted in settlement and profession, Jews were indeed overrepresented in free enterprises and industry. 101 At the same time, however, more than ten per cent were living below the poverty line, 102 and the majority of their businesses were village shops or retail trade. Particularly in the nationalist media, however, Jews were depicted as rich capitalists and exploiters. 103 This image was widespread among the Latvian population. Isaac Z.’s memory shows that the notion of the ‘cunning Jew’ was engrained already in childhood:

“One thing that stands out in my memory is that when I was a child, when my father was working for a while in a Jewish credit cooperative, I was eligible to participate in a summer camp. This was a summer camp with mostly Latvian children and very few Jewish children. And I remember feeling very hurt when some Latvian children were – they asked me ‘where does your father work?’ And I said: ‘he works in a bank’. And then they asked: ‘what kind of bank?’ And I said: ‘in a Jewish bank’. And then a Latvian child said: ‘Oh, then he steals only from Jews’. I remember being very hurt by their assuming and believing that my father was a thief when I knew he was a very honest man.” 104

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96 VHA, Maly Kohn, 36613, Segment 8, Interview by Shauna Sherker, 18 September 1997 (7 January 2021).
97 Ibid., Segment 33-26.
98 Ezergailis, The Holocaust in Latvia, 69.
99 Gurwitz, Zähl nicht nur, 10; Museum of the Occupation of Latvia, Ēriks Kārkliņš, Interview by Lelde Nei mane, 23 May 2012, OMF 2300/2593-2596.
100 Vestermanis, Der lettische Anteil, 438-439.
104 FVA, Z., Interview, Segment 2.
In the interviews, non-Jewish interviewees did not mention such stereotypes, although many remembered interaction with Jews mainly within the sphere of trade. As in other countries, Jewish peddlers connected the urban centres and the periphery.105 In some villages, there was just one shop. Many non-Jewish witnesses recalled that in the Jewish shops one could always buy on credit and pay once the salary arrived.106 Some remembered that Jews and non-Jews worked together in the shoe-making business.107 and one Latvian interviewee said that, due to such interaction, his father knew some Yiddish.108 Irena Saleniece considers the knowledge of Yiddish to be a sign that Latvians valued their Jewish business partners.109 Multilingualism was common in interwar Latvia, so many of the interviewees spoke various languages at home and with their friends.110 Zina Edelstein’s family owned a small shop in Daugavpils, and she often helped her mother in the store; she learned Russian from the customers.111 Edelstein did not recall anti-semitic incidents in her interview, but children of other shopkeepers did. Isaac Z., whose father had a shop in Livani, told the interviewer that one day they found notes on the steps of their store which said “down with traitors.”112 Leaflets and writings on the walls and windows of Jewish shops are documented in other sources. The members of Pērkonkrusts in particular regularly disseminated these all over the country and called for a boycott of Jewish shops.113

Such calls for boycotts were an embodiment of economic anti-semitism. They were, however, not mentioned in the interviews. The anti-semitism described by witnesses was expressed within economic interactions but not always based on economic considerations. This was discovered by Irena Saleniece. She found frequent mentions of Jewish peddlers visiting villages and staying with local peasants overnight. In one interview, a non-Jewish woman recalled Latvian youngsters blindfolding a Jewish peddler who was sleeping on their oven. When the interviewer asked her whether he became angry with them, the witness said that the boys had just been joking and that she thinks that, in the end, he was just happy to see again.114

This example reveals the imbalance in evaluating anti-semitism among Jewish and non-Jewish witnesses. The statistics support this: out of 39 interviews with Jewish witnesses, 37 remember anti-semitism in one form or another being expressed by Latvians or Germans. In 44 interviews with non-Jews, two rendered the attitude towards Jews as problematic.115 As implicated above, not all non-Jews were asked about this topic, but the results show that prejudices, hatred, and exclusion remained a problem for those who were targeted. Their perception of interaction paints a different picture than Saleniece’s116 and Boldāne’s117, who claim that non-Jews saw the Jews as part of their communities.

105 This applied to both eastern and western Latvia. Bogojavlenska, Die jüdische Gesellschaft, 55-56.
109 Saleniece, Latviešu rakstura iezīmes, 312.
110 Landman, Interview, 04:00-05:00, Viskovatovs, Interview, 03:00-07:00.
111 Edelstein, Interview, 07:00-09:00.
112 Z., Interview, Segment 2.
113 Oppermann, More Than a Means.
114 Saleniece, Latviešu rakstura iezīmes, 313-314
115 The interviews were retrieved from the abovementioned collections, but not all are presented in this article.
116 Saleniece, Latviešu rakstura iezīmes, 317.
117 Boldāne, Etnisko Stereotipu Veidošanās, 88.
An additional phenomenon that was revealed particularly in descriptions of professional interaction was the parallel existence of prejudices against a group and individual affection. Helena Gerasimova came from a Russian-speaking, very poor family. She worked as a nanny for a wealthy Jewish family in Daugavpils. She recalled:

“I went to look after children all summer. The richest families were Jews. Well and then I went to look after those Jewish children. And you know, from that I suffered a lot because the kids saw me on the street walking with those children. And then when I started going to school in autumn, then these kids always made fun of me for being a Jew-nanny. Well, please! Wouldn’t that hurt you? But I had a very good mistress, by the way. And I went to her every summer.”  

Gerasimova was aware of a general rejection of Jews. She was targeted for ‘fraternising’ with them, as were non-Jewish spouses living in intermarriage. Her sympathy – and potentially financial attraction – nevertheless made her continue working for the family. A similar experience was described by Jazeps Eiduss. His nanny was from a Baltic German family that had lost property and wealth after Latvia gained independence:

“She terribly detested Latvians, terribly. Of course, she did not love Jews either, did not love Latvians. I didn’t feel it on myself, she was, of course, very tactful. She didn’t say any bad word about us, but when she talked about someone else, one could feel it very well. She simply spoke so scornfully. Just as many Latvian families – like – ‘they are Jews what do you want’ – kind of like that. A Jew remains a Jew … There was no talk that they [the Jews] in any way should be exterminated or expelled, but arrogantly. But for Latvians – Latvians had taken away her manors, Latvians were [for her] generally peasants.”

Arrogant attitudes towards Latvians were, according to many Jewish witnesses, also quite common among educated Jews. They looked down on them as uneducated peasants with an underdeveloped culture. Ernest Jacobs grew up in a German-speaking household and his parents had many German friends. Jacobs stated that Latvians were xenophobic and that when the Baltic Germans left in 1939, many of the former were very happy. At the same time, a Jewish witness stated that the Baltic Germans “were the worst by the way. Next to the Latvians.” Such contradictory assertions reveal that Jews could hold prejudices against other ethnic groups based on different experiences of exclusion or inclusion.

**Conclusion**

Earlier research on the coexistence of Jewish and non-Jewish citizens of Latvia in the interwar period either underestimated the level of anti-semitism in the 1920s and 1930s or focussed on the radicalisation of individual groups. Little attention was paid to how anti-semitism was conveyed in daily interactions or to how and whether

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119 NMV, Eiduss, 1789.
120 Z., Interview, Segment 4; Kahn, Interview, Segments 4-5.
121 VHA, Jacobs, Interview, Segment 37.
122 VHA, Daniller, Interview, Segment 11.
Jewish citizens experienced exclusion based on stereotypes. Expressions of everyday anti-semitism are rarely documented in written sources, and oral history has not been used extensively to confront existing perceptions. By making extensive use of interviews and juxtaposing the testimonies of Jewish and non-Jewish witnesses, this article has examined the topic from a new angle. It has thereby provided a more nuanced picture of how Jewish life in Latvia was affected by anti-semitism before World War II.

The analysis has revealed that, while there was no official institutional anti-semitism, the structure of Latvian state bodies provided anti-semites with the chance to oust Jews from certain positions. Not being represented in the state administration and authorities left Jewish citizens with a sense of not belonging to the Latvian state, which many would also remember decades later. The examination also showed that, although being a very heterogeneous group, Jews were targets of anti-semitism all over the country, by offenders from all ethnic groups and on all socio-economic levels. Society in Latvia was ethnically fragmented in general, but Jews were targeted in particular: No other group experienced vandalism and physical attacks based on ethnic belonging.

Non-Jews most often did not consider Latvia’s interwar society as particularly anti-semitic, but nearly all Jewish interviewees remembered anti-Jewish sentiment or activities. Parallel to group-related prejudices, however, the testimonies revealed cases of individual affection beyond ethnic divisions. The majority of the society, though, did not perceive the Jews as fellow compatriots, albeit often claiming the opposite. Anti-Jewish resentment was omnipresent, not only among radicalising anti-semitic students or right-wing politicians. Interviews with ‘ordinary’ citizens of Latvia, Jewish and non-Jewish, revealed that members of different ethnic groups intermingled more frequently and often closer than scholarly literature has so far acknowledged. Still, anti-semitism existed, despite – and not because of a lack of – frequent everyday interaction and entanglement.

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Barbara Törnquist-Plewa

In Search of Transnational and Transcultural Memories of the Holocaust
Examples from Sweden and Poland

Abstract

The memory of the Holocaust has become one of the most salient and fully-fledged transnational collective memories traveling around the world. Most of the scholarship tracing the transnational flows of Holocaust memory representations has focussed on literature, films, and other media products. This lecture, however, instead foregrounds the research on memory practices in specific geographic locations. It aims to demonstrate the transnational dimension of national and local Holocaust memories, as well as to trace how this memory actually travels across national borders and what happens in this process. It also raises the question about the potential of transnational Holocaust memories to produce new stories, new social relations and solidarities. The text presents examples of transnational Holocaust memory at work in two very different localities: the Swedish capital, Stockholm, and the provincial Polish town of Szydłowiec, which prior to the Holocaust was a shtetl. These different sites, when analysed side by side, demonstrate a variety of the trajectories along which memories move across borders. Additionally, in connection with these cases, the paper discusses the extent to which transnational memories are also transcultural – that is, culturally hybrid memories that have a transformative power, enabling people to imagine new communities and new types of belonging.

Transnational Memory – An Introduction

The first two decades of the twenty-first century witnessed a ‘memory turn’ within the humanities and social sciences. The multidisciplinary research area of memory studies was established with its own scholarly journals, publication series, and a worldwide, international organisation, the Memory Studies Association. A consensus exists on the importance of studying social/collective/cultural memories, understood broadly as the representations of the past used by and within social groups and enacting their identities. At the beginning of the ‘memory turn’, scholars focussed very much on national memories, with the nation as the primary unit of investigation. During the second decade of the twenty-first century, however, memory studies have moved beyond such ‘methodological nationalism’, that is, the tendency to see the nation as a kind of ‘natural container’ of collective memory.¹

A clear interest has arisen for studies on how memories are transferred across national borders and how they are mediated and received beyond the communities

that originally produced them. Stories about the past have to some extent always been on the move across cultural and national borders, carried by media that have the capacity to cross borders and by people who move and mediate the stories across borders. However, the scale and the speed of these movements have significantly increased since the 1990s due to the time-space compression caused by new forms of globalised digital communication, large scale mobility across the globe (including mass migration and mass tourism), and transnational capital flows. As a result, the transnational ‘travelling’ of memories has become intensely visible and there is a need to better understand what happens in this process.

One of the most salient, fully-fledged transnational collective memories travelling around the world since the 1980s has been the memory of the Holocaust. As pointed out by a number of scholars, the memory of the Holocaust has a universalist reach and it has become a ‘global memory imperative’ connected with the propagation of human rights. Most of the scholarship tracing the transnational flows of representations of Holocaust memory has focussed on media products such as films, literature, and other texts and images, not least those communicated via the internet. However, in the following presentation, I want to foreground instead the research on memory practices in specific geographic localities and to show how the transnational production of memory works at the local level. More specifically, I will present some results of my research on Holocaust memory conducted in two very different localities: Stockholm, the cosmopolitan capital of Sweden, untouched by the Second World War; and Szydłowiec, a provincial, culturally homogenous Polish town, and a former shtetl that lost the majority of its inhabitants in the Holocaust. By using these two distinct cases, I aim to highlight the multiscale of transnational mnemonic processes and to show a variety of the trajectories along which memories move across the borders. Finally, in the concluding part of this presentation, I will briefly discuss the effects of transnationally mediated memories. Can they generate new stories and new social relations, as proposed by several researchers? Does the notion of ‘transnational memory’ signify a transformation of memory in the direction of enabling new identifications? Or do we need other concepts, such as ‘transcultural memory’, in order to capture the transformative potential of mnemonic encounters across borders?

2 For the concept, see: Astrid Erll, Travelling Memory, in: Parallax 17 (2011) 4, 4-18.
5 My work on this subject, published in several articles and book chapters, was conducted within three collaborative research projects: “The Holocaust and the European Historical Culture”, financed by the Swedish Bank Centenary Foundation; the network project “Transnational Memory Studies”, co-financed by universities in Utrecht, Lund, Konstanz, Frankfurt am Main, and Chicago; and “The Europeanisation of Realms of Memory and the Invention of a Common European Heritage in Poland and Sweden”, financed by the Polish National Science Centre.
6 De Cesaris/Rigney, Transnational Memory, 8.
Contextualising the Swedish Case

During the Second World War, Sweden was not under Nazi occupation: it was allowed to stay neutral for the price of substantial concessions to Germany, such as the transit of German troops and close economic cooperation between the two states. This puts into question Sweden’s moral and political stance in relation to the Holocaust. Admittedly, Sweden undertook rescue actions during the war, saving numerous Danish Jews and also many Norwegian ones. However, anti-semitism had been strong in Sweden before the war and the country’s population did not support the idea of giving asylum to large numbers of Jewish refugees arriving in Sweden from Germany between 1933 and 1939.

For a long time in Sweden, there was a very limited interest for a discussion of these issues as well as of the history of the Holocaust and the Second World War in general. Until the 1990s, the dominant Swedish narrative about the Second World War was that the country had just been an innocent bystander. Indeed, in parallel with the growing interest in Holocaust remembrance in the United States and Europe in the 1980s, a few debates on the question of Swedish complicity took place. However, it was during the process of Sweden’s accession to the European Union (EU) in the years from 1993 to 1995 – the formal accession took place on 1 January 1995 – that the Swedish interest in Holocaust memory was taken to a new level.

Sweden became an EU member state in 1995, at a point when the EU began to turn the Holocaust into a common memory for all of Europe. This was evidenced, among other examples, by the European Parliament’s “Resolution on European and International Protection for Nazi Concentration Camps as Historical Monuments” (1993) and “Resolution on a Day to Commemorate the Holocaust” (1995). Sweden, a newcomer to the EU, quickly took the lead in these politics of memory. In 1997, just two years after its accession to the EU, Sweden’s prime minister Göran Persson initiated the state-sponsored campaign Living History. Its declared purpose was to inform Swedish citizens about the history of the Holocaust and its effects on and meaning for Swedish society. The campaign resulted in the publication and distribution of the book Tell Ye Your Children in 1998. The book recounts, in a popular manner, the history of the Holocaust in Europe from 1933 to 1945, and it was sent out for free to every household in Sweden. It was subsequently also adopted for educational use in five other EU member states, including two post-communist ones, Estonia and Latvia. In 2012, a revised version was published in Sweden with an added chapter on the history of anti-semitism in Sweden and of racial theories that were widespread in the country in the 1920s and 1930s. In 2003, the Living History project was transformed into the Living History Forum, which is financed by the Swedish government and defines itself as a “public authority commissioned to work with issues related to tolerance, democracy and human rights, using the Holocaust and other crimes against...
humanity as its starting point”.10 The remarkable Living History project was not the only Swedish government investment for dealing with the Second World War and the Holocaust. In 1997, the government set up a special commission with the task of investigating what had happened to Jewish assets (such as gold, jewels, and works of art), that had arrived in Sweden during the Holocaust, either sold or deposited into Swedish banks by Nazi Germans. Furthermore, the 1990s saw a substantial wave of books, conferences, memorials, exhibitions, and projects focusing on the Second World War and the Holocaust, many of them with government funding.

The involvement of the Swedish government in Holocaust remembrance was not limited to the domestic, national scene, but it took place at the same time on an international level. In 1998, Prime Minister Persson, together with the American president, Bill Clinton, and the British prime minister, Tony Blair, established the Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research (ITF). In 2000, Persson followed up this initiative by organising the Stockholm International Forum on the Holocaust, a large international conference with the participation of many heads of governments and other prominent politicians from forty-five countries. Persson opened the conference with a speech in which he, inter alia, apologised “on behalf of Sweden for the Swedish policy of concession towards Nazi Germany during the Second World War; a policy that prolonged the war and indirectly contributed to the Holocaust”.11 It was the first official speech acknowledging that Sweden had not been just an innocent bystander. In this way, Sweden officially joined ‘the politics of regret’ and reckoning with the past that has been promoted within the EU since the 1990s.12

The conference resulted in a common declaration in which the heads of government committed themselves to support work aimed at keeping the memory of the Holocaust alive. In the wake of this act, many countries introduced national commemoration days for Holocaust remembrance and gave their support to the ITF. Thus, Sweden was the initiator of the declaration which is perceived as a point at which the remembrance of the Holocaust gained political momentum, making steps towards the Holocaust becoming a ‘universal’ memory.13

In sum, the changes in the Swedish politics of memory concerning the Holocaust and the Second World War may be described as a remarkable journey, from the disinterest rooted in the country’s history as a bystander to a leadership role in promoting the memory of the Holocaust transnationally. With its Holocaust remembrance initiatives, Sweden – as a new EU member state – positioned itself in the European ‘club’ as worthy of its membership, and it strengthened its international image as a country engaged in human rights. Considering this process of the Swedish mnemonic awakening in relation to the Holocaust, it may be argued that Holocaust remembrance in Sweden has been formed under the influence of the EU as a transna-
ional memory actor. At the same time, though, Sweden became one of the transna-
tional carriers of this memory by actively participating in the shaping of the EU’s
politics of memory of the Holocaust and in communicating this politics of memory
worldwide.

A pertinent question that arises in this context is how the transnational memory
of the Holocaust and the Swedish government’s mnemonic activities, as described
above, affected commemorative practices regarding the Holocaust in the public
spaces of Swedish cities and towns. Several examples could be mentioned to illus-
strate that impact but, due to the limit of space, I will elaborate only on two of them,
both from Stockholm.14

Stockholm and the Transnational Memory of the Holocaust

One of the first and most visible material signs indicating Sweden’s engagement in
the memory of the Holocaust has been the erection of the Holocaust Memorial in
Stockholm. The initiative to construct it came from the Association of Holocaust
Survivors in Sweden. The association had for a long time wished to have a public
place for the remembrance and mourning of family members who had perished in
the Holocaust, but it could not afford to pay for the construction of a monument of
proper stature. However, in 1994, when Sweden was on its way to becoming an EU
member state and began to be involved in the EU’s politics of memory, the associa-
tion seized the opportunity to realise its long-planned project. Stockholm’s City
Council and a representative of the Swedish government signalled at this moment
that if the association applied for financial support for the memorial, this would
stand a very good chance of being granted.15 Thus, the application was successful and
the memorial was solemnly unveiled in 1998 by Sweden’s King Carl XVI Gustav.

While Sweden’s involvement in the EU’s politics of memory was behind the deci-
sion for the funding of the memorial, its design also reveals transnational influences.
The memorial is 42 meters long and runs the length of an alley which is named after
Aaron Isaac, the first Jewish immigrant allowed to practice his religion in Sweden in
1781. The memorial begins at the entrance to a synagogue and contains several Jew-
ish motifs (such as a menorah and quotes from the Old Testament). Its main part
consists of seven granite slabs with approximately 8,000 names of victims from the
survivors’ families from all over Sweden. The names are followed by the dates and
places of birth and death of the victims, which is rather unusual for Holocaust me-
morials. The multitude of places all over Europe from which the victims originated
points to the historical European dimension of the commemorated event. Addition-
ally, the monument contains the names of the largest death and concentration camps
in Nazi-occupied Europe. This element was an idea borrowed from the Holocaust
Memorial in Miami,16 which demonstrates the transnational travelling of memory
practices. Moreover, it can be argued that the inscription on the plaque placed on the
monument expresses a mode of remembering that is very much in line with the EU’s

14 For further examples, see: Björn Magnusson Staaf, The White Buses. Creating Remembrance of the Second
World War in Sweden, in: Kowalski/Törnquist-Plewa, The Europeanization of Heritage and Memories, 163-
188.
15 Information obtained by the author from Romuald Wroblewski, one of the main initiators of the Holocaust
Memorial. Törnquist-Plewa, The Europeanization of the Memory, 141.
16 Information obtained by the author from Harry Pommert, then vice-president of the Association of Holo-
caust Survivors in Sweden. Ibid.
and Swedish state’s use of the memory of the Holocaust as a pedagogical and political tool to fight racism and xenophobia. It states the following:

“Don’t forget us! The cries of the six million Jews who during the years 1939–45 were killed by the Nazis and their helpers, echo from these stones. Here are 8,000 named victims whose memory is guarded by the surviving families who were rescued by Sweden. Only with knowledge about the past can we fight racism, anti-Semitism and intolerance [author’s emphasis].”

In 2006, the Holocaust Memorial in Stockholm was extended by an additional construction called “Vägen” (The Way), according to a project by Gabriel Herdevall and Alexander Wolodarski. The aim was to connect the Holocaust Memorial with the monument to Raoul Wallenberg that was opened to the public in 2001 in a nearby square. The Vägen monument consists primarily of a paved road which begins with the following words in English: “These paving stones were taken from the former Jewish Ghetto in Budapest. A gift from the City of Budapest.” The road contains a symbolic railway that leads to a stone globe placed in the nearby Raoul Wallenberg Square. The globe has an inscription that reads: “The road was straight, when Jews were deported to death. The road was winding, dangerous and full of obstacles, when Jews were trying to escape from the murderers.” This inscription, which is in Swedish, is followed by a translation into English and 22 other languages corresponding to the nationalities of the largest groups of Holocaust victims.

According to Sivert Lindblom, who designed the Holocaust Memorial together with Gabriel Herdevall, the memorial’s extension to Wallenberg Square creates “a bridge between Jewishness and Swedishness.” The Holocaust Memorial and the Vägen monument, taken together, speak both about the Jewish tragedy and, by recalling Wallenberg’s actions in rescuing the Budapest Jews, about the Swedish effort to help. Thus, the whole memorial complex has both transnational and national dimensions. First, it is about Swedish-Jewish remembrance and heritage. By accounting for the names of the murdered, it specifically commemorates actual individuals – the relatives of Jews living in Sweden – and not Holocaust victims in general, as many

memorials of this kind otherwise do. Furthermore, due to the addition of the Vägen monument leading to Wallenberg Square, it expresses not only the memory and identity of the Jewish community but of the Swedish nation as a whole. The latter, while admitting its morally problematic wartime position, wants to identify itself today as a champion of human rights in the world. The Vägen monument thus reaffirms this identity by commemorating Wallenberg, a Swedish Righteous among the Nations.

More generally, the remembrance of Wallenberg in contemporary Sweden constitutes the second example of transnational memory flows that I want to elaborate on. Wallenberg was a Swedish diplomat in Budapest who saved thousands of Hungarian Jews by issuing them with the so-called “Schutz-Pass” (protective passport), which certified that they were Swedish citizens, and by lodging them in a number of buildings under Swedish protection. He disappeared in 1945 after being arrested by the Soviet military. The Swedish government’s efforts to find out about Wallenberg’s fate were weak throughout the Cold War. While people such as Simon Wiesenthal, Israeli prime minister Menachem Begin, or the American president Jimmy Carter, wanted to investigate what had happened to him, Swedish diplomats avoided the issue. The ‘Wallenberg Affair’ was seen as a disturbance in the Swedish government’s highly prioritised policy of keeping Sweden neutral and in peaceful and good relations with the Soviet Union. Thus, while Raoul Wallenberg was internationally recognised after the Second World War as a hero and celebrated worldwide by such commemorative acts as monuments, posthumous awards of honorary citizenships (as in Canada and Israel), and depictions in films, until the 1990s he was almost non-existent in official public memory in Sweden. Consequently, it is justified to argue that the emergence of the memory of Wallenberg in Sweden must be seen as a result of transnational memory flows. First, his deeds were brought to the attention of the Swedish public via such products of popular culture as the American television series *A Hero’s Story*. Second, and most importantly, the memory of him became useful for the Swedish government in the context of Sweden’s accession to the EU in the 1990s. From being an annoyance in Swedish-Soviet relations, Wallenberg changed into a symbolic asset when, after the Cold War, Sweden joined the EU’s politics of memory foregrounding Holocaust remembrance. The first initiatives to establish monuments in his honour were taken in Sweden as late as in the 1990s, and Sweden was actually one of the last countries to erect Wallenberg memorials. In 1990, the first Swedish movie about Wallenberg was made: called *God afton, Herr Wallenberg* (*Good Evening, Mr Wallenberg*), it was directed by Kjell Grede. In the spirit of the European ‘politics of regret’, the film touched upon Sweden’s problematic neutrality during the Second World War.

Furthermore, in 2004, the exhibition *Raoul Wallenberg: A Man Can Make a Difference* was staged in the Jewish Museum in Stockholm as the first ever Swedish exhibition that commemorated Wallenberg. The exhibition later toured several cities in post-communist countries where Wallenberg had previously been largely unknown. In 2009, another Swedish exhibition about Wallenberg was staged in the Army Museum in Stockholm; it was a careful reconstruction of his 1944 office in

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21 Information obtained by the author from Yvonne Jacobsson, director of the Jewish Museum in Stockholm. See: Barbara Törnquist-Plewa, The Europeanization of the Memory, 146.
Budapest. In 2014, this was included in the museum’s permanent exposition as a part of the section about the Second World War. This section was redesigned at that time, and its appearance constitutes solid evidence of the changes in the Swedish way of remembering the Second World War, brought about through the influence of the European politics of memory. The section now includes two rooms that deal with the memory of the Holocaust. This is a new and rather exceptional development, since the Army Museum is dedicated almost entirely to Swedish military history. Moreover, the new exhibition established in 2014 (a number of years after Sweden’s Living History campaign in 1997 and the Stockholm Holocaust Forum in 2000) shows Sweden and Swedes in three different roles during the war: as bystanders (through posters depicting a peaceful countryside); as rescuers (through posters from Hungary where Wallenberg was active, as well as through footage of Holocaust survivors who found refuge in Sweden); and as collaborators (through objects pointing to the connections with both the lower and higher echelons of the German Army). The fact that the Army Museum – which has traditionally represented official historical narratives – articulates this multifaceted narrative of Swedish involvement in the Second World War, demonstrates how this kind of narrative has now become well established in Sweden. Additionally, the fact that the state Army Museum dedicates a special room to commemorate Wallenberg, who at no point in his life was a military hero, provides proof of how the transnational memory of him has travelled from abroad back to Sweden and became ‘nationalised’. Wallenberg is singled out in the Army Museum as he now personifies Sweden’s role as a rescuer during the war, a role that Swedish politicians prefer to emphasise in order to boost a positive national self-image of Sweden as a humanitarian nation.22

Contextualising the Polish Case

In his excellent book *The Bondage to the Dead*, from 1997, the American scholar Michael C. Steinlauf convincingly shows how the memory of the Holocaust was ‘Polonised’ in Poland. Shortly after the war, the focus was switched from the suffering and struggle of Jews to the suffering of the entire Polish nation. It was not denied

that the German Nazis had wanted to exterminate all Jews, but school teaching, as well as books and films dealing with the Second World War, and other kinds of commemorative actions, had a strong tendency to emphasize only Polish suffering and struggle. The process can even be described as a form of memory appropriation. The murderous politics of the Nazis were presented as something that hit Jews and Poles equally hard. Auschwitz became a symbol of Polish martyrdom. Generations of Poles educated in communist Poland were disinfomed regarding the number and proportion of Jews killed in Auschwitz and believed that the majority of the victims were Poles. Moreover, a question never properly discussed in communist Poland was the attitude of the Polish population towards the Jews during the Holocaust. Hushed up were the instances of local collaboration with the Germans, of blackmail and denouncement of persecuted Jews, not to mention the local pogroms, such as the one in Jedwabne in 1941. Many factors contributed to the marginalization of Holocaust memory in Poland, such as the focus on Polish national suffering and victimhood, lingering anti-Semitic attitudes, moral discomfort regarding the expropriation of Jewish possessions, and last but not least, an unwillingness to face the question of how far the Polish population was complicit in the Holocaust.

The fall of the communist regime in 1989 and the democratisation of Poland opened up opportunities for a free debate on the issue of Polish-Jewish historical relations. Moreover, as an applicant for EU membership in the 1990s, Poland came into the orbit of the European politics of memory that assigned Holocaust remembrance a prominent place. This contributed to the rise of interest in the history of Polish Jews and their fate during the Second World War. A breakthrough came in 2000 with the publication of the American scholar Jan T. Gross’ book Neighbors, which set off an immense Polish debate about the Poles’ complicity in the Holocaust. Although the latter issue is still very much contentious, the debate reverberated in Polish culture and resulted in a large and still continuing wave of research, books, films, works of art, and other mnemonic acts dedicated to the memory of Polish Jews in general and the Holocaust in particular. Thus, the memory of Polish Jews and their annihilation in the Holocaust occupies a clearly visible place in official public discourse in contemporary Poland. However, a question remains: what happened with this memory on the local level in the multitude of Polish small towns, many of them being of a shtetl character, which had lost their Jewish population during the war and were repopulated by ethnic Poles? I decided to shed more light on this issue by conducting a study of one such locality – the town of Szydłowiec in central Poland.

23 For a closer description of this phenomenon that to some extent continues in contemporary Polish society, see: Jelena Subotić, The Appropriation of Holocaust Memory in Post-Communist Eastern Europe, in: Modern Languages Open 1 (2020) 22, 1-8.
26 However, it should be pointed out that the illiberal political party Prawo i Sprawiedliwość (Law and Justice) has tried to stifle this debate by, for example, introducing in 2018 the so called ‘anti-defamation law’ prohibiting claims that ‘the Polish nation’ was responsible or co-responsible for Nazi crimes. See: Larry Ray and Slawomir Kapralski, Introduction to the Special Issue – Disputed Holocaust Memory in Poland, in: Holocaust Studies, 25 (2019) 3, 209-219.
27 This issue was understudied when I began to conduct and publish my research on it in the first years of the twenty-first century. Since then, however, interest in the topic has grown steadily. About a decade later, a number of publications dealing with this question appeared, written by both Polish and non-Polish scholars, such as Antoni Sulek, Roma Sendyka, Marta Duch-Dyngosz, and Yechiel Weizman.
Szydlowiec and the Transnational Memory of the Holocaust

Before the Second World War, Szydlowiec had about 11,000 inhabitants, of whom 75 per cent were Polish Jews. Almost all of them were murdered in the extermination camp of Treblinka. From 2002 to 2004, as part of a broader study on Holocaust remembrance in Europe, I conducted field studies in the town, investigating how the local population dealt with the memory of their perished former inhabitants. My choice of precisely this former shtetl was motivated by the fact that I was born and grew up there. This facilitated both the collection of data of a sensitive nature and the verification of it using my own previous knowledge of the place. To be brought up in a certain culture and environment can, with some reservations, be seen as a kind of extended participant observation. At the same time, the risk of ‘home blindness’ that can be associated with researchers doing fieldwork in their home environment has, in my case, been counteracted by the fact that I left the town at the age of eighteen and have lived most of my life outside of Poland. Thus, in relation to the people in Szydlowiec, I am both an ‘insider’ and an ‘outsider’.

The research that I conducted showed that the Jewish past of Szydlowiec had, until the end of the 1990s, been to a large extent suppressed. Street names referring to Jewish life – Rabbi Street or Synagogue Street – had been changed. The ruins of the main synagogue, demolished by the Germans, had been cleared away without a trace, while a second, small, private synagogue had been turned into a pub, and nobody knew that it had once been a house of prayer. The only recognisable remnant of the Jewish past, a cemetery, was until the 1980s conspicuously absent from the official list of the town’s historical monuments. For a long time, the local authorities turned a blind eye to the disappearance of gravestones from there that were used for building materials.

Szydlowiec and the Transnational Memory of the Holocaust

The calendar of official commemorations in Szydlowiec never included one for the Jewish inhabitants who perished in the Holocaust. A visitor could not find any information about the fact that the town had lost the majority of its residents in the Holocaust. The few existing publications on local history did mention the large number of Jews in pre-war Szydlowiec and laconically referred to their annihilation, but the marginal space given to this fact was striking. The killing of three-quarters of the town’s population was presented as if it did not impinge at all upon the life of the remaining inhabitants. My investigation showed that the oldest residents in the town, especially those who lived in formerly Jewish-owned houses, did not want to remember the Jewish past of Szydlowiec. They transmitted very little information to post-war generations about life in the town before the war and what had happened there during the Holocaust. However, the surveys and interviews that I conducted showed that, at the same time, these residents had managed to transmit a considerable amount of prejudice and resentment towards Jews.

In sum, when I began my first field study in Szydlowiec in 2002, the town’s Jewish past was almost non-existent in public memory. Nevertheless, my study revealed at the same time a few signs of budding changes in local memories. A first-ever collection of historical, scholarly essays dealing with Szydlowiec’s Jews was published and presented at a conference in the town in 1997. A few enthusiastic local schoolteach-

ers, encouraged by non-governmental organisations from Warsaw, started to involve school children in projects aimed at collecting both memories and memorabilia connected with the Szydłowiec Jews. Poland was in the midst of its post-communist transformation and preparations for EU accession, which took place in 2004. One could perceive that changes were underway. Thus, while finishing my study in 2005, I already hoped to come back after a lengthy period of time and to see whether this slowly growing awareness of the town’s Jewish past would result in a transformation of local memory. About ten years later, I was able to realise that plan.

When I returned to the town in 2017 for a follow-up study,29 I could easily see that clear changes had occurred in relation to the Jewish past. Material remnants of Jewish life are now officially declared to be a part of Szydłowiec’s historical heritage. The Jewish past and Jewish heritage are recognised and highlighted on the town’s website, as well as in guides, leaflets, and books dealing with local history. Moreover, a permanent exhibition on the history of Szydłowiec that opened in 2017 pays attention to the town’s Jewish past and contains a number of authentic Jewish objects (such as prayer books, menorahs, and books in Yiddish and Hebrew) which belonged to the town’s Jewish inhabitants. One of the local teachers had collected these objects with the help of schoolchildren and donated them to the local museum. The local authorities also began to care for a more regular upkeep of the Jewish cemetery, and in 2011 they finally officially registered the still preserved Jewish house of prayer as a historical monument. However, it should be noted that none of these two locations was included in the large-scale revitalisation project of the town that was conducted from 2011 to 2014 and co-financed by EU funds. The Jewish heritage is recognised but not prioritised in promoting the town as a tourist destination. Instead, the focus is on its aristocratic heritage (namely a castle) and historical Catholic monuments.

The construction of a small monument, or rather a commemorative plaque, to honour the memory of Szydłowiec’s Holocaust victims constitutes another important change. It was solemnly unveiled in 2014 with the participation of the mayor and representatives of the city council and a few Jewish organisations, as well as of religious representatives from the rabbinical office in Warsaw and the local Catholic church. Admittedly, the town already had a monument dedicated to “Polish citizens of Jewish origin from Szydłowiec and its surroundings” killed during the Second World War. It was commissioned by the district’s Communist Party branch in 1967. However, this monument never became a site of memory. Placed in the middle of the neglected Jewish cemetery, it was forgotten and left to decay. My investigation in 2004 showed that few people even knew of its existence. Upon my return in 2017, it was still there, derelict and abandoned. The commemorative plaque from 2014 is, on the other hand, situated in a visible place and includes the explanation that it marks the site of the pre-war synagogue that was destroyed by the German Nazis. The plaque informs visitors in Polish, English, and Hebrew that 21,000 Jews were “imprisoned in the local ghetto and murdered by German perpetrators of genocide”. The plaque seems to be integrated into the town’s memoryscape in a way that the old monument at the Jewish cemetery never was. Moreover, in contrast to the old monument, the new one has never been vandalised. On the contrary, on the annual Holocaust Remembrance Day, celebrated in Poland on 19 April (the day of the beginning of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising), two local teachers engaged with the Jewish memory of the town come with school children to lay flowers at the commemorative plaque.

29 For the results of this, see: Barbara Törnquist-Plewa, The Transnational Dynamics of Local Remembrance. The Jewish Past in a Former Shtetl in Poland, in: Memory Studies, 11 (2018) 3, 301-314.
The attitude to this new site of memory seems to be positive. “Finally, we have a place to which we can take Jewish visitors, without being ashamed”, I heard in one of the focus group interviews that I conducted during my field study. The reference to the feeling of shame gives evidence to a rising awareness that, until recently, in relation to the town’s Jewish past, the local society had not lived up to otherwise widely recognised standards on how to commemorate local victims of the Second World War. In general, during my follow-up field study, I also noticed a largely welcoming and relaxed attitude towards Jewish visitors. This constitutes a marked change from more than a decade earlier, when I could clearly discern expressions of anxiety among the contemporary owners of the formerly Jewish-owned houses who were concerned that Jews were coming to reclaim their property. While still present, these worries are now mostly rebutted and even scorned.30

How did all of these changes occur?

In my answer to this question, I want to foreground transnational dynamics of memory production and their operation on the level of a locality. I argue that imported mnemonic material and transnational actors played a significant role in the rediscovery of the town’s forgotten Jewish past. To begin with, while analysing the origins of the mnemonic change in Szydłowiec, I discovered that the main body of knowledge disseminated to the public about the town’s Jewish past originates in the Szydłowiec Memorial Book (the so-called ‘Yizker’ book in Yiddish), published in English translation in New York in 1989. Like other Yizker books, it was written by survivors originating from the same place (Landsmanshaftn) and contained their memories of the vanished community before and during the Holocaust. It appeared in a very limited edition and was primarily addressed to the inner circle of survivors and their families.

The Szydłowiec Memorial Book first reached the town in 2004, almost by chance. It was a non-Jewish emigrant from Szydłowiec interested in Judaica who found it in a bookshop in New York. He bought several copies at once and, knowing about my research interests, sent one copy to me and one to Sława Lorenc-Hanusz, a history teacher in Szydłowiec and one of the few enthusiasts for local Jewish memorabilia with whom I cooperated during my field study. Since she did not read English, I

30 For direct quotations from interviews and the local press, see Törnquist-Plewa, The Transnational Dynamics of Local Remembrance, 307.
summarised much of the book’s contents for her and urged her to obtain a proper translation of at least some parts, so that she could use the book in her activities. In 2007 she, together with Grzegorz Miernik, a professional historian, published the first popular publication about Szydłowiec’s Jews, *Przechować pamięć tamtych dni: Przewodnik po zabytkach kultury żydowskiej Szydłowca/Preserving Memory of Those Days: A Guidebook of the Monuments of Jewish Culture in Szydłowiec* (in Polish and English), using some material from the Szydłowiec Memorial Book. Furthermore, she referenced the *Szydłowiec Memorial Book* again when she wrote a chapter in a volume containing Szydłowiec residents’ memories of local events in the twentieth century, published in 2015.31 The incorporation of Jewish voices into this book about the town, whose title is *That is Our Life* (my emphasis), can be seen as a step toward the gradual inclusion of Jewish memories in public memory. Thanks to both publications, also accessible on the internet,32 Szydłowiec’s Jewish past has become clearly visible for the public.

A few excerpts from the *Szydłowiec Memorial Book* were also published in Polish translation in the local periodical *Dom na Skale* (Home on the Cliff),33 which aroused further interest in the town’s Jewish history. Some voices proposed that the whole *Szydłowiec Memorial Book* be translated into Polish as an important source for local history.34 However, this has not yet been realised. As I found out in my interviews with local memory activists, their enthusiasm for the translation cooled down when they realised that a professional translation of the whole book meant including sensitive passages that had hitherto been omitted in the translation. These passages contain instances of the indecent behaviour of some Poles towards their Jewish neighbours, as well as the names of those in Szydłowiec who denounced Jews to the Ger-

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34 For quotations of such opinions expressed in the local press, see: Törnquist-Plewa, *The Transnational Dynamics of Local Remembrance*, 305.
mans. None of these individuals are alive today, but their families still live in the town. There is fear regarding how the local community might react to such disclosures and their consequences both for the descendants of the perpetrators and for those who would be making the perpetrators’ deeds widely known by translating the Yizker book. In the opinion of the local memory activists, Szydłowiec is not yet prepared to fully face the difficult parts of its past, so the translation of the whole Szydłowiec Memorial Book has to wait.

However, young people from Szydłowiec who – in contrast to the older generation – have a good knowledge of English, can access the entire book, since it is now available online both on the portal The Virtual Shtetl and on the Yad Vashem Museum website. This enabled Patrycja Wlazło, a history student from Szydłowiec, to write a Polish-language master’s thesis called Żydzi Szydłowieccy pod okupacją niemiecką 1939–1943 (Szydłowiec Jews during the German Occupation 1939–1943) in 2010, using the Yizker book as one of her main sources. The thesis speaks openly about the anti-semitism of Szydłowiec’s non-Jewish inhabitants, both during the Holocaust and immediately after the war. However, just a few people in the town are familiar with this thesis, of which only one copy is available in the local library.

In sum, the case of the Szydłowiec Memorial Book demonstrates how a particular memory central to the identity of one group can travel across cultures and help to model the narrative of another group. The book was written to keep the memory of lost Jewish life in Szydłowiec alive for the survivors and their descendants. Nevertheless, it transcended its initial internal Jewish context. It travelled across borders – also in a literal sense – back to the place it commemorated, and it triggered memory work among non-Jewish inhabitants of that place, helping to bring the long-suppressed past to life. While my study of Szydłowiec revealed that the import of mnemonic material had an impact on the development of the local memory, it also clearly pointed to the crucial role of transnational memory actors. The involvement of Jewish memory actors deserves special attention in this context. The number of Jews living in Poland today is miniscule. Some researchers even claim that the revival of Jewish culture in Poland is “a renaissance without Jews”.35 The case of Szydłowiec, however, bears witness to the opposite view, pointing to the contribution of Jews from around the world. Reading in the local press about the new commemorative activities undertaken in Szydłowiec in relation to the town’s Jewish past, I noticed that all of them had received financial support from Jewish or Polish-Jewish foundations and organisations. For example, the Nissenbaum Foundation supported the Day of Jewish Culture – Mazel Tov, the Taube Foundation supported the 2009 photography project School Diary – A Story from Szydłowiec, based on a school diary from 1937–1938 by a Jewish class in Szydłowiec, and the Shalom Foundation financed a number of commemorative projects involving local pupils. Moreover, I found out that the initiative and the perseverance of two transnational Jewish organisations was crucial for the foundation of the previously mentioned commemorative plaque dedicated to the Holocaust victims from Szydłowiec. It was initiated by the Tel Aviv-based Israel-Poland Friendship Society that also contributed to financing the project together with the Association of Friends of Szydłowiec, a French-Belgian organisation of Jews originating from Szydłowiec and their families. The office of the mayor of Szydłowiec was an additional donor.

Although financial support from Jewish actors to the commemorative initiatives has been significant, considerable importance also has to be given to actual meetings. These include face-to-face interactions between the residents of Szydłowiec and Jewish visitors to the town, such as representatives of Jewish institutions and organisations. Israeli students making civil pilgrimages to Holocaust sites and, last but not least, former Jewish residents and their families visiting places where their ancestors lived. The interviews with the inhabitants, conducted for my study, indicated that the locals, by acting as hosts to the Jewish visitors, began to see their hometown through the eyes of their guests. ‘The gaze of the Other’ made at least some of them ashamed of the town’s neglect of its Jewish heritage and prompted them to take action.

My study also indicated that the mnemonic activities that actively involve both Poles and Jews have been of particular value. One of the most interesting entails the participation of Szydłowiec youth in meetings between school classes from Poland and Israel. These take place within the framework of the nationwide initiative Preserving Memory: History and Culture of the Two Nations, which has been organised as part of a special 2002 agreement between the Polish and Israeli governments. The idea is to give young Israelis who take school trips to the former death camps an opportunity to meet their Polish peers and together commemorate the lost Jewish world in Poland. The meetings are carefully prepared by twinning schools from Poland and Israel on a voluntary basis, and the preparations include training teachers who participate in the project. Education about the Holocaust is at its centre. In 2010, one of the two secondary schools in Szydłowiec joined the project and for several years hosted school classes from Hof Hasharon. In addition to mutual presentations and conversations, each visit included a walk together to the Jewish sites in Szydłowiec and a joint Holocaust commemoration ceremony at the Jewish cemetery. In the focus group interviews conducted with pupils in Szydłowiec who participated in these meetings, I learned that these were considerably appreciated. The pupils described the encounters as “exciting” and as an opportunity to learn more both about Israel and about the past of their own town. They also told me that the first time they walked together through the town, as a big group of around ninety people, people in Szydłowiec were astonished and some were perturbed. However, in the following years nobody seemed uneasy. Local authorities, as well as some private businesses, have co-sponsored the event each year by buying food and small presents for the visitors. The attitude of the visitors has also changed. During the first visit, some of the Israeli teachers and especially the Israeli security guards seemed to be quite nervous, while at the following encounter the atmosphere was much more relaxed.

The meetings between Polish and Israeli students in the town can be described as transnational rituals of commemoration crafted as encounters between the real ‘Others’ in a concrete physical place and involving bodily experiences and emotions. Considering the existing mutual stereotypes that burden relations between Poles and Jews, these encounters have enabled the traversal of cultural borders and the dismantling of culturally engrained prejudices. On the Polish side, the encounters have subdued the image of the Jew as an ‘alien’ in a country with practically no Jewish inhabitants. On the Israeli side, they have curbed the image of the Pole as a staunch anti-semite. The ritual trips made by young Israelis to Poland to visit the former death camps have been criticised as serving nationalistic sentiment.36 I would

argue that the joint Polish-Israeli commemoration in Szydłowiec, imbued with affective elements, has cracked, at least temporarily, ‘national containers’ and activated the potential for better future relations.

While the Jewish memory actors should be seen as crucial transnational memory carriers and of vital importance for local memories in Szydłowiec, I also need to mention my own role in this context, as a Swedish scholar of Polish origin. Thinking back to my recurrent field studies in the town, I realise that I have become a transnational memory actor in the formation of local memories. By conducting interviews and conversing with many local people, I influenced the ongoing memory work. I encouraged people to think about matters that had not previously concerned them. Moreover, as a person and scholar from abroad, I brought new perspectives on the local past.

Which of the changes can be related to my work? The most direct effect can be traced to the influence of the Szydłowiec Memorial Book, which I promoted among those locals who looked for sources from which they could learn more about Szydłowiec’s Jewish past. Furthermore, my research work encouraged the town’s memory activist, the only one who was in 2002 committed to Jewish heritage, to continue her own work. Our cooperation in carrying out interviews reinforced her conviction that what she was doing was important. Additionally, with my authority as a foreign scholar I was able empower her, especially in her relations with the local authorities, which were largely passive regarding the commemoration of the Jewish past but receptive to initiatives from below.

I certainly stimulated curiosity about the Jewish past of Szydłowiec among many local people, not least by holding lectures about the Holocaust, Szydłowiec, and the post-war oblivion for pupils and teachers in local schools. Some of the schoolteachers I met on these occasions later engaged in the commemoration of the local Jewish past. Thus, my field research in Szydłowiec turned out to have some transformative impact on the local memory, although it never was planned to be ‘action research’, that is, a combination of research and social action. Applying an autoethnographic
perspective to my study, I can state that I came to the town as a scholar, but by doing research in the field I also unintentionally but not unwillingly assumed the role of a memory actor. Moreover, due to my position as both an outsider living abroad and an insider as an emigrant from Szydłowiec, I became a carrier of transnational memory. My work enabled the town residents to look at local history through other, non-local, transnational lenses and to be confronted with ideas produced elsewhere.

Coda

In their introduction to the trailblazing book *Transnational Memory* from 2014, two scholars, Chiara De Cesari and Ann Rigney, spotlight the multiscalarity of transnational mnemonic processes and invite further research on how they operate. Moreover, they emphasise the need to explore the “generative” potential of transnationally mediated memories for producing new stories and new social relations.37 Inspired by these ideas, I analysed two case studies that I have presented in this lecture. I used transnational optics to take a look at how transnational memories of the Holocaust ‘travelled’ to Stockholm in Sweden and to Szydłowiec in Poland, and what the effects were of these transnational mnemonic encounters.

Both cases, although radically different, illustrate the transnational dynamics of memory production. Both in Stockholm and in Szydłowiec, transnational practices, imported mnemonic material, and transnational actors played a significant role in the rediscovery of a marginalised, forgotten, or suppressed past. They significantly contributed to the mnemonic changes that occurred in these places through a complex process, involving an interplay between many institutions, groups, and individuals. These included the EU with its politics of memory, governmental bodies on both national and local levels, Jewish organisations of survivors and their families, Jewish foundations and, last but not least, individual memory activists, both Jewish and non-Jewish, communicating across national borders. This shows that transnational memories work on multiple, interlocking scales involving the personal/intimate, local, regional, national, and global. The relationship between these different levels and scales cannot be described as just a ‘bottom-up’ or a ‘top-down’ process, but it points to a multidirectionality and multiscalarity of memory formation.38

How can we then summarise and define the changes observed in the memory cultures in both of the cases presented above? Both studies provide evidence of the fact that transnational memory work has facilitated the production and transmission of new memories. However, the transformative potential of the new narratives has been just partially realised. In the case of Stockholm and Sweden, the awoken interest in the commemoration of the Holocaust led to, at least to some extent, self-critical reflections on the country’s questionable neutrality in the Second World War. Such reflections have been visible, for example, in the exhibition on Sweden during the Second World War in the Army Museum in Stockholm. However, in the case of Szydłowiec in Poland, the new memories have not given rise to a self-critical reading of the town’s own past, a feature characteristic of a reflexive cosmopolitan

38 Ibid. See also: Michael Rothberg, Multidirectional Memory in Migratory Settings. The Case of Post-Holocaust Germany, in: De Cesari/Rigney (ed.), Transnational Memory, 123-148.
memory. While there are individuals who critically evaluate Polish attitudes towards Jews during and after the Holocaust, there is no support on the public level for discussing such matters locally. Nonetheless, a visible effect of the transnational memory work in the town is the reduction of the anxiety connected with the Jewish heritage and with memories of the Jewish past. The transmission of new memories has at least to some extent dismantled the Otherness of the Jews and promoted openness in the local community, demonstrating that the Other is not so different. The Jewish past and Jewish heritage are now recognised and included in the town’s memoryscape, and the local victims of the Holocaust are commemorated.

In general, however, both the Swedish and Polish cases suggest that although transnational memory work transforms the national and local mnemonic narratives, the direction of these transformations is not clear. In both cases, national memory framework seems to remain powerful and still dictates how the past is used and what is made public. Thus, although transnational memory is about the traversal of cultural and/or geopolitical borders, it is by no means equal to a hybridisation of memories that leads to new solidarities and new types of belonging. For the latter kind of memory, I would like to propose instead the concept of ‘transcultural memory’. Transcultural memory, in my understanding, includes not only the crossing of borders but also the transformation of cultural borders in a direction that enables imagining new, inclusive communities and modified identities. Thus, in the Swedish and Polish cases that I have presented above, transcultural memories, understood as proposed here, are not prominent. Some of the memory activists I interviewed for my studies articulated them. However, in general, the transnational memory work in both cases has not yet resulted in a wide production of transcultural memories on the level of society. This points to the necessity for distinguishing between the two categories of memories and to a realisation of the limited transformative power of transnational mnemonic encounters.

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40 See also the discussion of this concept by Rothberg, Multidirectional Memory in Migratory Settings, 129-130.
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Steven Seegel

Teleki, Trianon, and Transnational Map Men 100 Years After
Experiences and Expressions through the Lens of Oral History

“We have broken our word out of cowardice –
in contradiction with the eternal agreement based on the Mohács peace.
The nation feels it, and we have thrown away its honour.
We stand on the side of villains because of trumped-up atrocities.
No word is true, neither against the Hungarians, nor against the Germans!
We will be grave-robbers of bodies. We are the nation’s worst.
I did not hold you back. I am guilty.”
Count Pál Teleki, 1941

Abstract
The lecture focusses on the life and death of Count Pál Teleki (1879–1941) – twice prime minister of Hungary – in relation to the Treaty of Trianon (1920) and its legacy after a century. Teleki developed his reputation as a professional geographer, among Europe’s prominent ‘map men’ of his generation. Through scholarship in critical geography and cartography, this lecture examines Teleki’s gendered fantasies of North American frontier space; the origin and significance of his anti-semitism and anti-communism; his subtextual grasp of post-World War I symbology and territorial revisionism; the cultural significance of the famous Carte Rouge map; his efforts at Transatlantic diplomacy; his family’s contacts with Transatlantic geographers and his eventual suicide in April 1941; and the long legacy of illiberal politics in Hungary and Europe since the Treaty of Trianon.

Introduction
On the early morning of 3 April 1941, Count Pál Teleki ended his life in Budapest. Many details remain unknowable from the prime minister’s last words to Admiral Miklós Horthy, but powerful twentieth-century affects live on. The count, it seems, died with a profound sense of disappointment and shame. His death happened shortly after Hitler directed the use and occupation of Hungary’s territory for the Luftwaffe to attack Yugoslavia. Having failed to chart out an independent foreign policy, Teleki’s suicide note expressed the failures of a country he professionally and emotionally embodied. As he had put it in a confidential letter one year earlier to one of his oldest friends, the American geographer Isaiah Bowman, then president of Johns Hopkins University, the count was “nailed to Hungary”. Hungary’s most famous geographer would not live to see the rest of World War II, or the Holocaust of European Jewry.
I want to broaden our context for transnational map men here. Critical geographers, among which I count myself, have interrogated the layering of pseudoscientific cartograms. We, a collective we, grow wary of narratives of victimhood buried inside nation-state cocoons. My lecture transports Teleki into the lost Ostmittel-europa worlds of a generation of colonial men of empire, who made and utilised maps from the 1870s to the 1950s. Experts included, inter alia, Albrecht Penck of Germany, Eugeniusz Romer of Poland, Isaiah Bowman of the United States, Emmanuel de Martonne of France, Jovan Cvijić of Serbia, and Stepan Rudnyts'kyi of Ukraine. Teleki found in maps a weapon for the weak, a comfort for the scientist, and much emotional sustenance. His death was deeply spatial; his life was that of an aspiring bourgeois geographer, in a fractious twentieth-century world. His identity was Hungarian with a Transylvanian asterisk. Teleki’s self was rife with fantasy, not merely conservative or modern or national. Like everyone else in motion, he was everywhere unsettled.

Fantasies before Trianon

Because maps are distorted models, copies of copies, it seems doubly useless to call them ‘constructed’. By whom, for what, in which milieu? Few men carried more baggage than Count Pál Teleki, born in Budapest on 1 November 1879. He belonged to a multigenerational clan of Transylvanian landholders in the Habsburg-Ottoman borderlands. Of varying piety, the Telekis were a mix of Calvinists and Roman Catholics. Mihály II Teleki (1630–1690), the clan’s most famous ruler, supported Poland under the rule of King Jan Sobieski (r. 1674–1696). Mihály II negotiated for Transylvania’s autonomy; in 1685, he received the title of count from the Habsburgs, after Sobieski’s 1683 defeat of Ottoman forces in the battle of Vienna. He had 13 children. Count Sámuel Teleki (1739–1822) established the Bibliotheca Telekiana in 1802 as a public library in Marosvásárhely. József (1790–1855), Pál’s paternal uncle, became a prominent historian and jurist, the first president of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, and also governor of Transylvania. Pál’s cousin Sámuel (1845–1916) was credited with ‘discovering’ Lake Rudolph in northern Kenya and Lake Stefanie in southern Ethiopia. He inspired Pál’s expeditions in the grand explorer tradition of Humboldt, Livingstone, and Rhodes.

Academics attack myths in defence of truth, but myths are needed for human folly. Critical cartographers interrogate geo-bodies, the graphic worlds of misremembered childhood and emotion. The geo-body, a felicitous term coined by the Thai dissident Thongchai Winichakul in his Siam Mapped (1988), is furthered by authors Sumathi Ramaswamy and Raymond Craib, to name a few, who delve into subtexts of rivalry, exchange, and jealousy. I argue that geographers’ critical worlds – their epistolary worlds and multisensory moods – can be explored even more between disciplines. My aim through the illiberal 2010s has been to urge others to rethink grievances in what John Pickles calls geo-coded worlds: through schools of

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1 I draw from thinkpieces by Raymond B. Craib, Cartography and Decolonization, and Sumathi Ramaswamy, Art on the Line: Cartography and Creativity in a Divided World, in: James R. Akerman (ed.), Decolonizing the Map: Cartography from Colony to Nation, Chicago 2017, 11-71, 284-338

national indifference, mental maps and multiple modernities, as well as through trauma discourse, including deeply held generational myths of a Whiggish 1989. Mosaic maps of East Europe are banal tools for nationalist intent, prejudice and functional content, lobbying and con artistry, and border violence – sounds of a dehumanising silence, of autocritical deafness to race, Roma legislation, LGBTQ+ communities, and especially people of colour. I have relied on new decolonisation and globalisation work by Franck Bilî, Sunnie Rucker-Chang, Theodora Dragostinova, Bill Rankin, and Zoltan Ginelli to reframe anxieties of phobia and penetration, lines of maps extending into the atmosphere, beneath the soil, into our bodies.

Nationalists and sundry culture warriors who use maps to privatise and fragment civic space and foment electoral division would have used chopped into little pieces. Maps can chain us into systems, even while they still symbolise a profession and inspire new designs. Map men eliminate: they aspire to everyday bourgeois bohemianism, to enjoy fruits of consumption and comfort. Or a good café. Maps exclude others from the “outerskin”, as Tony Judt put it before he died, an imagined body politic. Count Teleki in Christian national Hungary silenced the voices of women, Romanians, Jewish professionals, and rural peoples (these categories are not mutually exclusive) while claiming to act in their interests. If you read your Larry Wolff, following from Bowman, Woodrow Wilson, and other supposed archmissionaries of democracy in Paris in 1919, they promoted some Slavic pet-majoritarian nations, while info-filtering out far more people than they included. If there is any lesson of partition, it is to be on alert for how bodies are flattened, borders are

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Pál dreamt of becoming an explorer. A son of homosocial empire, Pál hated to have a day job. While politics and jurisprudence were his father Geza’s preferences, Pál was drawn by his bookish habits toward geography. It was Karl May’s stock tales of the West, cowboys and Indians, that became Teleki’s favourite comfort read, a guilty pleasure into his adult years. Once at the University of Budapest, Pál took formal courses by the Hungarian geographer Lajos Lóczy (1849–1920), a natural scientist, professor of geology, and chair of the geography department. Educated in the German tradition, Lóczy in Hungary was a successor to Janos Hunfalvy (1820–1888), who had studied under Karl Ritter in Berlin. Lóczy, a geomorphologist, became a kind of father figure for Teleki. Lóczy earned memberships in geographical societies in Berlin, Leipzig, Vienna, and Bern. Elected by his peers in Budapest, he became the president of the Hungarian Geographical Society (Magyar Földrajzi Társaság, or MFT) in 1891–1892 and from 1905 to 1913.

Out of Ostmitteleuropa’s earth sciences, Teleki found a way to parlay the explorer’s life into a career. The recent work of Balázs Ablonczy, Maciej Górny, Catherine Gibson, and Vedran Duančić on contested borderland geography and cartography is seminal to my thinking here. The MFT’s membership had doubled in size by 1900. Patriotic researchers focussed on geography, ethnography, statistical demography, cartography, geology, climatology, and many other disciplines. Under Lóczy’s influence, Teleki turned quickly toward the writings of Friedrich Ratzel. In fin-de-siècle Europe as the world’s lands were coloured in, Pál developed a passion for maps. At a December 1898 meeting of the MFT, he presented a study of early European cartography in East Asia. Teleki did not know any Asian or African languages. Academe fit badly, but in 1903 he completed his dissertation thesis, *The Question of Primary State Formation*, under Lóczy’s direction in Budapest. In it, the Transylvanian argued that “the state was the result of national development” within the historical lands of the Crown of St. Stephen. Teleki assured others that the Magyar nation, due to the fact it was “rational”, rightly strove for independent statehood. Casting out Romanians and Ruthenians from Europe, he wrote, “[w]e don’t even have to go so far afield. The Moldavian Romanian or the Máramaros Ruthenian would be equally incapable of … abstract reasoning”.

Every Eurocentric map represents a coming-of-age tale. For the not yet technocrat, maps were blueprints for a future that safeguarded past privilege. In spring 1908, on his way from the Sudan, Teleki conducted research at the Royal Geographical Society and the British Museum in London, the Bibliothéque Nationale in Paris, and the Rijksarchief in The Hague. He buried himself in maps of Japan and wrote up the project on the family’s estate. Pál sent his scholarly manuscript to Jenő Cholnoky, his confidante in Kolozsvár/Cluj, another of Lóczy’s students, and Pál’s co-traveller in 1912 to the United States. Cholnoky was impressed. The 1909 *Atlas of the History of the Cartography of the Japanese Islands* was a historical atlas of 168 pages and 20 maps, based on representations by Europe’s travellers.

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The atlas was published in Leipzig, in German and Hungarian. The Geneva International Geographical Society elected Teleki to its old map and chart committee. The historical rub: there is no evidence that Teleki travelled to Japan or held a conversation at any time with a Japanese scholar. In fantasy spaces, the aristocrat knew no Japanese, and like his cousin Samuel, he had zero familiarity with African indigenous languages. He claimed a Eurocentric civiliser’s natural model of the world. In 1911, the Paris Geographical Society, the oldest of its kind in the world, awarded Teleki its prestigious Jomard Prize. Merits came at home, too: Lóczy got Teleki nominated for general secretary of the MFT, at which point Teleki reached out to a Hungarian public for old maps, charts, and manuscripts. He worked toward a Magyar world atlas. At the tenth International Geographic Congress in Rome from 27 March to 3 April 1913, Teleki lavished praise on Hungary’s explorers and its global progress in geography. Back in Budapest, he got his first academic position, as geographer at the Budapest College of Commercial Studies. On the eve of World War I, the Transylvanian count even envisioned a shrine to geographical science in Budapest, modelled on the Museum for Comparative Regional Geography (Museum für Vergleichende Landeskunde) established in Leipzig in 1892.

When the war began, Teleki’s map man dreams took a new turn. He was unable to secure funding for the museum from the monarchy, which obviously had more pressing concerns. On 18 July 1914, three weeks after the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand, Teleki was drafted into the army. On 31 July, he took leave of Budapest for Sarajevo and onto the Serbian and Romanian fronts. In December 1914, he received a promotion to first lieutenant in the Irregular Volunteer Service. When Italy entered the war in May 1915, he was sent to the south-eastern front to serve as a command officer. As the war dragged on, the Hungarian’s enthusiasm for a German-led effort waned. The smallish Teleki – sickly, bored, and ill-equipped for combat in the east – was thrilled when the military’s general staff ordered him in the fall of 1915 away from the battlefields. What was his job? To prepare maps. War made room for boyish fantasy. Albert Apponyi (1846–1933), the minister of education and a respected figure in Hungary (nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize), selected Teleki as his leading geographic expert for the post-war Hungarian delegation.

Carte Rouge and Trianon

The Great War was hardly the death of civilisation for Teleki. War presented opportunity. In his April 1918 MFT address, Teleki bemoaned Hungarians’ lack of self-confidence, scarce resources, and sparse support for research. Germany was the model, for it had “organised now a network [of scientists] all over the empire” and set the standard due to its “influence and willpower … [and] intellectual cross-fertilisation”, as well as developed broad programmes for research in statistics, geology, cartography, and geomorphology. Teleki’s crowning achievement was the “Carte Rouge” – The Ethnographical Map of Hungary According to Population Density – made from September to December 1918. It depicted the Magyar population in a bright red (vörös, and whence its informal name, “Carte Rouge”), moving into Europe and settling into a central area in Budapest and the Danubian Basin. Let me return to this in a moment. First, some context.

War proved to be a mother-courage boon for map men, an opportunity for empire and emotional release. Teleki had scarce hope that settler-colonial Slav states would be arranged in Austria-Hungary’s favour by Paris in 1919. So, he kept watch
on what lobbying Czechs, Poles, and others were doing, all the way to Upper Manhattan. Trying to ground a place, leaders like Tomáš Masaryk, friend of the United States’ President Wilson and Robert Seton-Watson in England, or Polish geographer Eugeniusz Romer, passed along maps. Masaryk – to take an example – and the Scotsman Seton-Watson, who favoured federalism for Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia, hardly thought that all nationalities were on the same level. In the Balkans or south-eastern Europe, the geographer Jovan Cvijić in Belgrade, who set up the Serbian Geographical Society in 1910, was also adept at this type of backchanneling and monitoring, of maps in letters, as Maciej Górný and Mirela Altić have shown. Ethnic lobbying and electoral geography grew in the United States. Stakes were raised as support grew in France and England for Masaryk and Seton-Watson, who were allies in London and publishers of maps in the New Europe periodical since 1915. End-of-war Hungarians like Teleki and Polish elites like Romer were aware that others’ national maps could be used against them and all their historical and ethnographic claims in 1919.

Losers and winners held Europe’s maps in common. The “Carte Rouge” was printed in English, French, and Hungarian, and prepared on a scale of 1:200,000, adjusted to 1:300,000 for the February 1919 version. Teleki solicited the assistance of Baron von Nopcsa, whom he needed along with men from the MFT, the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, the Bureau of Statistics, and the Ministry of Commerce. The sources and design rebuked Emmanuel de Martonne (1873–1955), the leading expert of France’s delegation in 1919, who skilfully used a similar technique for showing population density in competing pro-Romanian maps of Transylvania. Martonne favoured Romanian statehood across “eastern Hungary” (what Teleki called it), while insisting French sponsorship of the Little Entente. Martonne essentially concurred against Hungarian designs and with the Czech patriot Masaryk and Seton-Watson. Teleki had probably realised the collusion earlier when Masaryk turned to his ally in London in 1915 to publish maps in the New Europe periodical, against the Central Powers and Hungary in particular. Masaryk and the Scotsman who supported federalism in Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia considered Magyars low on a racial totem, among so-called ‘nationalities’, with peoples of Africa.

Teleki’s cross-border paprika geography was profoundly revisionist. Almost 3D or, dare I say, GIS. From the hard-digging work of Dániel Segyevy, we know how Teleki and his compatriot Baron von Nopsca devised the “Carte Rouge” clandestinely – therefore transnationally. It betrayed fears of “Judapest” and modern urban diversity. As a conservative, he had scarce hope that post-war democratic Slavic settlements would be arranged in Hungary’s favour. In early October 1918, Teleki worked to form a league for Hungary’s territorial defence, a carbon copy of the Germans’ revisionist Deutsche Schutzbund (German Protection League). As Austria-

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14 See Judith A. Tyner, Persuasive Cartography, in Monmonier (ed.), The History of Cartography, 1087-1095.
Hungary dissolved in November–December 1918, dozens of experts, geographers, and statisticians rushed to collect census data. Teleki took part, gathering up more maps of Hungary in November, illustrating districts with Magyar speakers, distribution by confession, and levels of literacy. This was the context in which a new Hungarian state was cobbled together.

When the armistice was signed on 11 November, Teleki fell ill with a serious case of influenza. On 13 November, Romanian, Czechoslovak, and Serbian forces invaded Hungary with France’s support. On 16 November, a government under Count Mihály Károlyi (1875–1955) was hastily established and Hungary’s post-war republic was declared. On the defensive at his Pribekfalva estate in December 1918, Teleki asserted population density ahead of nationality. His maps tended to follow a linear logic of modernisation, that the density of assimilated Magyars increased as peasants moved to the city, became literate, and settled naturally into St. Stephen enclaves. Magyars were a privileged norm. Entire districts were shown bereft of populations that were actually present. One square millimetre equalled 100 inhabitants. Teleki and Baron von Nopcsa thereby proved that nationalities could be measured by density, all in the same way. As if one were mapping the Balkans and Asia Minor in the 1870s and 1880s, or the United States west of the Mississippi (recall: the Indian Removal Act of 1830), they left deserted the uplands, mountainous areas, plains, and ‘Carpatho-Rusyn’ white spots with few inhabitants.

On 24 December 1918, Romanian troops occupied the city of Koloszvár/Cluj, including the university where Teleki’s compatriot Cholnoky taught. On 1 January 1919, the same day the Red Army took over Minsk in Belarus, Czechoslovak legions occupied Pozsony/Bratislava. On 11 January, one week before Paris, Károlyi became president of Hungary’s republic. Oszkár Jászi (1875–1957), the historian and minister of nationalities, tried in vain to persuade the Romanians to remain in Romania, under a revised election law. In Budapest on 21 March, Béla Kun’s communists seized power and, for 133 days in the capital, a Hungarian Soviet Republic was set up. The anti-communist Teleki appealed to the science he learned under Lóczy. To make ‘historic’ claims, Teleki faced competing graphic arguments by Czechs, Romanians, Poles, Ukrainians, South Slavs, and others, which added to the obliviousness of the Great Powers.

Revisionist map men like Teleki in 1919 fit badly between the thick, bold lines of new nation-states. Really, none of the delegations or politicians of Washington, Paris, or London in 1919 favoured any nuanced treatment for Hungary or the 3.3 million Magyars dispersed across new borders after World War I. Lacking objective science or a useful court of appeal, Teleki called for justice in the nationalist language of a pro-Western, but not quite Wilsonian or Leninist, self-determination. The last choice was revisionism as an ideology. In the Short Notes on the Economic and Political Geography of Hungary in 1919, which served as a first draft for lectures on American economic geography in 1921, Teleki redrew Hungary against “primitives”. He stressed Magyar high culture and those who now distanced the country in 1919 from past “German” (and Austrian) influence. Transylvania was Europe’s bulwark. He wrote that “[t]he temperament of the Hungarians resembles that of the Southern people, his comprehension is quick, his speech laconic … Hungarian culture has had its best individual and national development when it met with the culture of people having the same temperament.” Furthermore, he stated that “Budapest is situated on a spot of exceptional geographical weight … Amongst all capitals of Europe, Budapest stands almost unrivalled as to her strength of centralisation. This is a law of nature.” In defence of unity, he appealed to natural ecology. He wrote: “The division of
Hungary would separate geographical regions which are dependent on each other. It would create boundaries where nature laid down the foundations of commercial intercourse and mutual economical life.” The Danube and Tisza rivers were interlocked, as were trade networks of interconnected roads and railways.

Teleki hesitated to apply nationality or self-determination, but his maps made little sense for early modern pasts. Maps are propaganda, aspirational, and, in grand form, futurist. Maps appeal to futures: Far too many of Europe’s political futures are mapped to exclude others. Although ethnomaps raised geographers’ expertise in academies of science (and, of course, we are academics), the Parisian world of 1919 did not rule out minority claims and future dreams for self-determination. The count privileged Euro-Magyars against Jews, Czechs, Slovaks, Romanians, Yugo-


19 For this Southeastern/East-Central/Central trajectory, see: Timothy Snyder/Katherine Younger (ed.), The Balkans as Europe, 1821–1914, Rochester 2018.
conservative, victim-centred narrative of trauma, Hungary was encircled, occupied, and "dismembered" after World War I. The terms for the defeated are visible today. The country lost roughly two-thirds of its population, one-third of its territory, half of its most populous cities, and its access to the sea. Reduced from 282,000 square kilometres to 93,000 square kilometres, its population decreased from 18.2 million to 7.9 million, making it Central Europe's smallest country. Its army was limited to 35,000 men. The country paid reparations. Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, and Romania, which fought against a Greater Hungary and Habsburg legitimists, became home to 3.3 million Hungarians. Containment logic followed from indelicately applied self-determination: that Magyars were the country's titular nationality and they, like colonists, would repopulate into cities and the Budapest-centric space of the Danubian Basin. Calls for justice and revenge had lasting effects. Reactions ranged from nonviolent diplomatic revision and reform to the paramilitary reconquest of Hungary's lost territories. Geographers failed spectacularly when the country lost all its 'historic' and 'ethnic' claims.

Count Teleki took the shrinkage of Hungary's geo-body personally, as if he had lost an internal organ. Geography was his 1920s new spatial science in a new, sharper, transnational key. The Ministry of Commerce, together with the MFT and MTK, published his The Economies of Hungary in Maps, a vast oeuvre, early that year. There would be many editions, enlarged with more sophisticated maps by Francis de Heinrich, the minister of commerce, and compiled by Aladár Edvi Illés, the artist, ministerial councillor, and chief of the department, along with Albert Halász, a chemical engineer, trade inspector, and Teleki's friend. When the count returned to cartography, the Ethnographical Map of Hungary Based on the Density of Population in 1920 was based primarily on the "Carte Rouge". He issued a series of maps on Hungary's frontiers, including La Hongrie du Sud: Questions de l'Europe Orientale (Southern Hungary: Eastern European Issues) and La Hongrie Occidentale (Western Hungary). With Cholnoky and Ferenc Fodor (1887–1962), he put together the Economic-Geographical Map of Hungary in Hungarian, English, and French. Along with the "Carte Rouge", it is one of two of Teleki's maps displayed for the public in the permanent gallery of the Hungarian National Museum.

Revision in the 1920s and 1930s

In April 1921, Charles IV von Habsburg made the first of two failed attempts to regain the throne of Hungary. In Austria, the king had been delegitimised by the Habsburg Law, passed by the new republic's parliament in 1919. Teleki's government did not survive the first restoration coup, though Admiral Horthy defeated both attempts at restoration in April and November 1921, when he refused to back royalists with the armed forces. On 14 April, Teleki resigned. He returned to working as a geographer in the Department of Economic Sciences at Budapest University. As a geographer, Teleki sought to continue lobbying for Hungary's struggling institutions in Budapest. He also served as the head of irredentist organisations, which disseminated maps for education in the early 1920s to promote "justice for Hungary".

To this end, from 1 to 29 August 1921 he was in the United States, invited by Colonel Lawrence Martin in Washington, D.C., to give eight lectures at Williams College in Massachusetts. He addressed an audience of eager geographers, including his friend Bowman (U.S. Inquiry). The new Republican president Warren G. Harding (in office from 1921 to 1923) invited him to the White House. He met with the Unit-
ed States’ Secretary of State Charles Evans Hughes (1862–1948), the candidate who had opposed Wilson in the 1916 election. This second trip in the United States turned out to be another formative event of Teleki’s life.

When he got back to Budapest, Teleki published The Nationalities Question from a Geographer’s Point of View, which was important in three respects. First, he highlighted population density as a marker of civilisation, since Magyars in “various natural landscapes” had “adapted to economic realities”, a mentality that was ideal for frontier exploration and colonial settlement. Second, Teleki defined Hungarian unity by race, region, language, culture, and religion – above all, religion. Hungarians could be Roman Catholics, Calvinists, Unitarians, and Lutherans “without exception”. He prioritised his baptismal heritage but marginalised Jews, Muslims, and the Romanian Orthodox. Third, Teleki appealed to the canonical authority of Europe’s geographers. Since the St. Stephen borders were “historical”, they rested beyond ordinary politics. They permitted the count to blame anyone and anything but himself for Hungary’s woes – the victors of World War I, self-determination, the Little Entente, Jews from the East, non-Magyar nationalities – updating the Transylvania of his family’s heritage into dreams of future unity.

Pál’s model for success was also across the Atlantic. In lectures back in Budapest, he enjoined students to “[a]lways study with a map by your side! Learn from the map! Practice map reading not just with one map but with several types of maps.” Geographers had to know boundaries as well as the physical size, names, and form of settlements, routes, rivers, lakes, swamps, mountains, and all landscapes for economic development. Unity came by way of hydrography, geomorphology, and climatology. Knowledge of landscapes was essential. Cartograms aided the federal use of land in the south and west. For agriculture, industry, and commerce, one had to research how wheat, cotton, corn, and other major staples were all keys to expansion. Geographers were experts who served the state. A geographer’s “human mind” by way of “synthesis” was responsible for integrating the physical, chemical, physiological, and social aspects of the earth. The earth’s surface was “culture and civilisation” and the “geography of life sciences … and geographer’s thinking should be genetic”. Teleki’s moving fundament was fold (earth), in the gender neutrality of the Magyar language. Teleki published these thoughts together in Economic Geography of America, with Special Reference to the United States.

When German-American fantasies collided at the height of his diplomatic fame, Teleki resisted getting involved in geopolitics, at least at first. In 1926, he was instrumental in the establishment of the Institute of Political Sciences (Államtudományi Intézet), which reified Ratzel’s organic state, an idea inherited from Loczy and which Teleki developed in his 1903 dissertation. The institute operated under the Central Statistical Committee in Budapest, which was responsible for the interwar census. Under Teleki’s urging, the Institute of Political Sciences and the Hungarian Statistical Society completed a massive joint project in 1926, a giant 159-page atlas, Magyarország a háboru elött és után gazdaságtatistiktai térképeken (Hungary before and after the War in Economic-Statistical Maps), with 119 maps. It was immediately sent to Bowman and the AGS in New York City. Teleki thought the institute could succeed where at Trianon he had failed, propagating maps to politicians and researchers involved in studying transnational Magyar rights and minority issues.

In January 1926, the count was allowed to lecture on geography at the Hungarian Institute of the University of Berlin. Teleki’s arguments appeared in Karl Haushofer’s Zeitschrift für Geopolitik in 1926. In the original German version, he stressed the geographical unity (Einheit) of Hungary. Teleki protested against the “worship of alien
ideologies, the economic downfall of the main pillars of support of the national intellectual world, the middle class, the penetration of our culture-bearing status with nationless and denationalising elements, and a false, international conception of liberalism [that] partly prepared souls for the ensuing radicalism”. The psychosexual metaphor of “penetration” (Durchdringung in German, beszivárgás in Magyar) – one could translate it as impregnation as well as fusion, exploration, or saturation – suggested an illiberal understanding of difference. Teleki railed against Kun’s appeals in Europe to peasants and workers. He criticised the hypocritical League of Nations. He called democracy “humbug” and Wilson’s project a “degraded idealistic utopia”. He appealed to the “historic” St. Stephen crownlands, Transylvania’s past, the “defence of Europe” by Hungary and Poland in 1683, expulsions of the Ottoman Turks in the eighteenth century. He thought Hungarians “fought valiantly” in World War I and referred to the communist revolution and the Little Entente invasion as “two great national blows”. Teleki defended a “strong Christian-national reaction” in 1919 for the creation of a Hungarian bourgeoisie, and against Bolshevism “whose radical leaders were predominantly Jewish” and “militant cosmopolitans … having multiplied in the last decades”. He paralleled Hungary’s frontiers to the U.S. West, arguing that the Alps and Carpathians were akin to the Rockies and the Appalachians. He celebrated the Great Hungarian Plain (Alföld) with allusions to North American plains and prairies, comparing these areas to “Ohio, Kansas, the Dakotas, Manitoba, and Saskatchewan”.

The Eve of World War II

Count Teleki’s lecture was a revisionist blueprint for the European anti-communism of the 1930s. As late as spring 1939, Count Teleki still believed Hungary’s elites could deal with the Führer and achieve some of their post-World War I goals. Advantages seemed to lie ahead. On 14 April, Hungary withdrew from the League of Nations. When the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact was signed, Hungary stood to gain. But when Europe’s interwar architecture collapsed, Teleki watched in horror as Poland’s fate was sealed by plans for a two-front invasion. He avowed Hungary’s neutrality from the start of the Blitzkrieg, but by that point in the summer neutrality meant accepting Hitler’s gains to the east. Teleki hoped to make gains against Czechoslovakia, Romania, and Yugoslavia. Teleki held desperately to a dying fraternity of Poland and Hungary through 1939. His European home(s) no longer existed. In an unpublished 12 February 1940 letter to Bowman, Teleki refused to part with his treasures:

“These world-war-times are quite terrible. I am nailed to Hungary or better said 23 hours out of 24 to this prison called the Prime Minister’s Palace. It is still quite good that world wars, economic difficulties and the planning-out of territorial readjustments are not only political but geographical matters and so I remain a little inside my own business. But it is very sad not to be able to meet old friends as usual and not to be able to get personally a glimpse of the outside world … I would like to see this whole mess finished soon”.

Writing to America, he equated life with his precious maps – “nailed to Hungary”. Teleki took advantage of the moment to do what Masaryk in Czechoslovakia and Romer in Poland were doing for decades: spamming the West with maps. He sent articles to Bowman from the Hungarian Quarterly, reports by Hungarians on the global dispersal of Magyars, “proofs” that stressed Magyar presence in Romania and Transylvania, and maps of Transylvania that he and András Rónai (1906–1991) had.
 prepared. Teleki and Rónai in 1937 affirmed Magyar population density along with various other documents offering proof of Hungary’s vitality, totality, and need for revision.

**Death and Afterlife in Budapest**

In these last nine months of his life, Count Teleki clung to the idea of revision and the old power of maps up to a fateful end. On 30 August 1940, Hitler granted the so-called ‘Second Vienna Award’ to Hungary, by which the country ‘recovered’ parts of Transylvania in interwar Romania. Lands included Szatmár (Satu Mare) County in which the Teleki clan’s estates were located before 1914. Hungary’s gains represented a partial reversal of Trianon. In December 1940, the prime minister signed the Mohács friendship treaty with Yugoslavia, but by March 1941, Hitler insisted that Hungarian territory be used for Germany’s war aims. The Führer reshuffled fascist Europe’s map by promising to ‘transfer’ parts of northern Yugoslavia to Hungary, but Teleki’s breaking of the treaty would put an end to Hungary’s brief neutrality. This breach signalled the demise of the count’s credibility: Hungary would become a military outpost for the Third Reich’s aggrandisement.

Such was a civiliser’s afterlife: even the Trianoners – especially the Trianoners – were Europeans. They still are. Pál’s suicide in Budapest in 1941 left behind a corps of disciple ‘sons’, but no discernible American sympathiser or West European ally in professional geography. The count’s followers were left in Budapest, colleagues and former students such as Ferenc Fodor and András Rónai. His mental map was that of a rather oddball conservative, of Hungary as integral to Western civilisation against any reduction of ‘historic’ St. Stephen lands. Yet he reasoned that an Entente-led mandate system, guided by multilingual experts to redress grievances through the League of Nations and a Eurocentric neo-colonial trusteeship, was a generally good idea. Both leagues – one Wilsonian, one unapologetically protofascist – were useful for Teleki’s ingenious Transylvanian balancing act, for they could ultimately salvage what remained of Ostmitteleuropa geographic science before 1914. In his version, anti-communist, anti-semitic Hungary looked like a protectorate of bourgeois Christendom and Western civilisation, in general conformity with his noble clan’s Transylvanianism and its early modern history.

I might describe maps less as rational tools of nations than as flawed arguments. Or better suited to an imagined Greater Hungary in Central Europe, as Rorschach blots. In 1983, just outside Budapest, in the suburb of Érd, the Hungarian Geographical Museum (Magyar Földrajzi Muzeum) was founded. It may be even less frequent-ed than the baroque-style Teleki-Degenfeld Castle (built in 1748, reopened as a hotel in 1985) in the tiny, picturesque village of Szirák in northern Hungary, not far from the Slovak border, or the Teleki Library (Bibliotheca Telekiana, built in 1802) in Târgu-Mureș, Romania, but it is no less significant. The museum is one of Teleki’s other distant progeny, the fulfilment of a dream from before 1914 to build an institution for geography modelled on the 1906 Museum for Regional Geography in Leipzig. Today, it is the Leibniz-Institut für Landeskunde, a key research centre.

Teleki wanted maps to be part of an always bigger, broader enterprise. His son Géza carried on much of his legacy, working as a geologist in Washington, D.C., until his own suicide in 1981. Critical attention to the count’s life and work is often reduced by Hungary’s wars over memory and a fragile European future, involving the politics of anti-semitism, European Union enlargement, and the return to (and exit
from) a world after 1989. Controversial proposals were made in 2004 to erect a statue to Pál in Budapest, by activists on Hungary’s centre-right and with support from the Teleki Memorial Committee and, at least initially, Gábor Demszky (b. 1952), the long-serving Hungarian liberal mayor of the city from 1990 to 2010. It drew attention from the Simon Wiesenthal Centre in Los Angeles, which admirably objected to its symbolic placement in the history and memory of European Jewry. Under international pressure by Hungarian liberals and politicians even in his own party, Demszky changed his mind. He decided that the Teleki statue had to be moved outside the city to the resort town of Balatonboglár, near Lake Balaton, in the courtyard of a Catholic church. After twenty years in office, Demszky was voted out of office. Today, his party, once a powerful strategic alliance of liberals and social democrats, has all but disappeared with the rise of Fidesz and Jobbik. Tensions of illiberality are unresolved: Teleki’s “Carte Rouge” still hangs prominently on display in the Hungarian National Museum in Budapest and the Hungarian Geographical Museum in Érd.

Stories of map men after a century define transnational life and death: the rivalry, pride, and revenge projects of a generation of European aspirational experts. A hundred years after the Trianon tragedy for Hungary, we remain captivated by talismanic powers, yet not adequately aware of the space/time channels of maps or their aesthetic dangers. Maps after empire tell tales of historic nations that can never return, or did not exist, or can never change, or never were. For Count Teleki, Hungary’s prime minister from July 1920 to April 1921 and again from February 1939 to his suicide note on 3 April 1941, maps expressed revisionist anger. A monument to Wilson was unveiled in Prague in October 2011 at the site of the Main Railway Station. The revision of Hungary’s borders is shaped now, more than ever, by neofascist politics and memory wars in the European Union. Viktor Orbán has an 1887 map of ‘Greater Hungary’ (this is one of my ‘favourites’) hanging for show in his office. Trianon maps appear on t-shirts at nationalist rallies. ESRI, GIS, and Google evangelists march on, but maps do not represent a Silicon Valley triumphalism of gadgets, much less nations and civilisations. The absurdist Two-Tailed Dog Party, a joke party, was founded in Szeged in 2006, and registered in 2014 to “make Hungary smaller again”. But, as Holly Case has pointed out, can irony ever halt dictatorship?

The final hodgepodge of Teleki and Trianon, not without hackneyed ideas or prejudice draped in science, was the posture of an insecure, fragile man. If there is a final lesson to this brokenness geography through masks and ambitions, insecure men do not merely dabble in East Central European modern politics. They dabble in aesthetics – bad opera, failed theatre – the forms of petty anger and grievance that grow out of naïve curiosity. Maps are a symbology of belonging and a vernacular of prejudice. When Teleki read his Karl May, he drew gendered frontiers for white European colonial-settler conquest far afield into revisionist geopolitical worlds. Like other tightrope statesmen in a fascist era, he sought help from Berlin and Rome when hopes in Paris, London, and Washington fell short. He failed at Trianon. Then again, he was never invited. And when he failed dramatically, much like Karl May’s fateful Winnetou the chieftain, it was a failure to play all sides at once.


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“What should we do to keep their memory alive?” This is the trigger and the recurrent question that the volume Memories of Terror: Essays on Recent Histories, edited by the Romanian philosopher and historian Mihaela Gligor, tries to give proper and articulated answers to. Still, this is not the first time that such a question is being raised. On the contrary, that question goes back to the very origin of humankind as a species, not living only in the present time, but feeding its spiritual life from past happenings and looking with hope into the future. The present is only the stage for action, for decision-making, as the time of alchemical mixture and of self-transformation concerning individual and collective consciousness. It is also the time for preparation and for expressing intentionality for what the human mind projects onto the future, for its own well-being.

Such is the first insight that the editor expresses as this volume’s reason for being. The answer to it is to be found in the very pages of the well-articulated and sensitive articles written from critical and multidisciplinary approaches by seven female authors with different backgrounds, brought together by a passion for memory in the Jewish community during and in the aftermath of the Shoah. Mihaela Gligor, Sonia Catrina, Eugenia Mihalcea, Olga Ștefan, Katharina Friedla, Tuvia Friling, and Arleen Ionescu are the voices that many people who are no longer alive speak through. Their research, though, goes beyond individual stories and expands into (hi)story and collective destiny.

In the introduction, Professor Raphael Vago from Tel Aviv University opens his plea with a distorted replica of Gligor’s question: “[h]ow do you know that we are interested in keeping you alive?” This question is a reversed understanding of memory. It is the perpetrators’ perspective, it is “how Captain Burădescu, the commanding officer on duty in the Vapniarka concentration camp in Transnistria, replied to a delegation of three inmate physicians who complained about the terrible situation in the camp” (as mentioned in Ștefan’s chapter in this volume). The dust should cover dust and every ends into the darkness of forgetfulness.

The only remedy is telling the (hi)stories and thus keeping those facts, human profiles, and happenings alive, just as one struggles to keep alight the fire against the fierce cold, against the deep darkness and inner fears and monsters.

Telling the stories of those humans and their destinies, looking up details, and trying to put them together in order to reconstruct in a tri-dimensional way the social and historical context – and thus bringing their memory alive – is what this volume aims to do. Humankind is made up of stories, and storytelling is the only way to keep exorcising the evil and maintaining the good. In the foreword, Gligor explains that “[t]he idea of the current volume came to me in July 2019, on a warm Sunday morning, while visiting the Jewish Cemetery on Okopowa Street in War-
saw.” She also mentions the “POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews, Muzeum Polaków Ratujących Żydów/The Markowa Ulma-Family Museum of Poles Who Saved Jews in World War II, the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial and Museum, the State Museum at Majdanek.” She then adds “and other places where terrible things happened,” because places are indivisibly linked to human destinies. The chapters of this book reveal that it is of utmost importance where one is born, where one comes from, where one lives or is forced to live. The history of humankind is fundamentally a sequence of relocations, migrations, and wanderings, more or less desired, more or less fulfilling.

Following this idea, cemeteries are revealed not only as final places where these tiring wanderings end, but also as loci memoriae and as places for the simultaneous reorganisation of living inner emotions and information. They seem the most static places, as nothing really happens there, but their effect on visitors is exactly the opposite. Therefore, it is not surprising that the idea of such a volume of memory was born in a ‘living’ cemetery. The scientific community can be thankful for the effervescent result that this encounter had for prompting this collection of research, which has become a useful and inspiring publication.

The first chapter, written by Sonia Catrina, introduces the argument in a rather abrupt way, using concepts like ‘dehumanisation’, the ‘metaphor of Jewish errant life’, and a ‘sense of self’, regarding Miriam Kober-Bercovici’s first-hand accounts. Lying at the intersection of Jewish studies, memory studies, and gender studies, the objective of this chapter is to ethnographically study a Jewish-Romanian girl’s personal experience during the Holocaust. Miriam Korber (later Bercovici) was born in 1923 to a Jewish family from Câmpulung Moldovenesc, Romania. She was displaced and deported along with her family to Transnistria during the Second World War, living in various ghettos in Bessarabia and later Ukraine, where she kept a diary. The text was first published in Romanian in 1992, after the fall of communism. Sonia Catrina’s analysis of the diary harmoniously combines interdisciplinary tools from sociology, anthropology, gender studies and, of course, history.

The volume continues with Katharina Friedla’s chapter “When the Shabbat Became Sunday: The Religious and Social Life of Polish Jews in the USSR during World War II”, which opens with an impressive photo of a large Orthodox Polish Jewish family in exile in the Soviet Union during the Second World War. The author asserts that the body of sources concerning the life of Jewish refugees in the Soviet Union is remarkably extensive. She mentions that the main resources that she used were early accounts held by the Hoover Institution Archives at Stanford University (including the Władysław Anders Collection and Ministerstwo Informacji i Dokumentacji Records), the Yad Vashem Archives in Jerusalem, and the Polish Institute and Sikorski Museum Archive in London (especially the Wincenty Bąkiewicz Collection). Katharina Friedla underlines that she “analyzed a critical mass of testimonies and personal reports from various proveniences, early and later testimonies and interviews, checking them against other sources and comparing them with each other, including testimonies authored by Soviet Jews”. She adds that a rigorous “periodization is a prerequisite for the analysis of the religious life in the Soviet Union” as, from its start, the Soviet regime pursued anti-religious policies and promoted the concept of atheism.

Tuvia Friling presents a thoroughly researched story of Eliezer Gruenbaum, alias Leon Berger (his nom de guerre, taken in order to cut the final ties with his origins), a “Jewish kapo, a communist, an anti-Zionist, a secularist, and the son of Yitzhak Gruenbaum, the most prominent secular leader of interwar Polish Jewry and Israel’s first Minister of the Interior”. This is the intriguing story of a member of a Judenrat
taking part in the self-annihilation process as a Blockaelterste (block elder); he was elected within the inmate hierarchy to lead the Communist Party cell of the Auschwitz-Birkenau deportation camp. After the liberation, he was rejected in the communities that he tried to re-establish himself in and put under trial, never again to be trusted and accepted. He died in 1948 in battle as a combat soldier of the Haganah, and rumours circulated that his death was in fact an execution by his comrades in revenge for his role in Auschwitz. His life and deeds continued to haunt and raise tensions among Jews in Palestine and Europe, resulting in polarised ideas and groups.

“We are what we remember” is how Mihaela Gligor introduces her chapter, as a legitimate motto of memory studies. She bases her research on the theoretical grounds of specialists like Maurice Halbwachs, Friedrich C. Bartlett, Marc Bloch, Henri Bergson, and even Sigmund Freud and the writer Marcel Proust, who pointed out the importance of the cultural roles of memory and remembrance, based on sites of memory, texts, images, and rituals as identity patterns for a specific community. The case that Gligor brings to light is that of Saul Steinberg (1914–1999), his experiences of anti-semitism and xenophobia in interwar Romania, and how his memories of his home country influenced his artistic work in his final homeland, the United States, where he ended up after passing through Italy and the Dominican Republic. The socio-cultural climate in which Saul Steinberg grew up proved to be highly toxic and unproductive. The rise of fascist ideologies and groups like the Iron Guard or the Archangel Michael Legion, led by Corneliu Zelea Codreanu, forced many young members of the Jewish communities to emigrate to Western countries to escape humiliation and harassment. They also emigrated because of denaturalisation, which resulted from the legislative Decree No. 169 regarding the revision of Romanian citizenship (adopted by the Goga government on 21 January 1938), by which some quarter of a million Romanian Jews lost their Romanian citizenship. Saul Steinberg fled to Italy and started university and work as an editorial drawer. Soon, racial laws came into force in Italy as well and, after graduating as an architect, he had to flee to America, where he married a fellow Romanian artist, Hedda Sterne. He found a special place in his art and memory for Palas Street in Bucharest, where he had grown up, and for his country of origin which he chose not to visit again, as such places “don’t belong to geography but to time […] It’s better to leave certain things in peace, just the way they are in memory: with the passage of time they become the mythology of our lives.”

Arleen Ionescu’s “Traces of Survival in a World of Terror” examines the case of Kathy Kacer in a rather unusual Jewish China, as described in Kacer’s book Shanghai Escape. The author of the article begins by giving some details about the historical context: “Before and during World War II, when more than six million European Jews perished in concentration and death camps, the only country that saved a significant number of Jewish people fleeing from Hitler’s hell in Europe was China.” Shanghai offered “a safe haven for Jews at the most horrific moment in human history”, according to Jackie Eldan, a former consul general of Israel in Shanghai. There, German, Austrian, Russian, Polish, and Lithuanian Jews landed in several stages after 1933, by the tens of thousands, which meant as many saved lives. They did not have an easy life in China, especially during the Second Sino-Japanese War, when poverty struck refugees from the Japanese-controlled territories who were concentrated in Shanghai. However, they were at least not in the horrific situation that their families and friends in Europe were. A Chinese ‘Schindler’s List’ was established in recently annexed Austria by Dr Ho Feng Shan, the Chinese consul, who offered the
Austrian Jews life-saving visas to Shanghai despite this irritating the Nazis. ‘Noah’s Arks’ sailed away from Europe all the way to China, loaded with Jewish families, while Dr Ho was dismissed for the sake of diplomatic relations between Germany and China. Chinese people offered hospitality to Jewish refugees coming in different waves, and Chinese hospitals accepted and saved Jewish people’s lives, the author shows. Even in difficult situations, like in the aftermath of the attack on Pearl Harbour, the Chinese authorities ‘protected their guests and never manifested any antisemitic hostility’. The rich narratives on the subject, such as *Shanghai Escape*, endorse and bring further material to the historical data regarding places of memory and ‘witnessing witnessing’. The book is analysed through an interdisciplinary approach and the article brings further light to the subject by means of psychoanalysis, memory and trauma studies, history, and literature, offering a vast and sharp picture of the Shanghai Ghetto.

The sixth chapter, written by Eugenia Mihalcea, touches on the sensitive subject of how Romanian Jewish children who went on to live in Israel remember the Holocaust and the inconceivable horror of 1.5 million children being condemned to death in the gas chambers. Most of these children were Jewish, but there were also Roma or disabled children; only six to eleven per cent of all the children survived, much less than the figure for adults (33 per cent). The children were the first to be killed and the last to testify. As the author herself discloses, “the study is based on testimonies of children survivors who were deported to Transnistria during the Holocaust, but who were no longer children by the time they first testified. Consequently, their testimonies must be viewed in light of the fact that their perception of their own past is in close connection with their experiences over the years. In order to show that I analyzed children survivors’ testimonies using narrative qualitative research” on seven cases from the Kestenberg Archive, from the unique project led in the 1980s by Dr Judith S. Kestenberg and her husband, Milton Kestenberg.

The last chapter of the volume is Olga Ștefan’s study on the Vapniarka special status concentration camp for political prisoners in Transnistria when it was under Romanian rule, namely under Marshal Antonescu from 1941. The article analyses the survivors’ testimonies, through journals, books, recorded testimonies, and artistic objects. Olga Ștefan highlights precious details about the daily life in the camp up to the liberation when, on 6 March 1943, a commission was sent to the camp to select the Jews who had been hospitalised by mistake. It was determined that out of the 554 Jews who were arrested, 427 had no valid basis for being detained. Paradoxically, instead of being sent home, they had to pass through other ghettos first. The remaining internees, the leaders of the clandestine communist collective of the camp, were transferred to Ribnita and massacred by retreating SS troops on 17 March 1944. In the conclusion, Ștefan points out that Vapniarka, “despite its very diverse population, and its designation as a camp for political prisoners, was just another Jewish camp in Transnistria with a regime of extermination”.

As the afterword underlines, the volume is a collection of rare points of view and cases about the ‘Time of Terror’ and the ‘Time of Remembrance’, the ‘Before’ and the ‘After’. The studies are mostly based on authentic documents, and the first-hand scientific bibliography represents a treasure trove of thought and research on the volume’s topic. The original and sharp views of the authors refresh the historiography of what seems to be the very fruitful and even ever self-regenerating subject of the Time of Remembrance, to be endlessly maintained in order to prevent another Time of Terror. It also represents the true answer to the initial question: “what should we do to keep their memory alive?”
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