

UC Berkeley

UC Berkeley Electronic Theses and Dissertations

Title

In Scattered Formation: Displacement, Alignment and the German-Jewish Diaspora

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/56c875np>

Author

Ganir, Sheer

Publication Date

2019

Peer reviewed|Thesis/dissertation

In Scattered Formation:
Displacement, Alignment and the German-Jewish Diaspora

by

Sheer Ganor

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

History

and the Designated Emphasis

in

Jewish Studies

in the

Graduate Division

of the

University of California, Berkeley

Committee in charge:

Professor John M. Efron, Chair
Professor Stefan-Ludwig Hoffmann
Professor Thomas W. Laqueur
Professor Anton Kaes

Summer 2019

In Scattered Formation: Displacement, Alignment and the German-Jewish Diaspora

© 2019

by Sheer Ganor

Abstract

In Scattered Formation: Displacement, Alignment and the German-Jewish Diaspora

by

Sheer Ganor

Doctor of Philosophy in History

and the Designated Emphasis in Jewish Studies

University of California, Berkeley

Professor John Efron, Chair

The rise of National Socialism catalyzed a mass wave of forced migration of Jews from Nazi Germany and its annexed territories. From the beginning of Hitler's rule and until the end of the Second World War, it is estimated that more than 400,000 German-speaking Jews fled antisemitic violence in Central Europe in search of safe havens and new homes. This dissertation portrays the process by which this displaced population reconstituted itself as a diaspora. It captures the contours of life in the aftermath of forced migration; the modalities of reorientation adopted by the displaced in their diasporic communities; their efforts to preserve a cultural identity threatened by extinction; and the lived tensions that emerged as a result of these developments. Encapsulating five continents and spanning from 1933 and until the end of the twentieth century, this dissertation approaches displacement as a dynamic field, illuminating the ways in which diasporic communities evolve across time. In its geographic reach, it explores the multifaceted responses of a community bound by shared history to the shock of near-total dispersion and to the cataclysmic rupture of the Holocaust.

Three key analytical threads are woven together throughout the five chapters that comprise the dissertation. The first approaches displacement as a lived experience. By focusing on spheres and aspects of everyday life – from relationships between parents and children, through visits to the doctor, to sharing jokes and laughs – this study uncovers multidimensional manifestations of displacement. As a result, the dissertation proposes to understand displacement as a condition that permeates across life spheres and extends well beyond the immediate events of forced removal. The second thread explores displaced German-speaking Jewry as a diasporic community that had no center to which they could look back towards. Forced migration and genocidal persecution created unique circumstances wherein far more German-speaking Jews were living outside of Europe than in it. Decades after National Socialism, German-speaking Jewry remained in its essence a diaspora, and unlike the majority of dispersed populations, this diaspora had no existing space to yearn for as a home. Displacement and dispersion were, I argue, the defining characteristics of German-speaking Jewry during this time period. Building on this last point, the third thread of the dissertation illuminates the coherence of the German-Jewish diaspora. While diasporas by nature operate as complex and variegated networks, they

are also built around a set of ideas that bind their constituents together – a shared history, culture and values that become amplified in the process of diasporic formation. In the case explored here, this coherence was borne out of the pressures of balancing Jewishness and Germaness in light of and in the aftermath of the Holocaust. The fervor of anti-Jewish violence had made it impossible for the vast majority of German-speaking Jews to return to their previous homelands. Isolated and banished, the displaced nevertheless resisted denouncing their affinity with German culture, language and history. Although they had been forcibly removed from a geographic landscape, they remained embedded in a mental one that continued to play a crucial role in shaping their post-migration, still-displaced lives. The tension between German-speaking Jews' continued attachment to their lost homes and the irreparable sense of grief and betrayal that was unleashed in these places echoes throughout the dissertation, as it resonated across the German-Jewish diaspora.

For the displaced.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	iii
Introduction	1
Chapter 1: Lives in Boxes	13
Chapter 2: Comic Relief	35
Chapter 3: Encountering Jews, Probing Germanness	57
Chapter 4: The <i>Wiedergutmachung</i> Network	80
Chapter 5: Generation In-Flux	102
Coda: From Boxes into Vitrines	120
Works Cited	126

Acknowledgements

Throughout the years of pursuing my academic goals and authoring this dissertation, I was blessed to have had the assistance, support and encouragement of so many people. Each have contributed to the completion of this work in various ways, and I am so very grateful to them for that. At UC Berkeley's Department of History, I am immensely fortunate to have had the guidance and mentorship of brilliant scholars whose passion for history is simply infectious. With his sharp insight, his immense knowledge, his thoughtfulness and his kindness, John Efron has been an endless source of encouragement and inspiration. A generous and attentive reader, he taught me not only the mechanics but also the design and architecture of good scholarship. John gave me one of the biggest gifts an advisor can give to a graduate student: He always made it abundantly clear that he genuinely believed in me. I could not have asked for a better *Doktorvater*. My conversations with Stefan-Ludwig Hoffmann were absolutely instrumental in working through this project. Stefan has one of the most perceptive and creative minds that I have encountered, and his comments always worked towards helping me understand and articulate my own thoughts and arguments better. Whether we were discussing my research, his projects or other scholars' work, I have learned so much from him. I am a better historian, a better writer, and probably a better human being thanks to my interactions with Tom Laqueur. I have benefitted from his brilliance in ways that far exceed this immediate dissertation. Tom taught me that connecting the cosmic with the particular is such a worthy and gratifying pursuit, one that will continue to play a great role in life.

Many other wonderful scholars at Berkeley have generously donated their time and their ideas. Andrea Sinn, Tony Kaes and Isabel Richter offered invaluable advice and critique. John Connelly kindly shared his thoughts about the framing of this work. Deena Aranoff and Ron Hendel introduced me to the rich and wonderful scholarships of ancient and medieval Jewish history. James Vernon was always available for a conversation and happy to provide his astute and thoughtful guidance. Interacting with Naomi Seidman has been both revelatory and absolutely hilarious.

I was immensely fortunate to benefit from the wisdom and the support of brilliant mentors outside of Berkeley as well. When studying for a BA in Tel Aviv, Nizan Lebovic's seminars were probably the first that made me want to learn more and more and more. Nizan's guidance accompanied me on my very first steps as a historian and I am so grateful for his trust and his encouragement. Atina Grossmann has been a constant source of inspiration and support. Studying with her in Berlin brought the past into life and taught me to look for history in my own environment, wherever I may be. It was, strangely enough, during breakfast at the Buchenwald Concentration Camp museum that Darcy Buerkle encouraged me to apply to graduate programs in the United States. From that very moment and until the present one, she was always there for me. As a historian, Darcy's work and teaching pushed me to think beyond conventions of historical writing and to seek the voices that are less visible but so worthy of listening to. Darcy has and continues to be a model of mentorship and friendship.

A number of institutions have generously supported my studies and my research through funding, administrative aid and morale. I would like to wholeheartedly thank UC Berkeley's Department of History, especially Mabel Lee and Todd Kuebler, for all the assistance offered to me during the years. Etta Heber and her colleagues at the Center for Jewish Studies at Berkeley were always ready to help in any way that they could. Heike Friedman, Andrea Westermann and the wonderful team at the German Historical Institute West welcomed me to this vibrant

intellectual community. I was honored to be awarded the Leo Baeck Fellowship by the German Academic Scholarship Foundation in 2017-2018. During my year as a fellow, I benefitted greatly from my engagements with both faculty mentors and the cohort of scholars, and I thank Daniel Wildmann and Peter Antes for their support. A number of research grants were instrumental for the realization of my project and I am grateful to the institutions that provided them: The Central European History Society, the Institute of International Studies at UC Berkeley, the Erasmus+ Programme, the Academic Consortium of the Jewish Community Federation, the Newhouse Foundation and the Diller Family Foundation.

I am also thankful to the archives and archivists that have assisted me in the process: Michael Simonson and his colleagues at the Leo Baeck Institute NYC, Megan Lewis and Vincent Slatt and the rest of the team at the US Holocaust Memorial Museum, Aubrey Pomeranz, Jörg Waßmer and their colleagues at the Jewish Museum Berlin, Judith Bar Or at the German-speaking Jewry Heritage Museum in Tefen, Meirav Reuveni and her colleagues at the Leo Baeck Institute Jerusalem, the team at the Wiener Library London, Hannah Ratford at the BBC Written Archives, Clive Kirkwood at the Cape Town University Archives, the Tel Aviv University Diaspora Research Center, the SUNY Albany Archives, the *Akademie der Künste*, the Berlin *Entschädigungsamt*, the Senate House Libraries and the New York Public Library. And to all those who toiled hard on the digitization of archival sources – you are the unsung heroes of history PhD students across the world.

For six whole years, I have had the privilege of participating in the most productive, most rigorous and most cheerful scholarly forum: The UC Berkeley Working Group for German History and Culture, *Der Kreis*. Led by graduate students, *Der Kreis* has offered me the opportunity to workshop nearly every aspect of this dissertation, as well as a space to engage with works in progress by leading established scholars in the field and brilliant fellow PhD students. With their challenging yet supportive critiques, the group's members helped me refine my argumentation and my analysis. But our regular meetings gave me so much more than just feedback. *Der Kreis* was the intellectual community that I always hoped to be a part of. It is a space where dedicated minds share their love of studying history and their commitment to supporting the scholarship of others.

At *Der Kreis* and in Berkeley more broadly, I met many people who I now cherish not only as colleagues but as close friends. Sarah Stoller has touched me deeply with both her mind and her heart. Ula Madej-Krupitski, my dear *Doktorschwester*, was always there to offer advice and also laughs. Danny Luzon and Bat El Alon are my home away from home. I am constantly moved by Simone Stirner's caring and brilliant soul. Camilo Lunde gets me in ways that no other person can. My friendship with Yotam Tsal is a gift that I will forever be thankful for. I don't know how I would have accomplished this without Tehila Sasson, whose loving support always makes everything look much easier. Sara Friedman gives me hope in humanity on a regular basis. Jennifer Allen never ceases to amaze me with her talent and her generosity. In Yael Segalovitz, I have met the real-life version of Wonder Woman. Julia Wambach is the walking definition of *Menschlichkeit*. Elena Kempf's smile always gives me a boost.

My closest relationships have proven resistant to frequent moving around and have kept their closeness despite ever growing geographic distance. Lady Dana von Suffrin Brüller is a transcendent human being who I sometimes want to have all to myself. Valeria Geselev is the bravest, most honest and most creative spirit that I know and our friendship inspires me to be a better person. Udi Goldstein is the beautifully imperfect combination of everything that I adore in this world. Héla Hecker's genius is matched only by her superhuman ability to love. Etay

Naor and Spiffy are carved deep into my heart. I can't believe how lucky I am to have had them as my family. Ofra Lior is like a magnificent painting in which I discover something new every time I look at it.

Many canine companions have graced me with their presence as I toiled over this work. Argus, Kikko, Mona and Babka – thank you for welcoming me into your life and for sharing your walks with me. Mocha Bean and Rudi, you give me never ending joy. While shoving your head between my hands and the keyboard can't technically be considered helpful, you did so much to assist me in getting through this. I believe that you know how much you mean to me.

Without my family, there is absolutely no way that I would have been where I am today. I honestly wouldn't tolerate me as well as they do. The amount of love and support that they have poured over me throughout the years is a forceful wind in my sails. I am indebted to the sacrifices and efforts of my parents, and especially my mother, Irit Ganor. In my brothers, Ben and Gan Ganor, I see beautiful reminders that I am so much more than just a single physical entity. I hope I did them proud.

Aaron, it is impossible to list all the ways in which you were there for me during this process. I'll say just this: Thanks to our deep love for each other, I experience life most fully.

Introduction

A 1941 song by Hermann Leopoldi begins with a question: “Remember the Novaks? The Novaks from Prague?” The song then continues to paint a lyrical portrait of this Central European family. The Novaks, Leopoldi recounts to his audience, lived comfortably in the Old Town quarter of the Czech capital. Their Sunday roast meals were famous all throughout the region of Bohemia. The problem with the Novaks, the song recalls, was that they seemed perpetually caught up in their dreams. The son, Leo, dreamt of nights in Montevideo. Then there was aunt Anna, who dreamt always of Havana. Arthur, the young one, dreamt of travel to Lisbon. The cook, Marianka, dreamt of Casablanca; while the daughter, named Mali, dreamt of dancing in Bali, in Shanghai and in Bombay, so Leopoldi narrates their reveries in rhyme. From their lovely home in Prague, he sings, the Novaks dreamt of seeing the beautiful world. Then the world intruded on their dreams. They were awakened from their fantasies by the sound of marching boots heard throughout their hometown, accompanied by ringing calls for “one Führer, one Volk.” One day, the Novaks were nowhere to be seen around town. Where had they gone? Leo found himself in Montevideo; aunt Anna, who made her way to Havana, was waiting for Arthur to join her from Lisbon; sure enough, Marianka ended up in Casablanca; and Mali, unable to obtain visas to Shanghai or Bombay, was still stuck in Bali. “The days are long,” sings Leopoldi. And as each one passes, the Novaks, are still dreaming. Scattered throughout globe, from temporary housing in all those different cities, the Novaks kept dreaming. But now they dream “of one place alone. They are dreaming of Prague.”¹

Hermann Leopoldi, who composed and performed the Novaks from Prague, as well as Kurt Robitscheck, who wrote the lyrics, were themselves a part of this global diaspora, as were so many of the listeners who idolized the Viennese Leopoldi and his songs. A legendary performer throughout the 1920s and 1930s all across German-speaking Europe, he was received with grand enthusiasm when he arrived to New York in March of 1939.² Robitscheck, a native of Prague, was living in Berlin in 1933, when he began his journey of forced migration via Vienna, Paris and London, arriving in New York a few years thereafter.³ As it turned out, there was a growing audience in New York that welcomed their style of entertainment with excitement. In clubs such as “Alt Wien” [Old Vienna] or “Eberhardt’s Café Grinzing,” these audiences would gather to hear Leopoldi sing familiar classics and exile-inspired new hits. In Manhattan, London, Buenos Aires, Shanghai, Haifa, Los Angeles, Istanbul, La Paz and in other cities across the globe, German-speaking refugees from Central Europe established cultural enclaves where the Novaks’ tale resonated particularly well.

This following dissertation tells the story of the Novaks from Prague, the Weinbergs from Berlin, the Kahns from Hamburg and the Eislers from Vienna. It follows the communities of German-speaking Jews that were forcibly driven from their homes and their homelands in Central Europe by the menacing threat of National Socialist dispossession and violence.

¹ “Die Novaks aus Prag,” written by Kurt Robitscheck; composed and performed by Hermann Leopoldi. The song was officially released in October 1941. A recording of the song is available at <https://youtu.be/IWh0LwP74qA>.

² Georg Traska and Christoph Lind, *Hermann Leopoldi. The Life of a Viennese Piano Humorist*, trans. Dennis McCort (Riverside: Ariadne, 2013).

³ Marie-Theres Anrbom, *War'n Sie schon mal in mich verliebt?: Filmstars, Operettenliebhaber und Kabarettgrößen in Wien und Berlin* (Vienna: Böhlau 2006), 84-112.

Dispersed throughout the world, German-Jewish refugees became embedded into an emerging transnational community, a displaced collective that reconstituted itself as a diaspora. Applying a comparative lens that encapsulates five continents, the following chapters trace the German-Jewish dispersion to illuminate the features of life in displacement and the refugees' responses to this shared condition in different locales. They capture the ways in which refugees orientated themselves in their diasporic communities, their efforts to preserve a collective cultural identification in light of genocidal violence, and the fissures that emerged across the diaspora as a result of their near-total dispersion. Spanning the period from 1933 to the end of the twentieth century, *In Scattered Formation* approaches displacement as a dynamic field – not a fixed event or a static context. In doing so, the dissertation illuminates the ways in which diasporic communities evolve across time. In its wide geographic reach, it explores the multifaceted responses of a community, bound by shared history, to the shock of a near-total dispersion and the cataclysmic rupture of the Holocaust.

As a diasporic population that no longer had a center to look to from afar, German-speaking Jewry proposes a unique case in relation to other modern diasporas. National Socialist persecution created a mass-exodus of Jewish communities from their native homelands. Almost all of those who remained perished in the Holocaust. These radical demographic transitions produced the foundational fact that, from the outset of their forced migration and until the end of the twentieth century, German-speaking Jews lived in far greater numbers outside of Central Europe than within it. During this period, this dissertation contends that German Jewry was, in its essence, a diasporic community defined by mass displacement. As such, the arc of the project examines how this particular diasporic formation shaped and shifted the relationship between displaced people, the physical places from which they were removed and the symbolic meaning that people assigned to these original locales from the vantage of new ones over time.

As Leopoldi's song suggests, plight and longing were constant components of life in the aftermath of persecution, dispossession and forced migration. But were German-Jewish refugees truly caught up in yearning for their previous homelands, as he portrayed "The Novaks from Prague"? One of the central threads running through the dissertation takes up this question. Of the approximately 400,000-430,000 Jews who managed to escape Nazi Germany and its annexed territories between 1933-1941, it is estimated that no more than 5% returned to live in Central Europe after the Second World War.⁴ For comparison, approximately half of the political exiles

⁴ It is not possible to determine the numbers of German-speaking Jewish refugees that had Central Europe with accuracy. It is estimated that between 270,000-300,000 Jews had left Germany proper, approximately 120,000-130,000 left Austria and approximately 25,000 Jews who identify as German-speakers left the Sudeten region and the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia. See Gabriele Anderl, "Die ‚Zentralstellen für jüdische Auswanderung‘ in Wien, Berlin und Prag: Ein Vergleich", *Tel Aviver Jahrbuch für Deutsche Geschichte* 23 (1994), 283; Avraham Barkai, "Die Heimat Vertreibt Ihre Kinder. Die Nationalsozialistische Verfolgungspolitik 1933 bis 1941," in Jüdisches Museum Berlin (eds.), *Heimat und Exil. Emigration der deutschen Juden nach 1933* (Frankfurt a. Main: Jüdischer Verlag im Suhrkamp, 2006), 16; Albert Lichtblau, "Austria," in Wolf Gruner and Jörg Osterloh (eds.), *The Greater German Reich and the Jews: Nazi Persecution Policies in the Annexed Territories 1935-1945*, trans. Bernard Heise (New York: Berghahn, 2015), 61; Jörg Osterloh, "Sudetenland," in Gruner and Osterloh (eds.), 84; Jonny Moser, *Demographie der jüdischen Bevölkerung Österreichs 1938-1945* (Vienna: Dokumentationsarchiv des österreichischen Widerstandes, 1999); Herbert Strauss, "Jewish Emigration from Germany. Nazi Policies and Jewish Responses (I)," *The Leo Baeck Institute Year Book* 25, no. 1 (January 1980), 327. As for remigration rates, between 12,000-15,000 Jews returned to live in Germany in the postwar years. Marita Krauss, "Jewish Remigration: An Overview of an Emerging Discipline", *The Leo Baeck Institute Year Book* 49, no. 1 (January 2004) 107.

that were persecuted under the Nazi regime would return to their homelands after 1945.⁵ Evidently, amongst the Jewish refugees, remigration was an exception.⁶ Yet it would be wrong to assume, based on these numbers, that German-speaking Jews disavowed their previous homelands and severed their attachment to them. To the contrary, as will be made clear throughout this dissertation, displaced German-speaking Jewry actively invested in carving out spaces where it could maintain a collective particularism rooted in German culture and informed by the historical experience of a Jewish minority group. It did so precisely as its rootedness in German society disintegrated, first at the initiative of racialized exclusion, and later through internal misgivings.

The low numbers of Jews who chose to return after 1945 are therefore not so much an indication that, all over the world, dispersed German-speaking Jews have lost interest in dreaming of their former hometowns. Rather, these figures suggest that German-speaking Jews were longing for something that they did not believe could be attained again, certainly not in the geographies where they have endured persecution and genocide. National Socialism had not merely occupied but extinguished their home, such that the defeat of Nazism could hardly return what was already gone. Low remigration rates also suggest that, following their displacement, German-speaking Jews began attaching new meanings to the places from which they had been ejected. The following chapters will address the questions of what might have filled the dreams of the Novaks and those who shared their fate; what mental space did Prague – or any other city, neighborhood or region – occupy in their post-displacement realities; and how did their yearning for it shape their lives in new homelands, as part of a global diaspora.

Historiographic Overview

The history of Jewish refugees from Nazi Germany has long been a topic of scholarly interest, producing voluminous publications. Indeed, this existing literature has been instrumental to the conceptualization and the realization of this dissertation. A significant part of the historiography on this topic focuses primarily on the study of refugee communities in particular geographies.⁷ Alongside these important studies, a number of publications that center

⁵ Claus-Dieter Krohn, “Einleitung,” Krohn and Patrik von zur Mühlen (eds.), *Rückkehr und Aufbau nach 1945: deutsche Remigranten im öffentlichen Leben Nachkriegsdeutschlands* (Marburg, 1997) 9.

⁶ On Jewish remigration to Germany after WWII, see Bettina Bannasch and Michael Rupp (eds.), *Rückkehrerzählungen. Über die (Un-)Möglichkeit nach 1945 als Jude in Deutschland zu Leben* (Göttingen: V&R Unipress, 2018); John Bornemen and Jeffrey Peck (eds.), *Sojourners: The Return of German Jews and the Question of Identity* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1995); Atina Grossmann and Tamar Lewinsky, “Erster Teil: 1945-1949. Zwischenstation,” in Michael Brenner (ed.), *Geschichte der Juden in Deutschland von 1945 bis zur Gegenwart* (München, C.H. Beck, 2012), 134-139; Malachi Haim Hacoheh, *Jacob & Esau Jewish European History Between Nation and Empire* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 540-583; Marita Krauss, “Jewish Remigration”; “Die Region als erste Wirkungsstätte von Remigranten,” in Krohn and von zur Mühlen (eds.), 23-37; Christoph Reinprecht, *Zurückgekehrt: Identität und Bruch in der Biographie österreichischer Juden* (Vienna: Braumüller, 1992).

⁷ To mention just a few: Marion Berghahn, *Continental Britons: German-Jewish Refugees from Nazi Germany* (New York and Oxford: Berghahn, 2007); Irene Eber, *Wartime Shanghai and the Jewish Refugees from Central Europe: Survival Co-Existence and Identity in a Multi-Ethnic City* (Boston: De Gruyter, 2012); Yoav Gelber, *Moledet Hadasha: Aliyat Yehudei Merkaz Eirova u’Klitatam, 1933-1948* (Jerusalem: Yad Ben Zvi and Makhon Leo Baeck, 1990); Marion Kaplan, *Dominican Haven: The Jewish Refugee Settlement in Sosúa, 1940-1945* (New York: Museum of Jewish Heritage, 2008); Klaus Koppel, *Nahariyya und die deutsche Einwanderung nach Eretz*

on particular groups of refugees also provide valuable insight into the history of this community of forced migration. Some of these focused studies examine specific rescue operations.⁸ Others explore the fate of particular professional groups or intellectual communities.⁹ The imprint of individual refugees on a variety of fields and disciplines in industry, art or science has also garnered scholarly attention.¹⁰ Several historians have focused their attention on newspapers and publications that catered to German-Jewish readership in various locales and, in doing so, have explored the daily affairs, concerns and priorities of this dispersed population.¹¹ Important scholarship devoted to efforts of Central European Jews to escape the “Third Reich”, to the legal mechanisms that governed or hindered their emigration and the organizations that sought to support them in their flight has been immensely valuable as well.¹² Importantly, the international responses to the global refugee crisis that developed as more and more Central European Jews were forced into displacement also became the topic of extensive scholarship.¹³

Israel: Die Geschichte seiner Einwohner von 1935 bis 1941 (Tefen: Das offene Museum, 2010); Steven Lowenstein, *Frankfurt on the Hudson: The German-Jewish Community of Washington Heights, 1933-1983* (Detroit: Wayne State University, 1989); Anne Schenderlein, “German on Their Minds”? *German Jewish Refugees in the United States and Relationships to German, 1938-1998*, diss, 2014; Anja Siegmund (ed.), *Deutsche und Zentraleuropäische Juden in Palästina und Israel: Kulturtransfers, Lebenswelten, Identitäten Beispiele aus Haifa* (Berlin: Neofelix, 2016); Leo Spitzer, *Hotel Bolivia: The Culture of Memory in a Refuge from Nazism* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1998); Bill Williams, “Jews and Other Foreigners”: *Manchester and the Victims of European Fascism, 1933-1940* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2011).

⁸ See for example, Werner Angress, *Between Fear and Hope: Jewish Youth in the Third Reich*, trans. Christine Granger (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988); Judith Tydor Baumel-Schwarz, *Never Look Back: The Jewish Refugee Children in Great Britain, 1938-1945* (West Lafayette: Purdue University Press, 2012); Brian Amkraut, *Between Home and Homeland: Youth Aliyah from Nazi Germany* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama, 2006).

⁹ Including Steven Aschheim, *Beyond the Border: The German-Jewish Legacy Abroad* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007); Albrecht Dümmling, *The Vanished Musicians: Jewish Refugees in Australia*, trans. Diana K. Weekes (New York: Peter Lang, 2016); Rhonda Levin, *Class, Networks, and Identity: Replanting Jewish lives from Nazi Germany to Rural New York* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2001); Horst Widmann, *Exil und Bildungshilfe. Die deutschsprachige akademische Emigration in die Türkei nach 1933* (Bern: Herbert Lang, Frankfurt a. Main: Peter Lang, 1973).

¹⁰ For example, Gerd Gemünden, *Continental Strangers: German Exile Cinema, 1933-1951* (New York: University of Columbia Press, 2014); Nitzan Lebovic, “German Jewish Judges and the Permanent State of Catastrophe,” in Andreas Killen and Nitzan Lebovic, *Catastrophe: a History and Theory of an Operative Concept* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2014), 93-110; Fania Oz-Salzberger and Eli Salzberger, “The Secret German Sources of the Israel Supreme Court,” *Israel Studies* 3, no. 2 (November 2007), 159-192; John Russell Taylor, *Strangers in Paradise: The Hollywood Emigres 1933-1950* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1983).

¹¹ Elke-Vera Kotowski, *Aufbau Sprachrohr, Heimat, Mythos: Geschichte(n) einer deutsch-jüdischen Zeitung aus New York 1934 bis Heute* (Berlin: Hentrich and Hentrich, 2011); Susanne Bauer-Hack, *Die jüdische Wochenzeitung Aufbau und die Wiedergutmachung* (Düsseldorf: Droste, 1994); Peter Schrag, *The World of Aufbau: Hitler’s Refugees in America* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2019); Kerstin E. Schirp, *Die Wochenzeitung “Semanario Israelita”: Sprachrohr der deutsch-jüdischen Emigranten in Argentinien* (Münster: Lit, 2001). Anthony Grenville, *Jewish Refugees from Germany and Austria in Britain, 1933-1970: Their Image in AJR Information* (Portland: Vallentine Mitchell, 2010).

¹² Debórah Dwork and Robert Jan van Pelt, *Flight from the Reich: Refugee Jews, 1933-1946* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2009); David Jünger, *Jahre der Ungewissheit: Emigrationspläne deutscher Juden 1933–1938* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 2016). The issue of emigration and escape appears often also in Saul Friedländer, *Nazi Germany and the Jews, vol. I, Years of Persecution, 1933-1939* (New York: Harper Collins, 2002) and Marion Kaplan, *Between Dignity and Despair: Jewish Life in Nazi Germany* (New York: Oxford, 1998).

¹³ Including Richard Breitman and Alan Kraut, *American Refugee Policy and European Jewry, 1933-1945* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987); Greg Burgess, *The League of Nations and the Refugees from Nazi Germany: James G. McDonald and Hitler’s Victims* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2016); Frank Caestrecke and Bob

While the studies listed here, amongst other publications, provide thoughtful and significant examinations of particular strands in the history of the German-Jewish displacement, based either on the receiving destination, on a group affiliation or on other specific aspects of this historical event, a more comprehensive approach to the study of this dispersed population has only recently started to emerge. Several edited volumes that combine multiple contributions to form a transnational perspective are available.¹⁴ These publications, valuable and illuminating, are nevertheless inherently limited in providing a coherent analysis. Walter Laqueur's *Generation Exodus* was possibly the first to offer an analysis of dispersed German-speaking Jewry as a global community, though he chose to focus his study only on the group of refugees who, like himself, were born between the years 1914-1928.¹⁵ Laqueur's thoughtful and attentive account is nevertheless often led by a triumphalist retrospective approach, celebrating the successes and achievements of individuals who were a part of what he terms "the Kissinger Generation." While it is certainly true that many refugees can claim meaningful accomplishments despite being subjected to countless obstacles, the present dissertation proposes a more nuanced, less teleological approach to the history of German-Jewish displacement. The position that Laqueur developed in his book is, arguably, itself a result of this history, in that it strengthens and is strengthened by a collective mode of narration that members of the German-Jewish diaspora uphold with regards to their shared past, one marked by excellence in the midst of horror. Laqueur's work is nevertheless extremely valuable in that it has laid the foundations for research that conceptualizes displaced German-speaking Jewry as a *Schicksalsgemeinschaft*, a community of shared fate, despite the extensive geographic dispersion that had seemingly severed the ties that existed prior to displacement.

A number of comparative studies that examine German-Jewish communities in two or more destinations of displacement enhance our understanding of the German-Jewish diaspora as a transnational phenomenon, while illuminating the particular experiences of forced migration in specific locales. Geneviève Susemihl's study of German-Jewish refugees in both New York and Toronto focuses on the question of acclimation, and traces the various approaches that these forced migrants have taken in adjusting to foreign environments that were to become their new homes.¹⁶ Susemihl's choice to focus on these two particular cities fruitfully illuminates the diversity of German-Jewish diasporic nodes. The vast majority of the 120,000-140,000 German-speaking Jews who arrived in the United States have passed through the gates of New York City,

Moore (eds.), *Refugees from Nazi Germany and the Liberal European States* (New York: Berghahn, 2010); Daniela Gleizer, *Unwelcome Exiles. Mexico and the Jewish Refugees from Nazism, 1933-1945* (Leiden: Brill, 2014); Franz Kieffer, *Judenverfolgung in Deutschland – eine innere Angelegenheit? Internationale Reaktionen auf die Flüchtlingsproblematik 1933-1939* (Stuttgart: Steiner, 2002); Louise London, *Whitehall and the Jews, 1933-1948: British Immigration Policy, Jewish Refugees and the Holocaust* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000); Ari Sherman, *Britain and Refugees from the Third Reich 1933-1939* (Berkeley: Berkeley University Press, 1973).

¹⁴ For example, Parts 2&3 in Jay Howard Geller and Leslie Morris (eds.), *Three-Way Street: Jews, Germans and the Transnational* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2016); Elke-Vera Kotowski, *Das Kulturerbe deutschsprachiger Juden Eine Spurensuche in den Ursprungs-, Transit- und Emigrationsländern* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2017); Helga Schreckenberger (ed.), *Networks of Refugees from Nazi Germany: Continuities, Reorientations and Collaborations in Exile* (Boston: Brill, 2016). Margit Franz's and Heimo Halbrainer's (eds.) *Going East – Going South: Österreichisches Exil in Asien und Afrika* (Graz: Clio, 2014) deals specifically with the little explored diasporic nodes in the global South and East.

¹⁵ Walter Laqueur, *Generation Exodus. The Fate of Young Jewish Refugees from Nazi Germany* (Hanover: Brandeis University Press, 2001).

¹⁶ Geneviève Susemihl, "And it Became My Home." *Die Assimilation und Integration der deutsch-jüdischen Hitlerflüchtlinge in New York und Toronto* (Münster: Lit, 2003).

and large numbers have temporarily or permanently settled there. In comparison, Canada had received only around 6,000 refugees. This difference in numbers created diverging conditions for the integration process, and Susemihl's work points to those and to other factors as well. While Susemihl structures her book by looking at each community in separation, Lori Gemeiner Bihler's comparative analysis of refugee communities in New York and in London integrates the two cities and explores them side-by-side.¹⁷ Gemeiner Bihler observes that "German Jews in London felt pressure to appear British but did not self-identify as such, while, at the same time, German Jews in New York looked and sounded German Jewish, but identified as American," and her book pursues the causes underlying this distinction.¹⁸ Expanding the comparative lens, Hagit Lavsky's study of German-Jewish migration into the United States, Britain and Palestine/Israel examines the three destinations that have received the largest numbers of German-Jewish migrants.¹⁹ She astutely combines demographic data, such as age and occupation, with emigration statistics to portray a coherent picture of this migrating population as a social group. Yet Lavsky does not focus on forced migration from 1933 onwards, but rather on Jewish migrants from Germany in the interwar period, grouping together people who emigrated from the Weimar period and from Nazi Germany.

Positioning and Questioning

While *In Scattered Formation* has benefitted greatly from the publications mentioned above, it introduces a different perspective to the history of German-Jewish displacement, one that is animated by the following questions: How did German-speaking Jews orientate themselves once they were thrust out to seek alternative homelands? How did they come to understand the circumstances of their displacement, and what role did their new homes come to play in shaping that understanding? What spheres of influence can a shared culture and a shared history retain in light of an almost total dispersion, amplified by mass-trauma? In response to this line of questioning, the dissertation undertakes a transnational view that strives to remain as true as possible to the patterns of global dispersion. In addition, this dissertation departs with surgical timeframes that are common in current historiography to instead focus on the history of first-generation migrants who personally experienced removal. This research-responsive periodization stretches the analysis deep into the postwar decades, exploring the challenges that this displaced population faced far beyond the immediate dislocation. Though no standard terminus date can be specified, the dissertation locates the conclusion of its story in the last two decades of the twentieth century, a time period during which the fate of this community became a subject of heightened public interest. In other words, when the experience of displacement transitioned from a lived experience to a commemorated one.

Another crucial feature of this work lies in its focus on everyday experiences of displacement. Throughout the research for this project, the voices that arose from the primary sources vividly conveyed a sense of urgency, plight and insecurity, inherent to the circumstances to which they were responding, as well as a steadfast engagement with life's day-to-day affairs,

¹⁷ Lori Gemeiner Bihler, *Cities of Refuge: German Jews in London and New York, 1935-1945* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2018).

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 12.

¹⁹ Hagit Lavsky, *The Creation of the German-Jewish Diaspora: Interwar German-Jewish Immigration to Palestine, the USA and England* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2017).

regardless how mundane or insignificant they may appear in hindsight, considering the momentous weight of the surrounding events. This fusion is evident in many of the private collections of individual members of the German-Jewish diaspora, as the example of Yisrael Shiloni [born Hans Herbert Hammerstein] demonstrates. Shiloni's collection is housed at the German-Speaking Jewry Heritage Museum in northern Israel, a museum that he himself founded in 1971, urged by his wish to preserve the history of the German-speaking migration into Palestine/Israel. The documents kept in Shiloni's private collection include correspondences, pamphlets, newspaper excerpts, poems and other records accumulated throughout his life.²⁰ Reflected in these sources are both Shiloni's personal history of persecution and forced migration – he was imprisoned in Sachsenhausen in the aftermath of Kristallnacht, fled to England upon his release, was detained as an enemy alien there and sent to Australia aboard the infamous Dunera ship before arriving to Palestine in 1942 – as well as the daily affairs, conversations and tasks that had filled his days.²¹ These include an invitation from 1947 to join a secular bible reading group, promising explanations in the German language, a letter from a fellow former “Dunera boy” from 1963, in which the author poked fun of the religious schools in his Jerusalem neighborhood, and a copy of Shiloni's letter from 1979 to the Israeli bus company, complaining about their disorganized and irregular service and the messy conditions of their office facilities.²² These documents all, in one way or another, shed light on Shiloni's part in the formation of German-Jewish community in Israel. They reflect values and priorities that he and other members of this community sought to promote, his commitment to the preservation of a German-Jewish culture away from its geographic provenance and, despite his enthusiasm for the Zionist national cause, the resentment that he and other German-speakers felt towards many aspects of Israeli society.

The archives of the German-Jewish diaspora are filled with collections such as Shiloni, where routine instances of the everyday are kept alongside evidence and chronicles that testify to the grave reality of genocide and forced migration. This seemingly contradictory duality, wherein quotidian normalcy remains an integral component of crisis, provided a conceptual drive in the realization of this project.²³ Seeking to understand and to capture forced migration as a lived reality, the dissertation engages the perspective of the people who experienced it. Examining a wide array of primary sources – including photo albums, press publications, material objects, private correspondences, published and unpublished diaries and memoirs, newsletters and others – each chapter recovers historical meaning from everyday moments that reveal both the casual responses to and the deep-seated effects of forced migration. Seen through this intimate lens, the history of the German-Jewish diaspora compels a new interpretation of displacement as a phenomenon and mode of existence. Rather than an event susceptible to

²⁰ For Shiloni's biography, see Yisrael Shiloni, *Efshari U'vilti Efshari. Zikhronot* (Tefen: Hamuze'on Hapatu'ach, 1998).

²¹ The HMT Dunera was a British ship that during the summer of 1940 carried German POW and so-called enemy aliens (the vast majority of whom were German-speaking Jewish refugees) to Australia for detainment. The degrading and oppressive conditions on board turned the Dunera into a symbol of British injustice towards refugees from Nazi persecution.

²² All under Shiloni Yisrael and Mirjam Collection, G.F.0313-28, German-Speaking Heritage Museum, Tefen, Israel.

²³ On history of the everyday as a methodological approach see Alf Lütke (ed.), *Alltagsgeschichte: Zur Rekonstruktion historischer Erfahrung und Lebensweisen* (Frankfurt a. Main: Campus, 1989); Paul Steege, Andrew Stuart Bergerson, Maureen Healy, and Pamela E. Swett, “The History of Everyday Life: A Second Chapter,” *The Journal of Modern History* 80, no. 2 (June 2008), 358-378.

description by clear starting and ending points, displacement, this dissertation argues, is a condition that permeates across life spheres well beyond the physical act of forced removal. After transience and mobility, in settlement and aging, the displaced carried the condition within themselves.²⁴ The following chapters, therefore, look beyond the process of flight, the organizations that facilitated it and the legal structures that governed or obstructed it. Instead, they reflect the pervasiveness of the condition of displacement in quotidian moments and everyday spaces; the so-called ordinary, which, in fact, had been anything but.

A Multifaceted Collective

How did they come? With the luxury train, the beautiful train bleu, which so quickly surmounts the immense civilization gap between Chemnitz and the eternal City of Lights. With Mercedes-Benz. In the third class. With panhandled train tickets. On foot! Oh, yes, they came also on foot, slowly, step-by-step through the far, far journey, through rain and snow. They rented the millionaire's rooms at George V or at Crillon. Or searched for a nice den in the Latin Quarter. Or dragged their tired feet to the long lines in front of building of the Comité National [...]²⁵

Writing in Paris in 1934, Rudolf and Ika Olden recorded the living circumstances of German-Jewish refugees residing in the French capital. The couple's series of reports about this community – of which they themselves had been a part – sought to account for the multifaceted stories, personalities and backgrounds that were caught up together in a similar fate of persecution and displacement. In this short paragraph, they encapsulated the interwoven yet separate paths taken away from Germany and into safe dwelling, in this case in neighboring France. The multiplicity of experiences captured here was visible throughout the diaspora of German-speaking Jewish refugees, in varying places and at different stages in time.

Scholars have warned against treating displaced German-speaking Jewry as a single, homogenous entity, most often identified as an assimilated, secularized community of the hyper-educated middle class.²⁶ The Oldens' attention to differences in wealth points to but one of the categories that marked distinctions amongst the displaced. While reflecting the inherent heterogeneity that existed within them, this dissertation attempts to reconstruct the synchronicity and the linkages that connected members of this diasporic population despite the manifold variances that it consisted of. It is, however, worthwhile, to acknowledge some of these

²⁴ On the concepts of experience and trauma in historical writing, see Dominick LaCapra, *History in Transit: Experience, Identity, Critical Theory* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004). On the possible application of this emphasis on experience in the field of forced migration research see Marita Eastmond, "Stories as Lived Experience: Narratives in Forced Migration Research," *Journal of Refugee Studies* 20, no. 2 (June 2007), 248–264.

²⁵ Rudolf and Ika Olden, "In Tiefem Dunkel liegt Deutschland." *Von Hitler Vertrieben – Ein Jahr deutsche Emigration*, eds. Charmain Brinson and Marian Malet (Berlin: Metropol, 1994), 43.

²⁶ See in particular Anthony Heilbut, "My German-Jewish Legacy and Theirs," Abraham Peck (ed.), *The German-Jewish Legacy in America, 1938-1988* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1989), 199-205; Lowenstein, *Frankfurt on the Hudson*, 18-21.

distinctions from the outset. German-speaking Jewry in Central Europe was comprised of divergent groups and communities that had crystalized long before National Socialism had threatened their existence. Differences in gender-based experience, social class and occupation, religious leaning, political affiliation, stance towards Zionism and towards other Jewish nationalisms, generational gaps and regional background have all contributed to the complexities and variations that characterized German-Jewishness.²⁷ In the global displacement that was catalyzed by the Nazi revolution, many of these demarcations remained, and several new ones have emerged.

First, the diaspora of German-speaking Jews had no single national identification, but was rather comprised of Jews who identified as Germans, Austrian (more commonly, as Viennese) or Czech, and in some cases also Jews of Hungarian or Romanian origin. While the Jews of Central Europe shared historical, familial and business bonds, these differences nevertheless mattered, especially to the generation born after the demise of the Habsburg Empire and the founding of the nation-states that inherited it. “When I was referred to as German-Jewish, my Viennese soul recoiled,” Edith Kurzweil recalled about her time as a recently-arrived refugee in the city of New York.²⁸ Keeping note of this sentiment, it would nevertheless be false to regard these groups in total separation. It was not uncommon for German-speaking Jews to travel and even reside in a variety of cities throughout Central Europe, attaining some form of cultural intimacy that moved beyond a common language. Additionally, thousands of German Jews found the first stop on their journey of displacement in Austria or the Bohemian and Moravian regions, and after 1938, many of them joined the native Jews of these areas on their flight away from the clutches of National Socialism. The biography of Kurt Robitschek, the lyricist of the “Novaks from Prague,” illustrates these movements quite well. Born in Prague, his career has led him to Weimar-era Berlin. With Nazism in power, he left Germany, first to Prague and then to Vienna, before turning towards the United States (via Paris and London).

Even without these close encounters, Jewish refugees from Central Europe found that they were bound by culture as well as by circumstance. They founded organizations together, read the same newspapers and frequented the same establishments. Czech and Austrian Jews would occasionally create their own separate social circles, but these supplemented rather than replaced the larger German-speaking ones, where Jews from Germany were in the majority.²⁹ While the occasional match between team Vienna and team Berlin at the refugee soccer league

²⁷ Some scholarly accounts on diversity in German-Jewish history include Michael Brenner and Derek Penslar (eds.), *In Search of Jewish Community: Jewish Identities in German and Austria, 1918-1933* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998); Sharon Gillerman, *Germans into Jews: Remaking the Jewish Social Body in the Weimar Republic* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009); Marion Kaplan, *The Making of the Jewish Middle Class: Women, Family, and Identity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991); Jehuda Reinharz, *Fatherland or Promised Land: The Dilemma of the German Jew, 1893-1914* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1975); Miriam Rürup, *Ehrensache. Jüdische Studentenverbindungen an deutschen Universitäten 1886-1937* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2008); Shulamit Volkov, *Ben Yihud Li-temi 'ah: Yehudey Germanyah, 1780-1918*, trans. Orit Friedland (Tel Aviv: Open University Press, 2003).

²⁸ Edith Kurzweil, *In Full Circle. A Memoir* (New Brunswick and London, Transaction), 109.

²⁹ Leo Spitzer, for example, discusses his parents involvement both in the Austrian Club as well as with the Comunidad Israelita in La Paz – the first catered specifically to an Austrian refugee audience while the second was established for all German-speaking Jews. Spitzer, “Persistent Memory. Central European Refugees in an Andean Land,” *Poetics Today* 7, no. 4 (1996), 625-7.

in Shanghai was a highly anticipated event that aroused regional loyalties, players from both Germany and Austria would join forces when they played against other groups in the city.³⁰

Gender was another important factor in forming divergent experiences of displacement. Even prior to the departure, women had a unique role in the frustrating – often harrowing – process of obtaining legal documents and permits, arranging passage and securing the resources necessary for theirs and their families' flight.³¹ Upon arrival to new surroundings, the gender dynamics within the family often reflected the existential shock experienced by male heads of households, with their ability to provide for their relatives diminished first by Nazi exclusionist policies and then by the difficulties of life in migration. “When I arrive home at evening,” wrote one woman in March, 1940, “I sit in front of a silent, melancholic man.” Unlike herself and her eighteen-year-old son, she explained in a letter to the *Aufbau* newspaper, her husband was unable to find work after their arrival in New York, despite his many efforts.³² Securing a job to support their family is a common thread in many memoirs written by former refugee men, and it was clearly linked to their conceptions of masculinity and duties.³³

While forced migration did alter middle class familial relationships by requiring many women to take on responsibilities as earners, the outcome often was not the progressive shift that many women had hoped for. Many refugee women were directed towards domestic service and were trained by aid organizations to work as servants and maids.³⁴ Hertha Nathorff, who gave up her medical career in New York while her husband had resumed his, had agonized over having lost her position as a doctor, especially when working as a nurse aiding him with his patients.³⁵ Hilde Gabriel lamented becoming a housewife in the town of Palmerston North, New Zealand. She had grown up in Weimar-era Berlin, exalted the avant-garde gender politics that defined that environment, and felt that had it not been for Hitler, she would have pursued a professional career. In the more conservative, suburban environment that she and her husband had migrated to, this path no longer seemed attainable: “A great frustration and a further grudge, minor in the light of events, against the history makers of my generation.”³⁶

In some destinations – remote rural regions in particular – a wide gender imbalance existed in the refugee community, with a significantly higher number of men to women.³⁷ In Colonial Kenya, for example, this disparity, combined with the commonplace racist outlook of

³⁰ Albert Lichtblau, “Soccer and Survival among Jewish Refugees in Shanghai,” Michael Brenner and Gideon Reuveni (eds.), *Emancipation through Muscles. Jews and Sports in Europe* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2006), 174, 181-182.

³¹ Kaplan, *Between Dignity and Despair*, 126-135.

³² “Hilde Scott diskutiert: Probleme des Alltags,” *Aufbau*, March 8, 1940, 11.

³³ Judith Gerson, “Family Matters: German Jewish Masculinities among Nazi Era Refugees,” Benjamin Maria Baader, Sharon Gillerman and Paul Lerner (eds.), *Jewish Masculinities: German Jews, Gender, and History* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2012), 210-231.

³⁴ Tony Kushner, “An Alien Occupation – Jewish Refugees and Domestic service in Britain, 1933-1948,” Julius Carlebach, Gerhard Hirschfeld, Aubrey Newman, Peter Pulzer, Arnold Paucker (eds.), *Second Chance: Two Centuries of German-Speaking Jews in the United Kingdom* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1991), 554-578.

³⁵ Nathorff's diary has several entries that illustrate this, Wolfgang Benz (ed.), *Das Tagebuch der Hertha Nathorff. Berlin – New York. Aufzeichnungen 1933 bis 1945* (Frankfurt a. Main: Fischer, 2016), 175, 186-7, 189-190, 209-210.

³⁶ Letter from Hilde Gabriel to Francois Jacob, March 13, 1989, Gabriel/Salomonis Collection, Kon. 1032, Mp. 6, JMB Archive. See also the transcripts of an oral history interview recorded with Hilde Gabriel in New Zealand, September, 1986, Mp. 7.

³⁷ See for example Marion Kaplan, “‘Did You Bring Any Girls?’ Gender Imbalance in a Jewish Refugee Settlement: Sosúa, the Dominican Republic, 1940-1945,” Marion Kaplan and Deborah Dash Moore (eds.), *Gender and Jewish History* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2011), 104-119.

the settler population, meant that young female Jewish refugees from Central Europe were particularly desired for employment in white households. A pamphlet published by the Association of Jews in Germany emphasized that point and encouraged the immigration of Jewish women to the country.³⁸ The same publication included a letter from a young woman residing in the town of Kikuyu, who praised the ability of girls to obtain employment easily, as well as the increased marital prospects available due to the “regrettable” racialized social norms of colonial society (she notably did not regret that these norms provided her authority over the black staff in her position as household employee for a white settler family).³⁹

The following chapters consider these factors and others that accounted for variations with the German-Jewish diaspora (chapter five, for example, looks closely into the generational gap that existed between immigrant parents and their children). Yet they also place emphasis on the different strands that linked German-speaking Jews despite the geographic dispersion and individual life circumstances, across regional origins, gender, age or professional background. If displacement manifested itself in multifaceted forms, these modalities evolved at the backdrop of a shared historical experience that amplified a collective sense of self. One task that will be repeatedly be addressed across the following pages is accounting for both the coherence and the diversity of the German-Jewish diaspora.

Chapter Outline

In Scattered Formation begins in Europe, at the moment of packing personal artifacts into suitcases and boxes, when, in preparation for flight and for a life in displacement, migrating Jews were making inventories of their personal belongings – those that will be left behind and those that will travel to new homes. Despite the National-Socialist campaign to dispossess the departing Jews of their material worth, a wide array of objects – books, cameras, furniture, medical devices, toys, silverware and many others – traveled with their owners and became a part of their experience of displacement. While this travelling property often acted as a kind of material currency in a state of distress, these possessions offered more than a financial safety net. The first chapter explores how objects that were uprooted from the material reality in Central Europe and spread across the diaspora provided economic relief as well as a sense of stability in the context of drastic transition. Yet these personal belongings also had the capacity to embody otherness and loss, objectifying the experience of displacement in their materiality.

From material culture and the ways in which objects become embedded in experiences, the dissertation continues to explore another facet of everyday life in displacement. Turning to the performance of diasporic humor, the second chapter shows that German-speaking Jews vividly articulated the experience of discrimination, violence and forced migration in jokes, satire and comedy. Humor, this chapter finds, offered a flexible medium through which they could not only overcome their foreignness, but at times even accentuate and celebrate their cultural particularities. The genre of refugee humor utilized codes familiar to those whose experiences it narrated, activating ‘inside jokes’ that reinforced a sense of collectivity. In making

³⁸ Reichsvereinigung der Juden in Deutschland, *Jüdische Auswanderung nach Australien und anderen Gebieten des englischen Imperiums*, (Berlin, April 1939), 64.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 68.

fun of Germany, of their new host societies, and very often of themselves as well, German-speaking Jews narrated their life circumstances in their own voices, and their shared history echoed with every punchline.

The third chapter examines interactions between the German-speaking Jews and other Jewish minority groups. Displacement brought the German speakers into close proximity with Yiddish-speaking Eastern Europeans, Sephardic Jews, Jews from North Africa and the Middle East and other archetypal Jewish communities. While some of these encounters were informed by pre-existing interactions that evolved throughout modern Jewish history in Europe, in the dispersion they were challenged by new social contexts as well as by new geographies. Jolted by the force of Nazi antisemitism, some German-speakers sought to form new bonds of solidarity with other Jewish groups. Others found that their cultural particularity heightened in the face of Jewish difference. In examining the unfolding of these post-displacement encounters, this chapter shows that German-speaking Jews from Central Europe defined their diasporic collective identity in relation and reaction to these old and new contacts.

Shifting to the postwar period, the fourth chapter focuses on post-Holocaust reparations to victims of Nazism. For German-speaking Jews throughout the world, the hopes and disappointments raised by the German reparations system deeply affected both public discourse and private concerns. Tracing the necessary efforts and the emotional investment involved in pursuing reparations claims, chapter four defines this process of pursuing claims as an inherently collaborative project that extended to all corners of the German-Jewish diaspora. To state their case persuasively, claimants consulted with lawyers, relatives and friends, rekindling lost connections across their dispersed communities. The administrative encounters attendant to seeking reparations thus stimulated the emergence of a transnational dialogue between German-Jewish claimants that assisted in validating not only their claims vis-à-vis the German bureaucracy but also their shared past.

The fifth and final chapter explores relationships between German-Jewish parents and their children, which were characterized by a particularly delicate generational gap in culture and identity. Children are a tangible link to the future. But what happens when raising children confronts parents with the possible dissolution of their own pasts? This question arose in various forms across the diaspora of Jewish refugees who escaped Nazi persecution in Central Europe. Parents who migrated with young children, as well as those with children born during the immediate years following displacement, witnessed them growing up in foreign environments, distant from the ones that they had known themselves. In light of the destruction of German-Jewish life in Europe, and with their children successfully integrating or born into new homelands, parents faced the realization that German-Jewish culture, as they had come to know it, may be lost to posterity.

In Scattered Formation concludes by returning to possessions. After 1945, the objects that had travelled away from Central Europe – like the individuals who migrated with them – became remnants of a community and a culture that faced extinction. With time, their practical value diminished while their symbolic value grew, and they transitioned from objects of the everyday to artifacts of historical significance. Tracing the path of these possessions from the home environment to the museum vitrine display, the coda turns directly to a question that resonated all throughout the dissertation: Does the shift from a lived experience to a commemorated experience mark the end of the German-Jewish story?

Chapter 1: Lives in Boxes Belongings on Journeys of Forced Migration

Herbert Mosheim and Inge Marx couldn't wait to get married and start their own home. The newly-engaged couple, two young Jewish refugees who had only recently escaped from their German homeland, had met at a dance party organized by one of the German-Jewish refugee organizations in New York City. In the winter of 1942, the two were living at a distance of more than 200 miles apart from each other. Herbert was working at a paper mill in Bellows Falls, Vermont, while Inge was employed as a live-in governess in Manhattan. From a distance, they exchanged letters in which they shared their plans for furnishing their home once she could join him and move to Vermont. "What kind of furniture should we look for some day? Do you like Louis XVI style?" Herbert wrote to his fiancée in early February. "I think I told you about my 72 pieces of silver flatware? So you see, we already have a few things together for our future household," he added.⁴⁰ In another letter, Herbert mentioned 12 pieces of silver "that I could take along legally." When Inge wrote back to report that she herself has a set of flatware with 140 pieces, Herbert bemusedly noted that, altogether, they already have about 250 pieces of silverware at their disposal.⁴¹ Herbert's letters to Inge (only his were preserved, while her responses can only be gleaned from them) during their engagement period are filled with excited visions of their anticipated domesticity. "Schatzle," he wrote once, "for everyday, we can use my Alpacca silverware – I have enough of it. Your good silverware is too good to be used all the time."⁴² Day-to-day life and special occasions, morning routines and household chores were planned and deliberated as they were making inventories of sheets, towels and other items in their possession.

The love and longing that these letters convey are joined by fears and frustrations. Herbert Mosheim's reference to the silverware that he was able to legally remove is a reminder of the great danger that both he and Inge were able to escape back in Germany. Mosheim, born in 1908 in Vlotho, North-Rhein Westphalia, was arrested during Kristallnacht and imprisoned in Buchenwald, released upon the condition that he leave the country immediately. In early 1939 he fled to England, where he lived in the Kitchener Camp for refugees before obtaining his immigration visa to the United States in 1940. Marx, who was born in Munich in 1921, also arrived in the United States in 1940. Both came alone. Amongst the casual updates they shared and the plans for a future together, the letters that the two exchanged reflected grave concern for the fate of family members that had remained in Germany. Finances were tight. Both of their families belonged to the middle class before the rise of National Socialism, but had been thoroughly stripped of their assets by the time the two had escaped. In the United States, much of Herbert's income was set aside to secure immigration permits for his relatives and to cover the costs of their travel from Europe, though ultimately, his efforts were in vain.

Amidst these anxieties, Inge's and Herbert's yearning for a normal life together was even more pronounced. Inge assured her fiancé that they will be able to enjoy their life together all the more because of the difficulties that they endured. Herbert agreed and added that their longing for a home will be rewarded as well. "I can hardly imagine how it feels to have a home of my

⁴⁰ Letter dated February 4, 1942, in: Series 3, Mosheim and Marx Families Papers, 1999.A.0233, USHMM. Inge Moss translated her family letters and donated both originals and the English translations to the USHMM. The quotations are cited in her own translation.

⁴¹ Letter dated February 21, 1942, Ibid.

⁴² Letter dated February 25, 1942, Ibid.

own again, but it must be beautiful. Ach, Schatzle, I do love you so much.”⁴³ Contemplating the items that were to populate their home produced a tangible link between the lives they had lost in Germany and the one that they sought to build together in a new country.

The following chapter captures forced migration through the lens of the possessions that refugees were able to salvage and take with them on their paths of displacement. It examines what these objects can tell us about Jewish life in and after the “Third Reich”; about the comprehensive operation of dispossession executed by the Nazi regime; and about the refugees’ own negotiations of the material reality of plight, loss and dislocation. For displaced German-speaking Jews, these possessions became a form of multidimensional currency. They filled the interiors of temporary shelters and new homes as objects of everyday use; they were sold or exchanged to provide urgent relief in a state of destitution; and they acted as physical traces of a world that was being pillaged and destroyed, their materiality simultaneously bearing witness to the realness of that past and to the reality of its absence. Removed from Central Europe, possessions across the German-Jewish diaspora realized a material continuance of habits, traditions, and tastes. But their foreign origin could clash starkly with the new cultural environments into which they were introduced, perpetuating – like a foreign accent – the status of outsider with their mere presence.

Like all Jews living under Nazi rule, Herbert Mosheim and Inge Marx were subjected to a continuing process of despoliation prior to their escape. Yet like many refugees that left their home country, they were able to take with them some personal belongings that the Nazi authorities had not, at the point of their departure, deemed worthy of theft.⁴⁴ The list of objects that Inge Marx prepared for the approval of the inspecting authorities was almost five pages long, and it included a diverse variety of personal items such as eight pairs of white socks, opera binoculars, a portable gramophone, three table runners, a reading lamp and two Bavarian Dirndls, “with accessories.”⁴⁵

In Marx’s case, some items that appeared on her list, like her tennis dress or the notebook of self-authored poetry, reflect aspects of her life in Germany, her habits and habitus. Others, like the German-English dictionary and the guide book for English stenography, reveal her preparation for life in displacement and her plans for a future in a foreign country. With its meticulous detailing of each item’s monetary worth, and, whenever possible, the year of the original purchase, the list as a whole sheds light on the bureaucratization of forced migration and the policies implemented by the Nazi regime to expropriate emigrating Jews. From the other side of the journey, the possessions that Inge and her future spouse Herbert enumerated in their letters – the majority of which originated from their homes in Germany – allowed the envisioning of a shared life. The presence of these objects and the conversations that they sparked convey the state of the displaced: impoverished refugees with trunks of linen and utensils, waiting for the conditions that would allow these things to again be a part of home.

⁴³ Letter dated February 28, 1942, Ibid.

⁴⁴ What was and wasn’t deemed valuable was subject to frequent change. During WWII, for example when the German home front began to feel the sacrifice of total war, items that were previously approved for emigration, such as clothing, linen or non-valuable metals were then confiscated from the remaining Jews within the Reich’s borders. Avraham Barkay, *From Boycott to Annihilation. The Economic Struggle of German Jews, 1933-1943*, trans. William Templer (Hanover: University Press of New England for Brandeis University, 1989), 170.

⁴⁵ “Gepäckliste”, dated November 23, 1939. Series 1, Mosheim and Marx Families Papers. The document preserved in the family collection does not include the signature approval of the Nazi emigration authorities, so it is not possible to determine whether the list in its entirety was approved.

XXXXXXXXXXXX

XXXXXXXXXXXX

Ingeborg Clara Sara Marx, München
Tengstr. 35/1 Telefon 370760

23. November 39

1	2	3	4	5			
					Übertrag	332.40	
61	II		1		Sportmantel	15.-	1936 C. Kleidung
1		1	1		Garbadin-Mantel	18.-	
		1	1		Sportjacke	24.-	
		1	1		gr. Kostüm	75.-	
1			1		selbstg. Strickkleid	16.-	
1		1	3		Wollkleider	55.-	
1			2		Wollstoffe	45.-	
			1		Rohseidenkleid	33.-	1934
		1	1		K.S. Kleid	25.-	
70		1	1		weisses Kleid	18.-	
1		2	4		Sommerkleidchen	80.-	
1		1	2		Waschseiden-Kleider	50.-	
6			6		Hauskleider	18.-	
1			1		Servierkleidchen	6.50	
	8		8		Kleiderschürzen	27.-	
	12		12		kleine Schürzchen	12.-	
9		5	7		Blusen, 1 Rock	80.-	
2			2		Dirndl m. Zubehör	14.-	
3			5		par Halbschuhe	50.-	1933/8
89			1		" Tennisschuhe	4.60	
7			7		Schals	10.-	
1			1		Kapuze	2.-	
4			4		par Handschuhe	6.-	

Figure 1. Excerpt from Inge Marx's list of belongings [Umzugsgutverzeichnis], November 23, 1939. The pencil markings on the left appear to be dividing the items according to crates or boxes.

Scholars of material culture have explored various modes of connections and interactions between people and the objects that inhabit their world, pointing out that, more than innate things, objects can morph between meanings depending on the context in which they are

positioned.⁴⁶ Like people, they have “biographies” that evolve across time and space.⁴⁷ Commonly manufactured for a particular purpose, the meanings and functions of objects nevertheless exceeds their utility; they are more than what they do. When situated in the context of extraordinary and momentous events such as war and displacement, the multiple needs that objects answer and the various meanings that they contain are staggeringly revealed.⁴⁸ In their very banality, these ‘things’ – aprons, gloves, shawls, in Inge Marx’s case – have the ability to highlight the anomaly that surrounds them – a list of items taken by a nineteen-year-old girl when fleeing violence and hatred in her homeland. Throughout this chapter, sources that illustrate the capacity of objects to offer comfort, to act as relics, to bear painful testimony or to materialize perseverance will be contemplated.

In his memoir, Monroe Price recorded his impressions after viewing the film *Nowhere in Africa* (2005), which was based on Stefanie’s Zweig autobiographical novel by the same name. Price, who was only seven-months-old when his parents fled from Vienna to the United States, noted one scene in particular, in which crates of belongings were being packed at the family home in Germany, in preparation for their flight to Kenya. “[I]t seemed the virtual simulacrum of our own departure [...] as if objects, like people, had become refugees subject to flight.”⁴⁹ Too young to recall memories of his own from the moment of displacement, it is understandable why Price would feel compelled to imagine his own family history into the film. That the fate of objects and people coalesce in his mind is also understandable. Relatable and tangible, physical artifacts prove to be evocative conveyers of history. Jeffrey Wallen and Aubrey Pomeranz have noted that, particularly in representations of the Holocaust, objects have become somewhat of an inadequate “stand-in” when seeking to capture the magnanimity of loss.⁵⁰ But if museal and

⁴⁶ In preparing this chapter, the following works on material culture have been valuable: Leora Auslander, *Taste and Power: Furnishing Modern France* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998); Leora Auslander, “‘Jewish Taste?’ Jews and the Aesthetics of Everyday Life in Paris and Berlin, 1920–1942,” in Rudy Koshar (ed.), *Histories of Leisure* (Oxford: Berg, 2002), 299-318; Deborah Cohen, *Household Gods: The British and Their Possessions* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006); Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi and Eugene Rochberg-Halton, *The Meaning of Things: Domestic Symbols and the Self* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981); Sandra Dudley, *Materialising Exile: Material Culture and Embodied Experience among Karenni Refugees* (New York: Berghahn, 2010); Shannon Fogg, “Displaced Persons, Displaced Possessions: The Effects of Spoliation and Restitution on Daily Life in Paris,” in: Sandra Ott (ed.), *War, Exile, Justice and Everyday Life, 1936-1946* (Reno: University of Nevada, 2011), 359-376; Paul Lerner, *The Consuming Temple: Jews, Department Stores and the Consumer Revolution in Germany, 1880-1940* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2015); Daniel Miller (ed.), *Home Possessions: Material Culture behind Closed Doors* (New York: Berg, 2001); Alexandra Reininghaus (ed.) *Recollecting: Raub und Restitution* (Vienna: Passagen Verlag, 2009); Maruska Svasek (ed.), *Moving Subjects, Moving Objects: Transnationalism, Cultural Production and Emotions* (New York: Berghahn, 2012). Anthropologists have been particularly attentive to material culture’s role in the human world. A helpful analysis of anthropological approaches to the study of objects is provided by Janet Hoskins, “Agency, Biography and Objects,” in Chris Tilley, Webb Keane, Susanne Kuechler, Mike Rowlands, Patricia Spyer (eds.), *Handbook of Material Culture* (London: Sage, 2006), 74-84.

⁴⁷ Igor Kopytoff, “The Cultural Biography of Things: Commoditization as process,” in Arjun Appadurai (ed.) *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 64-91.

⁴⁸ Leora Auslander and Tara Zahra, “The Things They Carried: War, Mobility, and Material Culture,” introduction to Auslander and Zahra (eds.), *Objects of War: The Material Culture of Conflict and Displacement*. Ithaca, NY: 2018. 1-21.

⁴⁹ Monroe Price, *Objects of Remembrance. A Memoir of American Opportunities and Viennese Dreams* (New York: Central European University Press, 2009), 35.

⁵⁰ Jeffrey Wallen and Aubrey Pomeranz, “Circuitous Journeys. The Migration of Objects and the Trusteeship of Memory,” in Auslander and Zahra, *Objects of War*, 257.

medial displays have turned artifacts into icons, the result often obscures the histories of these objects – how they were dislocated, how they were used in displacement, how they fluctuated in value and how their owners valued and used them.

Rather than pursuing an analysis that understands possessions to be emblematic of the experience of displacement – a kind of material incarnation of forced migration – this chapter proposes looking at personal belongings as mirrors that have the capacity to reflect multiple aspects of life in displacement. Their material qualities and their numerous usages place objects at the juncture of commerce, work, home, culture and other facets of the everyday. Situating these possessions within their contemporary material reality, this chapter draws attention to the different duties that they performed for the population of German-speaking Jewish refugees. Layered in their meanings, objects had material, cultural and emotional value. They could be bartered or sold for much needed cash; they could participate in conscious efforts to reconstruct habits and habitus; they could become symbols of perseverance; and they could act as painful reminders of foreignness and of loss. Whether as objects of daily use or as heirloom possessions, personal belongings taken into displacement often carried a deep, personal meaning to the people they had journeyed with. But while some objects became relics from a lost world, the significance of others remained linked to their materiality, to their function as work tools, as commodities or even as vessels to hide money or valuables from the eyes of Nazi authorities. It is this multidimensional nature of displaced objects that will be the focus of the chapter.

Possessions in the Context of Mass-Theft

To understand the meanings and functions of the objects that accompanied displacement, one needs to take into account the scope and precision of the Nazi operation of stripping Jews in Germany of their material worth. The expansion and radicalization of economic restrictions affected the living conditions of the Jewish population deeply, gradually introducing more and more measures of financial expropriation. The longer one lived under the clutches of the “Third Reich,” the greater the severity of despoliation that one had to endure. While dispossession and the systematic exclusion of Jews from the German economic sphere were chief goals in and of themselves, they served the Nazi regime further in advancing another explicit purpose of anti-Jewish policy – the push for Jewish emigration out of the territories of the Reich. Through measures such as the Law for the Restoration of the Professional Civil Service [April 7, 1933], which barred Jews from all public positions; the ongoing calls for boycotts on Jewish businesses and professional practices; or the so-called Punitive Tax [*Sühneleistung*, November 12, 1938] that, in the aftermath of the Kristallnacht attacks, required German Jews to transfer a sum of one billion Reichsmarks to atone for the damage done during the orgy of destruction, economic marginalization and legalized theft were successfully achieving this dual goal of expropriation and forced migration. Simultaneously, Nazi authorities implemented a series of policies aimed at encouraging Jewish emigration on the one hand, while at the same creating onerous financial and material restrictions that impeded Jewish flight away from Germany on the other.

Economic policies that placed hurdles on emigration included the Reich’s Flight Tax [*Reichsfluchtsteuer*], which required all German citizens to pay a fine prior to leaving the country. Originally issued in December 1931 as a means of preventing removal of capital in the aftermath of the 1929 depression, the Reich’s Flight Tax later effectively became a tool for mass-expropriation of Jews escaping persecution. Under Nazi rule, the tax threshold was reduced from

RM200,000 in total assets or a yearly income of RM25,000, to RM50,000 in total assets or RM10,000 in yearly income, expanding the number of the affected emigrants significantly. Set at a rate of 25%, the Reich's Flight Tax is estimated to have accumulated 939 million Reichsmarks in revenue.⁵¹ In addition to this policy, those seeking flight incurred great losses through foreign currency regulations designed specifically to block the removal of funds away from Germany. The transfer of foreign currency abroad was heavily fined, beginning with a 20% fee in 1934, increasing in gradual installments until it had reached 95% by September, 1939. The transfers could take place through blocked accounts held at the bank of the *Deutsche Golddiskontbank* only, so that refugees had practically no control over the funds that they were attempting to salvage.⁵² The *Ha'avara* [Transfer] Agreement, under which the German government had allowed the transfer of capital by emigrants to Palestine in exchange for the purchase of exported German goods, was considered a relatively lenient method of economic penalty. Yet this policy too had resulted in a 35% devaluation of the funds deposited by emigrants, and was revoked with the outbreak of the Second World War.⁵³ To further limit the funds that Jews were allowed to transport with them, the German government heavily reduced the amount of money permitted for emigrants to carry on their person upon departure, initially from RM200 to RM50 in April 1934, and then further to RM10 in September that year.⁵⁴

Already harmed by the general economic measures set against the Jewish population in Germany, prospective emigrants thus found themselves in a state of increasing precariousness when faced with the series of fines, costs and, very often, bribes, that were involved in the process of securing a path out of the country. Alexander Szantos, whose work for the Jewish aid organization *Hilfsverein der Juden in Deutschland* included assisting Jews in preparation for their emigration, witnessed this mechanism in action. Szantos described the work of the Gestapo-run Central Agency for Jewish Emigration in Berlin as an "assembly line" of plunder. To receive the authorization to leave from the agency, the intended emigrant was pushed from one station to another, where his savings, property and dignity were stripped away one by one. At the end of the process, "he was left a stateless beggar with one single object in his possession – a passport with an exit permit."⁵⁵

This thorough scheme of dispossession extended also to the objects and belongings that fleeing Jews were allowed to take with them. The administrative agencies governing emigration gradually increased their control over the items approved or prohibited for removal. If during the initial years of Nazi rule emigrating Jews were not legally restricted in taking any particular items (though individual intervention in specific cases could block the removal of valuable ones), the radicalization of anti-Jewish policy was translated into prohibitions on the content of transported goods [*Umzugsgut*]. Policies restricting the removal of objects and jewelry made of

⁵¹ Barkai, 100; Fritz Kieffer, *Judenverfolgung in Deutschland – eine innere Angelegenheit? Internationale Reaktionen auf die Flüchtlingsproblematik 1933-1939* (Stuttgart: Steiner, 2002), 39-40.

⁵² Martin Dean, *Robbing the Jews: The Confiscation of Jewish Property in the Holocaust, 1933-1945* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 61.

⁵³ Kieffer, 87. On the *Ha'avara* Agreement, see Avraham Barkai, "German Interests in the Haavara-Transfer Agreement 1933–1939," *The Leo Baeck Institute Year Book* 35, no. 1 (January 1990) 245–266; Yehuda Bauer, *Jews for Sale? Nazi-Jewish Negotiations, 1933-1945* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), 5-29; David Jünger, *Jahre der Ungewissenheit: Emigrationspläne deutscher Juden 1933-1938* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2016), 153-162.

⁵⁴ "Achte Verordnung zur Durchführung der Verordnung über die Devisenbewirtschaftung," April 17, 1934; "Verordnung zur Änderung der Verordnung über die Devisenbewirtschaftung," September 29, 1934.

⁵⁵ Alexander Szantos, *Im Dienste der Gemeinde: 1923-1939* (1968), 221. LBI Memoir Collection (ME 638), LBI Archives, New York.

gold were introduced in November, 1935, and were quickly expanded to include other precious metals and stones.⁵⁶ To ensure that emigrants were not illegally smuggling such items abroad, new mechanisms of surveillance that involved the Gestapo, the Currency Offices and privately-owned shipping and storage companies were put into place. In December, 1937, the removal of recently-purchased items was limited, requiring the approval of the Foreign Currency Office and the payment of additional fees.⁵⁷ Beginning in May, 1938, Jews preparing to leave Germany and its annexed territories were obligated to prepare a detailed list of the items they intended to transport, which were to be inspected at least three weeks prior to the date of departure. Elaborate instructions on the preparation of these lists required great accuracy. The lists had to clearly distinguish between items purchased before and after January 1, 1933, and to provide justification for the removal of the latter. They also needed to divide all objects into items transported in shipping containers, in checked baggage [Reisegepäck] and hand-luggage. “It is insufficient to enter ‘one item of clothing,’” instructed the manual distributed by the Foreign Currency Offices. “Precise details are required, for example, five tablecloths, 12 kitchen towels, etc. In the case of refrigerators, radio devices, typewriters, pianos, telephones, bicycles and similar items, the brand name and serial number are to be listed.”⁵⁸



Figure 2. A police officer supervising the loading of a truck with possessions belonging to the Meyer family in Rheda, 1937

⁵⁶ Ralf Banken, *Edelmetallmangel und Großraubwirtschaft: Die Entwicklung des deutschen Edelmetallsektors im „Dritten Reich“ 1933-1945* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2009), 268-272. According to the Banken, restrictions on the removal of items made of precious metals came in response to an increase in the purchasing of such items by Jews preparing for emigration. These prospective emigrants were circumventing the prohibitions on removing capital by purchasing jewelry and other valuable items, presumably in order to sell them after crossing Germany's borders. This surge in sales was causing a concern that the Reich will be emptied of precious metals.

⁵⁷ Joseph Walk, *Das Sonderrecht für die Juden im NS-Staat. Eine Sammlung der gesetzlichen Maßnahmen und Richtlinien – Inhalt und Bedeutung* (Heidelberg: C.F. Müller, 1996), 208.

⁵⁸ Devisenstelle S Frankfurt/M., „Merkblatt für die Mitnahme von Umzugsgut durch Auswanderer, 1939,“ printed in: Kommission zur Erforschung der Geschichte der Frankfurter Juden (eds.), *Dokumente zur Geschichte der Frankfurter Juden 1933-1945* (Frankfurt a. Main: Kramer, 1963), 407-409.

The approval and inspection of transported goods grew stricter, in accordance with the increasing radicalization of violence and oppression against the Jewish population. A pamphlet from 1938 that guided prospective Jewish emigrants emphasized, for example, that even regular household items such as curtain rings or mirror frames will be examined to ensure that they do not violate the prohibition on removing precious metals.⁵⁹ Inspecting authorities often found reason to penalize emigrants with more fines. Having inspected Fritz and Sophie Löwenthal's list of personal belongings in 1939, the Customs Investigation Office in the city of Lübeck ruled that the couple must pay a sum of RM1,019.96 to be permitted to transport the requested items with them to Chile. This was in addition to more than RM33,000 in taxes, costs and special payments that the family was required to pay for securing their path out of Germany. One item – a refrigerator – was struck down from their list of household items completely, and when Fritz Löwenthal submitted a special application for its approval, the Foreign Currency Office allowed for the refrigerator to be included pending yet an additional payment of RM440, which in all likelihood exceeded the appliance's original price.⁶⁰

Illegal smuggling was possible through bribery and deception, for those who were willing to risk the consequences. When he fled from Vienna to England in late 1938, Fritz Treuer was able to disguise an antique writing desk that had belonged to the noble Radetzky family as a simple dresser for work clothes, and so to rescue it from confiscation. His son recalled this refined piece of furniture as the family's only valuable possession, purchased by Fritz Treuer for a great discount during the crisis days following the defeat in WWI. It had pleased the socialist activist Treuer greatly to be the owner of an aristocrat's prized belonging.⁶¹ For Theodore Alexander's family, it was pure chance that had aided them in rescuing their belongings. They were able to get almost their entire household goods approved upon their escape from Berlin to Shanghai in 1939. The Gestapo officer that was assigned to inspect the packing of their crate told the then nineteen-years-old Alexander: "Watch that they don't take anything that is not allowed to be taken. I'll leave you alone."⁶² Most Jews were not so fortunate, as the case of Amalie Strauss illustrates. In December 1940, in preparation for her departure to Uruguay, Strauss delivered the list of possessions she was planning to take with her to the Foreign Currency Office in Frankfurt am Main. An inspection of the items revealed discrepancies, and Strauss was accused of falsifying information on her list of transported goods. Her breach, according to a confession she had given, was that she knowingly lied and claimed one bag of linen, one sheet, one heating pad, one robe, two aprons, one sewing kit with nine pieces of yarn, and one hairbrush as having been purchased before 1933. In addition, Strauss listed an umbrella that was only manufactured in late 1938 as having originated from 1936, and the value that she had specified for that umbrella was found to have been too low.⁶³ Strauss was then ordered to pay

⁵⁹ Heinz Cohn and Erich Gottfeld, *Auswanderungsvorschriften für Juden in Deutschland* (Berlin: Joseph Jastrow, 1938), 34.

⁶⁰ Dieter Guderian, *Fritz Löwenthal: Die Geschichte eines jüdischen Kaufmannes im Dritten Reich. Demütigung, Verfolgung und Vertreibung* (Ochtenburg: Cardamina Verlag S. Breuel, 2006), 108-9.

⁶¹ Robert Treuer, *Eagle Flight. Prelude, Fugue, and Chorale with Contrapuntal Comment by Migizi*. Robert Treuer Family Papers, 1999.A.0282, Series III, USHMM, 41.

⁶² Oral History Interview with Rabbi Theodore Alexander, USHMM. Available at <https://collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/irn512407>

⁶³ "Protocol of the Customs Investigation Office in Frankfurt from December 30, 1940." Printed in: *Dokumente zur Geschichte der Frankfurter Juden*, 411.

additional fees for the items in question, as well as a RM200 fine in penalty for her transgression.⁶⁴

Even when the list of transported goods had been approved and all fines fully paid, this still did not guarantee that the items chosen, packed and inspected would have arrived safely to the country of destination. Daniel Siesel's attempts to receive compensation for some of his belongings that had reached Bolivia in pieces ended in disappointment. Though Siesel had paid for insurance coverage for the shipment of his possessions, the German insurance company approved a sum of less than 25% of the value of the 43 items that were damaged during the 1937 transport.⁶⁵ Ella Lewenz's family experienced an even greater disappointment. Having received the necessary permits, Lewenz invited the transport and moving company to her house in Berlin on November 1, 1938. "The packers arrived," she recorded in her diary that day. "They packed crystal and wrapped the porcelain. [I] filmed the truck leaving. Midnight, exhausted, collapsed into bed." Out of a total of 12 containers that were packed that day, only six had made it to their final destination. The rest, one of Ella's daughters recalled, was "all sold off by the Nazis as Jewish property for nothing, and we didn't even get that little bit of nothing."⁶⁶ But even the Lewenz family could consider itself lucky. After the war broke out, transatlantic travel was disrupted regularly, and packed containers of many refugees who had already left Europe remained stranded in the storage halls of German freight companies. In coordination with the local police and finance authorities, these companies would then facilitate the confiscation of the belongings that were left behind.⁶⁷

The accumulative outcome of expropriation policies, the exorbitant costs involved in emigration and the growing restrictions on personal belongings that could be removed in the escape was that the material value of objects successfully carried into displacement was augmented. In their instructional guide for prospective refugees, Heinz Cohn and Erich Gottfeld emphasized the "exceptionally great significance" that the transfer of belongings had gained in light of the restrictions on the transfer of money.⁶⁸ In displacement, whatever possessions were available constituted a material safety net that, regardless of their original usage or value, carried unique meaning to a population in a state of scarcity. As the value of these mobile possessions fluctuated, they were transforming in meaning as well. In places of refuge and new homelands, their very presence offered a material testament to the history of German-speaking Jewry and the cataclysmic rupture that came to define it. This dual function of displaced belongings rendered them, as the following examples show, both transactional and transcendent.

⁶⁴ Letter from the Finanzamt Frankfurt a. Main Ost from February 26, 1941. Ernest R. Stiefel Papers, 1996.A.0134, USHMMM.

⁶⁵ Letter exchange between Daniel Siesel and the Europäische Güter-u. Reisegepäck-Versicherungs-Aktiengesellschaft, Sammlung Familie Siesel, 2013/23/56-57, JMB.

⁶⁶ Lisa Lewenz and Ella Lewenz, *A Letter Without Words* (1998).

⁶⁷ Sabine Loitfellner, "Die Rolle der 'Verwaltungsstelle für jüdisches Umzugsgut der Geheimen Staatspolizei' (Vegusta) im NS-Kunstraub," in: Gabriele Anderl and Alexandra Caruso (eds.), *NS-Kunstraub in Österreich und die Folgen* (Innsbruck: Studienverlag, 2005), 110-120; Susanne Meinl and Jutta Zwilling, *Legalisierter Raub: Die Ausplünderung der Juden im Nationalsozialismus durch die Reichsfinanzverwaltung in Hessen* (Frankfurt a. Main: Campus, 2005), 68-9.

⁶⁸ Cohn and Gottfeld, *Auswanderungsvorschriften*, 32.

How to Pack for Displacement

The content of boxes, suitcases and containers taken by Jewish refugees away from their homes depended on a number of variables. These included the year of migration, the availability of funds to cover the costs of departure, the country of settlement, as well as the sheer coincidence determining the level of scrutiny that Nazi authorities employed in their inspection of the items. The experience and advice of refugees who had already successfully immigrated to certain areas was taken into consideration as well. Across the emerging German-Jewish diaspora, research and knowledge disseminated amongst members of dispersed communities and their networks of friends and relatives, who were still facing the question of what to bring along their journey of forced migration.

When German-Jewish aid organizations began printing guidelines for Jews planning their escape from Germany, their aim was to assist readers with preparing for the process as best they could. This included, for example, important information concerning the local taxation policies, to inform incoming refugees about anticipated fines and to help them identify which personal belongings might become a liability when proceeding through the customs office. When arriving in the Philippines, the *Hilfsverein's* guidebook advised migrants that they will need to show proof that they intend to reside in the country, and that the transported goods originated from their place of previous residence.⁶⁹ Migrants heading towards Argentina were advised that household items for daily use, as well as agricultural equipment, do not require additional fees, while luxury items and valuable household objects may be taxed according to their worth (though the category of “luxury items” was left undefined).⁷⁰

A crucial source of information published in the guidebooks were letters from refugees with recent migration experience to specific regions. Sharing from their own first-hand knowledge, the letter writers made recommendations on what items should and should not be included. Writing from Manila, one advisor recommended that migrants bring with them items such as vacuum cleaners [“the wealthy people use them, but only Americans and Germans”], cameras, gramophones, toiletries or binoculars. Large quantities of silverware, on the other hand, were not needed, since “the Japanese products are really cheap.” The writer also advised against packing a laundry boiling tub [*Waschgefäß*], which would be entirely useless since “laundry is never boiled here, but washed twice in cold water and then spread to whiten in the sweltering sun, and is nevertheless entirely clean.”⁷¹ One letter writer from Sydney, recommended bringing small furniture pieces, such as a couch or a pie-safe [*Fliegenschrank*], while another letter from the same location advised readers to consider the value of their furniture and the price of transporting them, since such items were relatively affordable in Australia and shipping them may not be worth the expense.⁷² Writing from Rongai, Kenya, another writer was more adamant: “People who come here to join a farm should take everything they have. All of the old hats, suits, clothing, shoes, belts, water flasks, pocket knives, radio devices with batteries, working tools, etc.” He qualified this emphasis with two reasons: For one, “what you buy here in the Indian Dukas [small shops] is more or less bad, and very cheap;” and second, “the negroes love

⁶⁹ Hilfsverein der Juden in Deutschland (eds.), *Jüdische Auswanderung. Korrespondenzblatt für Auswanderungs- und Siedlungswesen* (Berlin, 1938), 93.

⁷⁰ Hilfsverein der Juden in Deutschland (eds.), *Jüdische Auswanderung nach Südamerika* (Berlin, 1939), 3.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 93.

⁷² Reichsvereinigung der Juden in Deutschland (eds.), *Jüdische Auswanderung nach Australien und anderen Gebieten des englischen Imperiums* (Berlin: Jüdischer Kulturbund in Deutschland, 1939), 44.

European things, and you can always earn a schilling or two.”⁷³ Advice about usable objects, as these letters reveal, extended to introducing future migrants to the economic, social and cultural environments of prospective destinations, as well as the racial hierarchies into which Jewish refugees would enter when settling in colonial regions.



Figure 3. Ad for Adolf Heine's household goods' store in Bielefeld. The ad targeted prospective refugees, marketing their goods as "welcome assistance in the new homeland"

In between the pages of those German-Jewish emigration guidebooks, advertisements promoted shipping companies, packing services, travel agencies and other small businesses involved in facilitating the departure of fleeing Jews away from Germany. In one of these ads, Jewish emigrants are encouraged to shop for refrigerators, washing machines, stoves and vacuum cleaners, promising that these appliances will provide “welcome assistance in the new homeland.”⁷⁴ The business promoted in this ad, Adolf Heine’s household goods store in Bielefeld, would become aryanized shortly after the advertisement saw print in the summer of 1938. Its last Jewish owner, Thekla Lieber, was deported in late 1942 to her death.⁷⁵

With its illustration of a young couple, surrounded by their new electronic appliances and staring at the ship that will presumably take them to their place of refuge – a new homeland – the store’s ad raised a question that many German Jews were asking as they were planning their flight: How can they prepare themselves for life in another country, with unfamiliar circumstances? What can they do to ease this transition? Decisions about the belongings that would be taken into displacement were often based on these considerations. Before Kurt Gabriel and his wife, Hilde, left Germany and moved to New Zealand, he visited the country briefly to familiarize himself with the living and employment situation there. When he returned to

⁷³ Ibid, 67.

⁷⁴ Hilfsverein, *Jüdische Auswanderung. Korrespondenzblatt für Auswanderungs-und Siedlungswesen*, 3.

⁷⁵ Stefan Boscher, „Zugfahrt in den Tod/ Heute vor 70 Jahren wurden erstmals Bielefelder Juden ins Konzentrationslager Auschwitz deportiert,“ *Neue Westfälische – Bielefeld West*. July 10, 2012. Accessed online at <http://www.hiergeblieben.de/pages/textanzeige.php?limit=10&order=titel&richtung=DESC&z=49&id=35442>

Germany, in January 1938, he shared with Hilde his observation that hired housekeeping will not be available to them in their new home, since it wasn't a common practice as it had been in Germany. "Well, we found that funny, but I didn't find it so funny anymore when I just got here," Hilde Gabriel recalled in laughter years later. Her husband's research, she added, "led to us arriving here with a washing machine."⁷⁶ Just as the ad had indicated, turning to the "welcome assistance" of household goods was evidently a factor for the Gabriel couple in choosing what items to bring with them to their faraway new home.

Consultations from both sides of forced migration – between those who already arrived at their place of refuge and those who were awaiting their departure from Central Europe – were not always helpful. Writing from Bolivia in January, 1940, the Deutsch family sent their daughter, Gerda Schottländer – still residing in Breslau (Wroclaw) – a list of items, anticipating that she would soon join them in La Paz. This very detailed list included recommendations for objects that would become useful for Gerda and her family, such as extension cables, linoleum floor covers, a washing machine, good raincoats ("very important") and hot water bottles. It also included requests for things and belongings that the Deutsch family members were missing in their new home, including vanilla sugar, baking powder, coffee filters in no. 2 size, sewing materials, the "old drilling machine", "more cups and plates from the service with the flowers," and "more from aunt Tony, when possible."⁷⁷ Gerda Schottländer's response to her family requests was: "Thank you for the list, but you are very naïve!" The costs and difficulties entailed in bringing the requested objects seemed unrealistic to her, reflecting the growing precariousness in the lives of Jews remaining in Germany, and the rapid radicalization of their condition even only six months after her parents, Stefan and Frederike Deutsch, had left the country.⁷⁸ Neither Gerda Schottländer nor the items that her family had hoped to receive made it to La Paz. Despite the family's ongoing attempts to secure all the necessary emigration papers, Schottländer was unable to escape on time. She was deported along with her husband, Heinz, and their young son, Denny, in 1942.

The Schottländer family's fate provides a somber reminder of the fact that these conversations about furniture, clothing, appliances and dishware were taking place within the context of oppression, persecution, forced migration and mass-murder. Encapsulating the ordinariness of day-to-day use in conjunction with the seismic crisis of Jewish life under National Socialism, personal belongings offer a particularly effective prism in the study of everyday life in displacement. Dilemmas on what objects can be taken echoed those that will be left behind; discussions on their incorporation into rooms in new homes mirrored the loss of old ones; contemplating the procedures, costs and risks involved in the removal of objects resonated a sense of loss of control over one's life and future.

Regardless of how external factors influenced their decisions, the reluctant choices that Jewish refugees from Nazi Germany met with regards to the content of their luggage were taken at a moment of great uncertainty. For Ernst Berger, this translated into a conscious decision to leave most of his belongings behind. When he left his home in Vienna and came to New York in July, 1938, he had only two small suitcases and five dollars with him. "I could not bring any money and left books and tools and even many certificates at home. It was I think a superstition.

⁷⁶ Interview with Hilde Gabriel from September 23, 1986. Transcript available in Sammlung Gabriel/Salomonis, Konvulat 1031, JMB.

⁷⁷ Letter from Deutsch to Gerda Schottländer, January 25, 1940. In Stefan and Frederike Deutsch Family Papers, series 3, 1997.A.0039.1, USHMM.

⁷⁸ Letter from Gerda Schottländer to Deutsch family, February 11, 1940. Ibid.

Like saying: So long but not good bye.”⁷⁹ Naturalized as an American Citizen after the end of WWII, he would never again return to his hometown.

Material Currency

For displaced German-speaking Jews, things and objects could alleviate the financial expropriation experienced under Nazi rule. In some cases, this transpired in a literal sense, with objects used as secret couriers for money that was illegally smuggled abroad. Theodore Alexander’s mother skillfully sewed stocks inside the mattresses that the family packed in their containers. When he sold the hidden stocks in Shanghai, Alexander both secured the family’s financial security for the immediate days, and obtained himself a job. The stockbroker that had purchased the German stocks from him was so impressed with his English skills that he helped Alexander to find a position at the E.D. Sassoon and Company headquarters, which was located in Shanghai at the time.⁸⁰ Gertrude Meyer’s family also relied on physical objects to rescue funds for their sustenance in Palestine. Trained as a bookbinder, Meyer was able to conceal banknotes inside book covers and bind them again as new. When the family unpacked their belongings in the city of Nahariya in 1937, Gertrude’s husband, Otto, had to slash these books with a pocket-knife, much to the shock of his children.⁸¹

Beyond their ability to hide money, things were able to offer refugees a substitute for money as well. Exchanged and sold to private individuals, pawn shops or collectors, objects transported from Central Europe became a form of foreign currency that could, with effort, be traded into the local currency. This was certainly the case with postage stamps, which prospective emigrants could purchase in Germany prior to their departure and then sell once they arrive at their destination. This practice had become so commonplace that the German prohibitions on the removal of valuable items by emigrants explicitly named stamp collections as one such item.⁸² To evade the inspection of Nazi authorities, prospective emigrants would mail letters to their travel destination, which would bear stamps that were later sold off. According to the *Aufbau*, this option was less profitable than what the refugees had hoped. In February, 1939, the US-Based German-Jewish newspaper printed the following warning:

Since many of those who are forced to emigrate from Germany resolve to invest in postage stamps as a way to salvage even a small portion of their property in the new homeland, Herr Alwin Shoenbach from the Shoenbach’s Stamp Shop seeks to caution that emigrants fall victim to all kinds of forgeries in Germany, and that the current American market yields less profit than they hope to get. With the exception of German postage stamps, the expert therefore recommends waiting for an economic upturn. An exception to that are the very latest postage stamp releases in Germany from the *Winterhilfe* series and the Automobile Exhibit series. It is recommended to stamp letters from Germany with these stamps, and with the whole series when possible.⁸³

⁷⁹ Ernst Berger Questionnaire, Austrian Heritage Questionnaire Collection, AR 10378, Box 3, LBI NYC.

⁸⁰ Interview with Rabbi Theodore Alexander, USHMM.

⁸¹ Andreas Meyer, *Zikhronot* (Kfar Vradim: Self Published, 2007), 11.

⁸² For example, number 186 in Walk, 291.

⁸³ Anonymous author, “Briefmarken,” *Aufbau*, February 15, 1939.

Profitable or not, this method of subversion would not go unnoticed by the Nazi regime. To curtail the practice of shipping stamped letters, a prohibition on international stamp exchange with Jewish or “unreliable” businesses was declared in Germany in February, 1941.⁸⁴

While value of stamps commonly lies in their worth on the exchange market of specialized collectors, financial instability in displacement had converted other objects of personal use into exchangeable commodities as well. Cameras, for example, became an asset in supplementing income. Here too, traces of cameras viability as a commodity can be found in the pages of the *Aufbau*. In response to a reader’s question on the potential value of a personal camera, the editors responded that prices vary a great deal, and that, after consulting with an expert in the field, it appears that the price for both Leica and Contax camera brands was heavily reduced at the time. They advised the reader to wait a little: “It is expected that new tariffs on German manufacturers will lead to an increase in the price of products already located and available for sale here,” the paper stated.⁸⁵ It is not quite clear what led to the assumption that new tariffs on German exports are to be expected, or that they will render the property of refugees from Germany more profitable.⁸⁶ What is relevant here is the collective interest invested in such measures and their potential implications for the ability of individual refugees to obtain higher prices for their used goods. Whether or not the value of German-made cameras increased, American consumers seemed to have expressed a clear demand for such products. Amongst the many advertisements addressing the refugee readership, the *Aufbau* often printed ads that promised cash for cameras.



⁸⁴ Walk, number 162, p. 334.

⁸⁵ Anonymous author, “Kameraverkäufer,” *Aufbau*, April 15, 1939.

⁸⁶ The US had intermittently applied countervailing duties on German products as a sanction against German government subsidies on export. Such duties were put into force for the second time on March 19, 1939, in response to the German occupation of Czechoslovakia a few days earlier. See Arnold A. Offner, *American Appeasement: United States Foreign Policy and Germany 1933-38* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1969), 146-153.



Figure 4. Three ads from the June 21, 1940 *Aufbau* edition, promoting businesses purchasing used German cameras

In the state of destitution and with limited employment opportunities, refugees all over the globe had turned to selling and exchanging some of their belongings. “That goes hand in hand with our emigrant-existence [*Emigrantendasein*],” a fellow refugee had explained to James [Isidor] Friedmann shortly after his arrival to Buenos Aires in 1938. Friedmann’s new acquaintance, Hans, who had more experience with life in displacement, helped him find a pawn shop where Friedmann could exchange his typewriter for much needed money. When Friedmann stated he hoped to get a lot of money for it, Hans responded: “hopefully, only a little, so you won’t have to pay too much when you buy it back.” An educated man, Hans insisted, cannot live without a typewriter. “According to German law, a typewriter is unseizable [*unpfändbar*],” he claimed with confidence.⁸⁷

While refugees did not select the possessions that they took with them solely on the basis of their exchange worth, correspondences suggest that the value of objects as second-hand sale items was, in fact, something to consider when choosing which items to bring along. When Leontine Axelrad was preparing in 1940 to leave her temporary refuge in Istanbul to join her family in New Jersey, her daughter-in-law, Hedi Axelrad, asked that she verify with her what belongings other than Leontine’s own clothing she was planning to take, since “carpets are very difficult to sell, and the same goes for real jewelry, which isn’t considered modern here and has little worth. There’s no interest in eiderdown.”⁸⁸ The cost of transnational shipping, which could include not just the transportation itself but also insurance, storage or packaging, was not inconsiderable. Approaching the question of what should be included in a calculated manner, as Hedi Axelrad did, meant that the objects needed to justify that expense in one way or the other.

The intention and willingness to sell was not always met with an enthusiasm to buy. As Hedi Axelrad’s letter makes clear, the material culture that Jewish refugees carried with them from Central Europe wasn’t necessarily fashionable, useful or exciting to the buyers’ market in their new places of residence. Leonie Oliven, who settled with her family in Porto Alegre, Brazil,

⁸⁷ James I. Friedmann, „Muttersprache: Das Vaterland der Heimatlosen. Erinnerungen und Dokumentation einer Verlegers in der Emigration,“ James I. Friedmann Collection, SPE XMS 81.4, box 1, German and Jewish Intellectual Émigré Collection, SUNY Albany.

⁸⁸ Letter from Hedi Axelrad to Leontine Axelrad from September 9, 1940, Axelrad Family Collection, AR 25003, box 3, folder 5, LBI NYC.

had a similar experience. In 1945, she wrote to her daughter about an attempt to sell a painting that had been in the family's possession to a local antiquarian dealership. While the three men who came to inspect her piece, in her words: "behaved very Brazilian," she was surprised to discover that they were all Jewish refugees themselves, one originally from Gleiwitz [today Gliwice], the other from Vienna, "and the third, who supposedly didn't speak any German, was a Galizianer!" Disappointed by the negotiations, Leonie Oliven remarked that "they want to sell for a profit of 400% so they offer very little." The dealers apparently saw little value in the piece that they came to inspect, since "the Brazilians don't want paintings of old men and prefer nice paintings of women," but they did set their eyes on another: "They were very keen on the faded pastel painting with the butterfly." While visiting the Oliven household, the dealers inspected the rest of the family's belongings from their old German home, to the chagrin of their hostess who reported that they "made a mess of all the suitcases and complained about the size of the rugs." The three dealers took the opportunity to visit the Oliven family acquaintance, Käte – another German-Jewish refugee, who, apparently hoped to sell a great deal of her old property. Käte's husband was quite upset at their arrival, shouting that his family had absolutely no need to sell anything whatsoever since they have enough money. He blamed his wife's capriciousness for wanting to get rid of the goods. Leonie Oliven, reporting all these occurrences in the letter to her daughter, did not disagree. "The silly woman," in her words, wanted to sell their property only so that she could travel back to her hometown of Ratibor [previously German Silesia, today Racibórz in Poland], to collect the rest of her belongings that had remained there when she was forced to flee.⁸⁹

Leonie Oliven's account shows, on one hand, how Jewish refugees from Central Europe participated in the economy of exchange both as sellers and as arbiters. Her surprise at the discovery of the dealers' identities was perhaps not so much a response to their professional engagement in the second-hand antique business as part of her diagnosis of their behavior as "Brazilian," which she noted with a sense of amused disapproval. Furthermore, her report of the dispute between the acquaintance, Käte, and her husband illustrates how individual refugees had developed different relationships to objects and their monetary worth. While her husband objected to the sale of their belongings, Käte seemed quite pleased to exchange some of them for the possibility of obtaining others. Käte's motivation to sell their possessions may have been more complicated. With the war's end, she may have just wanted to see the town that used to be her home. It is her framing of her actions in terms of an economic transaction that revolves around things that is of interest here. What seems so absurd to Leonie Oliven – selling old possessions to retrieve other old possessions – can also be seen as an extension of the logic wherein personal belongings are exchangeable with money; a form of liquidity that went hand in hand with (as James Friedmann's companion put it) the *Emigrantendasein*.

Material Witnesses

In Leonie Oliven's letter, another notable facet of her experience with the antique dealers was their lack of enthusiasm for the painting that she and her son, Klaus, intended to sell them – "the old Italian," as she called it. Attentive to their clientele's tastes, they preferred a piece depicting butterflies over a painting of an old man. Leonie Oliven's letter linked this choice with

⁸⁹ Letter from Leonie Oliven to Susanne Schall from July 15, 1945. Susanne Schall Collection, AR 11055, box 1, folder 6, LBI NYC.

local aesthetic predilection, contrasting her family's belongings with what seemed popular with Brazilian audiences. Hedi Axelrad's letter too indicated that according to local preferences in the United States, the European jewelry that they could offer for sale would be considered old-fashioned and unappealing. Like language and cultural codes, objects had the ability to denote foreignness. Placed in environments other than the ones that they were created for, they often appeared alien, marked by different aesthetics and even different functions. In this manner, the personal belongings that were taken during forced migration acted as tangible testament to their owners' displacement.

This message resonated in Lessie Sachs Wagner's plea of early 1938 to female readers of *the CV-Zeitung*, the paper published by the Central Organization of German Jews. Writing from her new home in St. Louis, Missouri, Sachs-Wagner addressed those who were preparing for their own departure and shared her impression of life in the American Midwest. One matter that she felt compelled to emphasize to her "beautiful, attractive and charming" readers was the question of clothing. As disappointing as it may be to them, she advised her readers to leave their grand evening dresses at home: "In general, lovely and courageous friend, don't over-do it. Attention! Red warning signal! Stop! The American woman dresses so totally and utterly different than you do [...] with your European clothing you will inevitably look... well, European, i.e. out of place [*aus dem Rahmen fallend*]." ⁹⁰ More than simple reminders of one's otherness, clothes operate as signifiers that reflect it publicly. If she had hoped to assist her readers to pack wisely and avoid the embarrassment of being singled out as foreigners, Sachs Wagner's advice was not very practical. The lists of belongings that German Jews prepared for the inspection of Nazi authorities were filled with clothing items, and most refugees were hardly in a position to discard of their clothes and purchase new ones according to the latest fashions of their new places of residence. Rather than urging the adoption of new dress styles, her words read more as a suggestion for life after forced migration: prepare to be different.

It wasn't just in their appearance that personal belongings reiterated otherness. Things simply did not always work as they were intended to outside of their place of origin, and often in unpredictable ways. Eleanor Hess, for example, encountered difficulties with her brother's typewriter while visiting him in São Paulo, Brazil, in 1952. During her visit, Eleanor regularly exchanged letters with her mother, Trude. The two had been living in London since the spring of 1939, when the Hess family escaped from Munich. Eleanor, who was 15 years old at the time, adapted quickly to life in England, and by the time of her visit with her brother in Brazil was already corresponding with her mother almost entirely in English. In one of the letters, she apologized to her mother for the quality of the script, since the typewriter was in need of some repair. "Also," she added, "he still has the Z and Y in the European way which I am no longer used to." She then continued the letter, recollecting, amongst other stories, the experience of enjoying an evening of Churrasco with her brother and his friends, "what we would call Barbecu or in German, Fleisch am Rost offen gebraten, like on the Oktoberwiesen." ⁹¹ Switching back to typing on a German typewriter setting after years of using the English language one, Eleanor Hess found herself slightly out of practice. A quotidian activity such as writing letters suddenly required a habit that was simultaneously familiar and distant. If the typewriter appears here in the form of a boundary object, Hess herself echoed the state of in-betweenness when she explained to her mother the Latin American Churrasco meal by linguistically as well as culturally translating

⁹⁰ Lessie Sachs Wagner, "Mittelwestliche Impressionen," *Aufbau*, March 1, 1938.

⁹¹ Letter from Eleanor Hess to Trude Hess, July 3, 1952. Eleanor Hess Collection 1571, folder 4, Wiener Library London.

it, first into English (albeit misspelled), then into German. Her reunion with the German typewriter at her brother's house may have required some adjustment, but Eleanor Hess was evidently not unaccustomed to moving back and forth between worlds.

The suitability of appliances made in Germany to everyday life across the globe had become not only a problem but also an opportunity. Immigrant electricians and engineers offered their skills in repairing tools and machines that were transplanted from Central Europe. The German-Jewish press throughout the world carried advertisements of professionals who listed expertise with German-made appliances as a desired specialty. Beyond attending to technical problems, refugees turned to these specialists to adjust their devices to their new surroundings. Changing typewriter keys to fit local language specifications was one such adjustment. Luis Mayer in Buenos Aires listed this service in his 1936 advertisement, and so did L. Weisbrod, who, from his shop in Tel Aviv, offered clients in an advertisement from 1949 a full keyboard switch from the Latin to the Hebrew alphabet.⁹² Depending on the region, electrical appliances also required adaptation to local voltages, another service that skilled refugees were able to offer to those who hoped to continue using the radios, vacuum cleaners or sewing machines that they were able to take with them. Within the refugee economy that emerged in large concentrations of forced migration during the 1930s and early 1940s, the presence of foreign devices created a demand for services that could support the operation and longevity of these objects, and it was from within the refugee community that these services were being fulfilled.



Figure 5. Advertisement for radio repairs by Jacob Schwarz: "Previously one of the oldest and largest radio companies in Baden. Special testing equipment for German devices." *Aufbau*, January, 1939

⁹² "Schreibmaschinen" ad for Luis Mayer, *Hilfsverein Deutschsprechender Juden Buenos Aires Mitteilungsblatt*, October 1, 1936; "Schreibmaschinen" ad for L. Weisbrod, *Mitteilungsblatt*, May 6, 1949.



Figure 6. "Adaptation of German electrical appliances to local currents." *Aufbau*, December, 1938

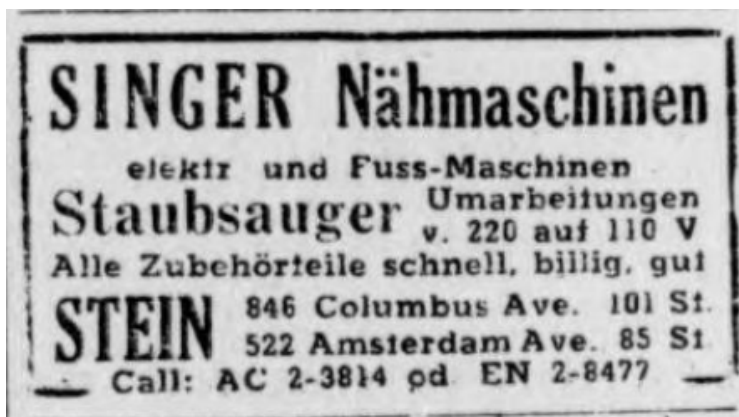


Figure 7. Listing promoting a service for adaptation of Singer sewing machines and vacuum cleaners from 220 to 110 volts. *Aufbau*, January 1940

Electricity conversions, fashion faux-pas and unwanted second-hand items served to accentuate the foreignness of objects and, by extension, the people who owned them. The objects themselves became, in this manner, material witnesses to the experience of displacement. By the force of their presence, they erected personal, everyday monuments to the historical events that catalyzed their removal. But the contrast that material objects testified to, differentiating between old and new, past and present, was not necessarily experienced by the refugees themselves as a burden. The familiarity of transported belongings often projected comfort, safety and control at a time of great disorientation and concern. As a physician, Arthur Jacobson felt particularly committed to protecting his family's health in the subtropical climate of Cuba. "The strictest observation of hygiene was of the greatest importance" for him, and he was grateful to have at his disposal a small icebox that they brought from Germany and then nailed to the wall of the family's apartment in Havana, in order to keep their food cold.⁹³ Jacobson was able to look back at this as an act of resourcefulness, a means of exerting control over life in displacement.

In the refugee domicile, personal belongings helped create a sense of familiar comfort. One whimsical poem, modeled after Goethe's celebrated *Erlkönig*, attempted to capture the

⁹³ Arthur Jacobson, "57 Years in the Service of Humanity, 1912-1969. Memoirs of a retired physician" Ilse Jacobson Collection, 2007/127, JMB Archive.

sense of homey ambience in narrating the reunion between two parents with their son in Cape Town, South Africa. Author E.W. described how, upon their arrival to the city's port, the parents were picked up by their son, Otto, who had arrived to Cape Town before them. Four days later, when the container with their possessions reached its final destination, the sense of warmth [*Gemütlichkeit*] was already in the air. As they unpacked the load, Otto was disappointed to see the blue vases wrapped so unprofessionally. "It was the packer from Silberstein!" his mother reassured him. But even this unpleasant surprise couldn't spoil the atmosphere:

The home became cozy, with the furniture there too.
They celebrated a reunion that was long overdue.
If at Sea Point, Vredehoek Estate or in Gardens
Wherever you see emigrant children and their parents
Whether Stern, or Bloch, or Wolf, or Cohn,
With daughter-in-law, or daughter, or with the son.
And at the end of a long day,
Back towards home they make their way.
Like in old times, gathering in felicity
To celebrate the comfort of Jewish domesticity.⁹⁴

The German word *Gemütlichkeit*, which the author used repeatedly in the poem, is notoriously difficult to translate, invoking simultaneously middle-class sociability, home-making, familial bonds and jovial serenity.⁹⁵ Just as elusive is the term "Jewish domesticity" [*jüdische Häuslichkeit*] and what it purported to encapsulate.⁹⁶ In this poem, both terms appear as a mood, an atmosphere fostered by the long-awaited family gathering and the presence of familiar personal belongings. With the arrival of the parents, followed by their possessions, a home has resurfaced. Recited in 1939 at the birthday celebration of Leo Raphaely, a prominent figure in Cape Town's Jewish community, E.W.'s poem would have resonated with many listeners in the audience, themselves recent refugees that were aided by Raphaely in their migration to South Africa.

Forty years after E.W.'s poem depicted the remaking of the German-Jewish home in the diaspora, Alice Schwarz-Gardos celebrated the endurance of this interior culture in Israel. Writing from Tel Aviv in the 1970s, Schwarz-Gardos portrayed the characteristics of the city to her mainly non-Jewish readership in Germany. She described several of the main streets, including HaYarkon Street, with its many hotels facing the Mediterranean. In between these luxurious constructions, she noted, deteriorating old apartment buildings were still visible, populated by the same tenants that had resided there for decades. Inside the decrepit hallways of these buildings, one could walk into "refined, highly cultivated interiors," that house "people

⁹⁴ E.W., "Der zeitgemässe 'Erlkönig'," Jewish Immigration Collection, BC719, Cape Town University Archives.

⁹⁵ More on the term and its significance in the formation of Germany's middle class, see Brigitta Schmidt-Lauber, *Gemütlichkeit. Eine kulturwissenschaftliche Annäherung* (Frankfurt a. Main: Campus: 2003).

⁹⁶ While it is difficult to determine exactly what the author of the poem meant in referencing "Jewish domesticity," the arrival of the parents as a precondition thereof points to the centrality of the family in reinforcing this ideal. For more on Jewish families and domesticity in the German-Jewish context, see Marion Kaplan, *The Making of the Jewish Middle Class: Women, Family and Identity in Imperial Germany* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), especially 3-134. See also Paula Hyman, *Gender and Assimilation in Modern Jewish History: The Roles and Representation of Women* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1995).

from Central Europe, who love good books and classical music, while outside their windows and doors the underworld is swirling. The street of the fancy hotels, with the nice stores and the old cultured ‘pioneers’ is also the street of prostitution.”⁹⁷ Schwarz-Gardos, who escaped from Vienna and arrived to Palestine in 1939, identified the homes of former refugees like herself as a bastion of Central European culture. Inside these spaces, this aging culture was safeguarded from the commercial, ethical and aesthetic threats posed by the bustling city. The Central European ambience that Schwarz-Gardos celebrated in her essay has, on one hand, defined the living spaces of those she had called “pioneers,” and, on the other hand, was confined to these spaces; alienated from the outside, partly by choice and partly by necessity.

Multidimensional Artifacts

The things that accompanied displacement were, in most cases, removed not to be revered, but to be used. These were objects of the everyday that could provide dispossessed refugees with material support at a time of scarcity. They were the working tools that secured a salary, the flatware that filled cupboards, the smuggled jewelry that was sold for much needed cash, the Sunday clothes worn for weekend strolls in new neighborhoods, the linen in which one slept. But seen in the context of the world-historical events that propelled their dislocation, the objects of the German-Jewish diaspora gained an additional layer of meaning, “transformed by awareness,” as Mona Köter has put it.⁹⁸ In this chapter, the objects of the displaced were discussed as emblematic of the material and quotidian reality of forced migration. But it is precisely this reality that had made them into multidimensional artifacts, moving between function, value, representation and remembrance. Köter’s work addresses objects that epitomize this multidimensionality forcefully. One of those is Margarete Kuttner’s small towel, which she had packed for her son, sixteen-year-old Paul, as he embarked upon the Kindertransport and left Berlin for England. His mother was deported to Auschwitz in 1942 and murdered there one year later. For decades, Paul Kuttner had kept the towel, decorated with the embroidery of his mother’s initials, just as she had carefully folded and placed it in his suitcase. An everyday object turned relic.⁹⁹

If Kuttner’s towel illustrates how history has transformed the meaning of objects, other examples remind us that many artifacts were removed into displacement not for their monetary worth, usage and exchangeability, but rather because they encapsulated habits, traditions and identities. The five mourning albums [*Traueralbum*] that Fritz and Sophia Löwenthal had in their possession offer a case in point. The couple brought the albums with them from Schwerin to Santiago de Chile in 1939, and then from Chile to Israel, where Sophia had moved in the 1980s following her spouse’s death.¹⁰⁰ Commemorating deceased family members who had passed away before the Nazis came to rule, these albums included photos, obituary excerpts, Jewish mourning prayers and a calendar that converted the Hebrew annual commemoration day into the Gregorian calendar for the following decades. By the time Sophia Löwenthal had decided to

⁹⁷ Alice Schwarz-Gardos, “Tel Aviv – die größte Metropole in der Provinz,” *Paradies mit Schönheitsfehlern. So lebt man in Israel* (Freiburg: Herder, 1982), 115.

⁹⁸ Mona Köter, “Bracelet, Hand Towel, Pocket Watch: Objects of the Last Moment in Memory and Narration,” *Shofar* 23, no. 1 (Fall, 2004) 111.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 109.

¹⁰⁰ They are now available in the Fritz and Sophia Loewenthal Collection, P-58, at the Diaspora Research Center, Tel Aviv University.

once again pack the mourning albums and take them to Israel, they were no longer functional for marking the yearly *Yahrzeit* but had clearly retained their meaning in her eyes. Like many other belongings across the German-Jewish diaspora, they had become “bearers of memory,” their symbolic value amplified by the rupture of forced migration as well as by the genocidal annihilation of German-speaking Jewry and its culture in Europe.¹⁰¹ Like the Löwenthal family mourning albums, numerous personal belongings have made their way to the various locales of the German-Jewish diaspora with no explicit purpose other than to signify roots, history and identity: Family heirlooms, WWI decorations, wedding cards, newspaper clippings, books, autographed photos and others.

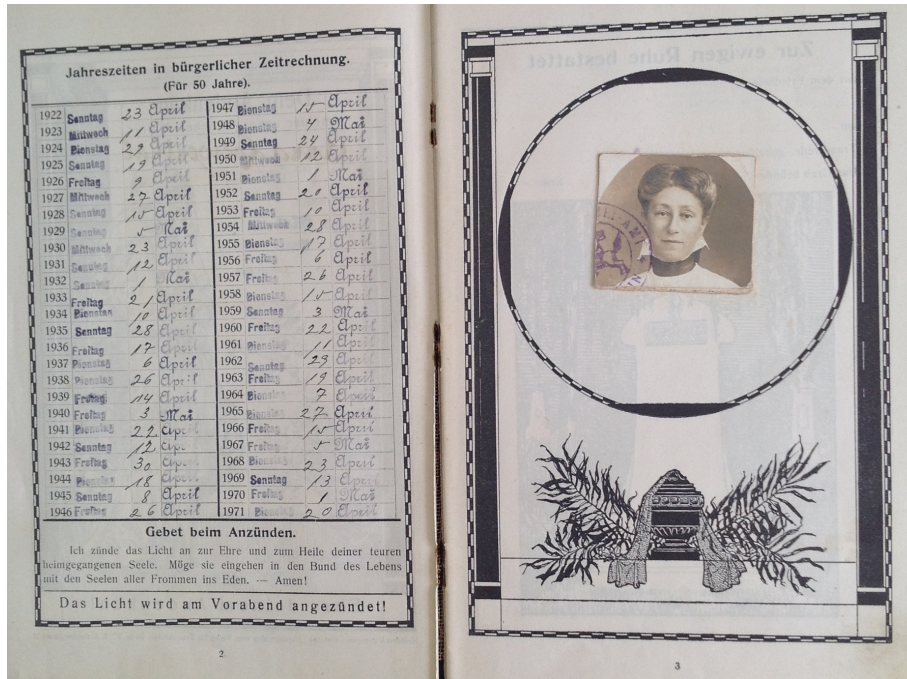


Figure 8. Mourning album in memory of Anna Löwenthal, Fritz Löwenthal’s mother

In the suitcases and boxes of German-speaking Jews who were forced to leave their homes and seek refuge in foreign countries, a mixture of objects with various purposes could be found: Personal use, professional value, monetary worth or meaningful symbolic qualities, with some artifacts capable of fulfilling multiple roles at the same time. As commodities, they provided relief for a population subjected to mass-theft. As material objects, they typified the sense of otherness that is inherent to displacement. As personal belongings, they became physical testaments, memorializing an upended world and the people who used to inhabit it.

¹⁰¹ Köter., 110.

Chapter 2: Comic Relief Humor and Displacement

The language that I spoke before,
I spoke it with no problem.
but with English – oh, dear lord –
I always hit rock bottom.

It all began in Evening School,
that's where I do my learning,
but what I learn the night before,
is gone by the next morning.
With my accent, it's not hard to guess,
when I first discovered the US...
[...]
The word 'sure!' is the first you learn.
then next is 'I am busy.'
If someone wants a loan returned,
I tell them 'take it easy.'

'I need a job' means 'I am broke,'
'a carpet' is for *Teppich*,
'a boss' is really not a joke
and refugee means '*nebbich*.'
But this we haven't covered in class:
How to tell someone to kiss your _____?

Yes, English is really important to learn,
and more than just 'how do you do.'
as long as you speak only with friends,
no one else will understand you.

And as long as you meet only family members,
acquaintances, relatives and other *schnorrers*,
you will only be able to nod your head,
so it's better to learn English instead!

Die Sprache, die ich früher sprach,
die konnt' ich fließend sprechen.
Doch English language - Schmerz lass' nach -
da hab' ich heut' noch Schwächen.

Mit Evening School, so fing ich an,
ich nahm my English lesson,
doch hab' ich, was ich evenings kann,
beim breakfast schon vergessen.
Man merkt mir an am Dialekt,
wann ich Amerika entdeckt...
[...]
Zuerst lernt man das Wörtchen 'sure!'
dann lernt man 'I am busy.'
Will einer von mir Geld retour,
dem sag' ich 'take it easy.'

'I need a job' heißt ich bin Stier,
'a carpet' ist ein Teppich,
'a boss' das ist ein großes Tier,
und refugee heißt '*nebbich*.'
Bei einem weiß ich mir noch keinen Rat:
Wie heißt denn hier das Götz-Zitat?¹

Ja, da wär's halt gut, wenn man Englisch könnt',
bisselr mehr noch als 'How do you do,'
denn solange man hier nur zur Verwandtschaft rennt,
da lernt man nicht Englisch dazu...

Und so lang man hier trifft nur dir Onkeln und Tanten,
Bekannten und Schnorrer und and're Verwandten,
so lang lernt man Reden nur mit die Händ' –
darum wär's halt gut, wenn man Englisch könnt'!

Turning one of the most fundamental challenges faced by immigrants into an object of amusement, lyricist Robert Gilbert (1899-1978) and composer Hermann Leopoldi (1888-1959) articulated an experience that troubled dozens of thousands of German-speaking Jewish émigrés in the mid-twentieth century – the language barrier. Hamburg-born Gilbert and the Viennese Leopoldi wrote their jesting song *Da wär's halt gut wenn man Englisch könnt'*¹⁰² in the early 1940s, having themselves escaped Nazi persecution in their home countries and only recently landed in New York. Their title cast language as a relentless but entertaining difficulty that touched refugees like themselves both casually and existentially. The song raised troubling

*All translations are by the author unless stated otherwise.

¹⁰² Robert Gilbert, "Da wär's halt gut wenn man Englisch könnt'." Composed and performed by Hermann Leopoldi. I include the German original here to portray Gilbert's skillful transition between English and German. For a recording of the song performed by Leopoldi see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H5OLFPRVVq4>.

questions pertinent to many of the newly-arrived forced migrants: Can one really fit in a new surrounding when one's capacity to joke or curse fluently is taken away? Is it possible to belong in a society with a lacking vocabulary and a strong accent constantly reminding listeners of the speaker's foreignness? In their piece, Gilbert and Leopoldi approach these concerns with a humorous tone, introducing a whimsical air to an otherwise sober, destabilizing situation. And yet, the playful disorientation between English and German at the heart of the song's logic emerges as a result of the artists' command of English and mastery of their own native tongue. Without the ability to easily move back and forth between the two languages, the wit would be lost in translation. Paradoxically, then, the anxieties of learning a new language and the sense of inferiority brought about with it were communicated from the artists' position of relative strength rather than of weakness.

Like many of the songs that Leopoldi released in his exile years, *Da wär's halt gut wenn man Englisch könnt*, which was recorded in 1946, was popular with German-speaking immigrants in the United States, and the song's treatment of the language barrier challenge certainly resonated with the listeners of that community. In the United States, as well as in other geographies across the German-Jewish diaspora, individuals confronted the task of adapting to new languages with varying degrees of success. That this task comprised one of the defining features of their life in after displacement is unquestionable in light of its prominence within memoirs, correspondences, private documents and cultural artifacts that they produced. Does this mean that they would have found the song funny? Despite Hermann Leopoldi's huge success as an entertainer, that remains a difficult question to answer.¹⁰³ What is clear is that the song reflected a real condition experienced by the majority of the "nebbich refugee" population that was its main audience.¹⁰⁴ Communicated in a deliberately exaggerated manner, it invited the same refugee listeners to sit back and have a good laugh at their own expense.

In the following chapter I explore the multiple functions of humor in the hands of the Jewish forced migrants from Central Europe. Needless to say, the devastation that National Socialism unleashed upon Jews inside and outside of German-speaking regions was a tragedy of world-historical proportions. Analyzing the humorist cultural production that emerged from its midst may seem peculiar. Yet such consideration helps illuminate exile and refuge as everyday realities for people whose lives were radically altered by them. My aim is not to offer an exercise in the study of gallows humor but rather to point to the different ways in which people utilized humor under conditions of emergency and instability. Different comedic expressions encapsulated diverse reactions to displacement. The examples brought forth in this chapter will account for this divergence while stressing affinity. The jokes, skits, songs and caricatures that German-speaking Jews created after their removal conveyed particular stories that were nevertheless linked within one grand narrative through culture, community and history.

In Gilbert and Leopoldi's song, humor offered an accessible medium for responding to a shared obstacle – the immigrants' foreignness in their new surroundings. Language was one of the most common demarcations of this disjointed existence but not the only one. Further humorist expressions will follow to illustrate the problem of foreignness as it was manifest in a host of conflicting social and cultural norms. Humor in these instances appears to perform the consoling role of a coping mechanism ascribed to it by Freud. "[T]he intention which humour carries out," he wrote in 1927, is to determine the world, as dangerous as it may seem, to be

¹⁰³ Christoph Lind and George Traska, *Hermann Leopoldi. The Life of a Viennese Piano Humorist*, trans. Dennis McCort (Riverside: Ariadne Press, 2013). 226-258.

¹⁰⁴ The Yiddish word *nebbich* translates here to pitiful, shabby and unlucky.

“nothing but a game for children – just worth making a jest about!”¹⁰⁵ But humor’s workings was not constrained to the role of consolation. While predicaments of adjusting to unfamiliar environments shaped every aspect of their existence in displacement, German-Jewish migrants did not always perceive their sense of otherness in entirely negative terms. For many who were forced into dispersion, distinctive group characteristics were a source of pride rather than a liability that should be shed quickly on the path to integration. This sense of cultural exclusivity found expression in humor as well. German Jews drew great pleasure from the opportunity to ridicule themselves (and, while they were at it, other Jews as well) in what was ultimately a celebration of their culture.

Stigma and Redemption in German-Jewish Humor

Historians have tended to dismiss humor as a viable source of investigation. This neglect, as noted by John Efron, is particularly puzzling in the field of modern Jewish history, considering the prominent role humor holds in Jewish cultures and identities.¹⁰⁶ From a contemporary perspective, the link between Jewishness and humor is so prevalent in mass media and pop culture that it seems almost timeless, essentialist or ahistorical. In reality, how Jews produced and responded to humor, as well as the attitude of non-Jewish society towards their humor, was shaped in reaction to historical developments. For Jews in modern Central Europe, jokes, satire and comedy reflected daily affairs as well as tectonic shifts that took place in the era of emancipation: changing encounters with non-Jewish majority society, internal conflicts within the Jewish world, emerging national allegiances and the rise of new breeds of antisemitism.

The typology of German-Jewish humor as a specific genre was, in fact, born out of antisemitic discourse that formed in Germany during the first half of the 19th century. The pejorative term *Judenwitz* – loosely translated as Jew Joke – referred to a style of humor that was seen as particularly sarcastic, juvenile and inarticulate. Proponents of a German high culture that was devoid of “foreign” influences saw *Judenwitz* humor as a threat to the purity of the German language and the German spirit. The main supposed agents of the *Judenwitz* in the eyes of such critics, the authors Moritz Saphir, Ludwig Börne and Heinrich Heine, were scolded publicly by their opponents for disseminating uncivilized and illiterate humor to German readers.¹⁰⁷ Attacks on the authors combined aesthetic with political chauvinism. Saphir, Börne and Heine never shied away from publishing scathing critiques of German society (nor of Jewish society, for that matter), arousing the displeasure of nationalist German voices. In return, the satirists would be reprimanded not only for their supposed rhetorical flaws, but also for their ethnic origin. Heine was accused by one critic of “introducing” into German literature a disgraceful tone, emphasizing his authorial foreignness.¹⁰⁸ Saphir’s adversaries often berated his allegedly weak command of the German language in their polemics against him.¹⁰⁹ One critique of Börne’s *Letters from Paris* [1832-1834] referred to a specific section in the text as the work of “the

¹⁰⁵ Sigmund Freud, “Humour,” trans. Joan Riviere, republished in James Strachey (ed.), *Sigmund Freud, Collected Papers vol. 5* (London: The Hogarth Press, 1950), 6.

¹⁰⁶ John Efron, “From Łódź to Tel Aviv: The Yiddish Political Satire of Shimen Dzigal and Yisroel Shumacher,” *Jewish Quarterly Review* 102, no. 1 (Winter 2012), 51-52.

¹⁰⁷ Jefferson S. Chase, *Inciting Laughter: The Development of "Jewish Humor" in 19th Century German Culture*. (Boston: De Gruyter, 2000).

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 174.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 46-47.

embittered Jew.”¹¹⁰ While it was the satirical content produced by these authors that aggravated their attackers, their Jewish origin elevated this content – which to German conservative ears already sounded treacherous – to the level of a great cultural threat.

The identification of this allegedly quick-witted yet frivolous style of humor with a Jewish mentality was established in the minds of those who sought to discredit the viability of Jewish authors in the German cultural sphere. Yet it would be false to suggest that Jewish authors resisted the notion of a uniquely Jewish humor. “The Jews have chosen wit,” Saphir himself wrote, “because in its service they can, in time, get to the rank of officer before some army order judges them by their certificate of conversion and not by their meritorious service.”¹¹¹ In their works on Jewish humor as a literary product, Sig Altman and Ruth Wisse both identify the humor that contemporary critics have mockingly termed *Judenwitz* as a genuine cultural phenomenon born out of bourgeois German Jewry’s conflicted existence as both German and Jewish. It is this particular strand of humor, Altman and Wisse both argue, that is the predecessor of popular Jewish humor as we know it today, from the Marx Brothers films through Lenny Bruce’s comedy and to Larry David’s sitcoms.¹¹²

In early twentieth-century Germany and Austria, especially during the interwar period, the visibility of Jews in the entertainment industry, in the arts and in journalism helped cement the link between Jews and humor, as it was interpreted from the non-Jewish perspective. In Karl Kraus’ Viennese polemical satire, in Ernst Lubitsch’s films or on the cabaret stage of Walter Mehring in Berlin, irony and wit produced and performed by Jews continued to possess a perceived distinct quality, achieving popularity amongst Jewish and non-Jewish audiences alike. While some Jewish performers and artists often avoided Jewish themes in their work to evade typecasting, others deliberately chose to explore Jewish content in mass media representations.¹¹³ These entertainers, comedians and writers often embraced stereotypical antisemitic representations, and – not unlike Heine and Börne before them – bent and exaggerated them with the dual aim of ridiculing their familiar Jewish surroundings and criticizing the non-Jewish majority for harboring these stereotypes.¹¹⁴ The success of comedic filmmakers and cabaret artists of Jewish extraction was not always met with approval from the leadership of Jewish communities, who feared that portraying antisemitic caricatures to uninformed audiences would simply validate rather than help to refute them.¹¹⁵ Humor’s role in German-Jewish culture was evidently rarely a matter of entertainment and laughter only.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 106.

¹¹¹ Michael Meyer and Michael Brenner, *German-Jewish History in Modern Times Emancipation and Acculturation, 1780-1871*, vol. II. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 225.

¹¹² Sig Altman, *The Comic Image of the Jew. Exploration of a Pop Culture Phenomenon* (Rutherford: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1971), 163, 198; Ruth Wisse, *No Joke. Making Jewish Humor* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013), 776-789 in Kindle edition. For an opposing interpretation, which locates the origin of modern Jewish humor in Yiddish traditions of storytelling: Jordan Finkin. “Jewish Jokes, Yiddish Storytelling, and Sholem Aleichem: A Discursive Approach,” *Jewish Social Studies* 16, no. 1 (Fall 2009) 85-110.

¹¹³ Marline Otte. *Jewish Identities in German Popular Entertainment, 1890-1933* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 239.

¹¹⁴ For example, Valerie Weinstein, “Anti-Semitism or Jewish ‘Camp’? Ernst Lubitsch’s *Schupalast Pinkus* (1916) and *Meyer Aus Berlin* (1918),” *German Line and Letters* 59, no. 1 (Winter, 2006) 101-121; Hans-Peter Bayerdörfer, “Jewish Cabaret Artists before 1933,” in: Jeanette Malkin and Freddie Rokem (eds.), *Jews and the Making of Modern German Theatre* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2010) 132-150.

¹¹⁵ Peter Jelavich, “When Are Jewish Jokes No Longer Funny? Ethnic Humour in Imperial and Republican Berlin,” in: Martina Kessel and Patrick Merziger (eds.), *The Politics of Humour: Laughter, Inclusion, and Exclusion in the*

In 1924 in Berlin, the Jewish comedians and cabaretists Kurt Robitschek (born in Prague) and Paul Morgan (born in Vienna) published an anthology of “Jewish” jokes under the title *Die einsame Träne: das Buch der guten Witzen* [“The Lonely Tears: The Book of Good Jokes”]. The anecdotes compiled in the book depicted an array of Jewish archetypes, some more negative than others, whose shortcomings were meant to elicit the readers’ sympathy. One example read:

A man appears in a business office. “Herr Tietz? I saw your ad in which you look for a young, educated, experienced man. I am 58, speak a little German but mostly through the nose, and have been a *shnorrer* all my life!” “Well, what are you doing *here*?” “I just wanted to tell you that the job is *not for me*.”¹¹⁶

Demonstrative of a particular strand of German-Jewish humor on the eve of the Nazi rise to power, this joke openly upholds antisemitic tropes with the purpose of ridiculing them. The unnamed protagonist of the joke is a stereotypical *Ostjude*, the Eastern-European Jew, a figure that elicited scorn from Jewish and non-Jewish Germans alike.¹¹⁷ He is lazy, a *shnorrer*, and his poor command of German is best described as *mauscheln*, a type of grotesque mumbling that was pejoratively associated with Jews in Germany.¹¹⁸

While the appearance and traits of the Jewish figure seem to be drawn directly from antisemitic rhetoric, it differs from such stereotypical representations in that it portrays the Jew as a multi-dimensional character and not simply as a flat caricature. He here appears as an object of mockery and disapproval but also as a likable and ingenious individual, while Herr Tietz is reduced to a mere prop in the background.¹¹⁹ As the subject of this joke, the Jew is not solely the butt of it but rather its promulgator. In exercising control over the situation by letting Herr Tietz know that he is not qualified for the job, the protagonist, for a split of a second, disorients the existing societal order. But the change that he posits is a temporary one. It is taken for granted that the Jew would not even be considered for the job, and with this realization he can comfortably declare to the baffled employer that he renounces the position altogether. Yet he remains jobless, making the punch line an act of empowerment that nevertheless preserves the authority of his counterpart. To the extent that barging into an office, naming his faults and then relinquishing the position is a liberating act, it is ultimately impotent in posing a real threat to existing power relations. Part joker, part laughing stock, the contradictory character of the self-

Twentieth Century (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012), 492-1062 in Kindle edition; Lind and Traska, 135-138.

¹¹⁶ Altman, 167.

¹¹⁷ On the loaded position of German Jewry towards Jews from Eastern Europe see Steven Aschheim, *Brothers and Strangers: The East European Jew in German and German-. Jewish Consciousness, 1800-1923* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1982); Delphine Bechtel, “Cultural Transfers between “Ostjuden” and “Westjuden” German-Jewish Intellectuals and Yiddish Culture 1897–1930,” *Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* 42, No. 1, 67-83; Jack Wertheimer, *Unwelcome Strangers: East European Jews in Imperial Germany* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987). Chapter three in this dissertation will explore at greater length the relationships between Central European Jews and other Jewish communities after displacement, outside of the German-speaking region.

¹¹⁸ *Schnorrer* in Yiddish means beggar or freeloader. On the term *mauscheln* and its antisemitic usage in German culture, see Hans Peter Althaus, *Mauscheln. Ein Wort als Waffe* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2002).

¹¹⁹ Tietz is an interesting choice for the gentleman’s name. Traditionally a Prussian name, it was, at the time of the publication, strongly associated also with the Jewish Tietz family, the owners of one of the most successful German department store chains at the time. The character of the *Ostjude*’s counterpart is therefore ambiguous in its demarcation from the protagonist.

proclaimed *schnorrer* provides an apt illustration of how Jews in Central Europe used humor to reflect on their own predicaments.

Significant in this case is also the choice of the Eastern European Jew, the *Ostjude*, as both the object of laughter and the arbiter of humor. This recurring theme in German-Jewish humor is rooted in the complex and problematic attitude of German Jews towards Eastern European Jews. The divergence between these two cultures, exacerbated by German-speaking Jewry's acculturation into non-Jewish society and by the geographic and linguistic proximity that they shared, manifested itself often in two contradictory expressions. While some German Jews considered Eastern Europeans as backwards and inferior – even disgusting – others exoticized them as authentic Jews, uncompromised by the influence of European Christian society. This loaded outlook had a surprising exception in the realm of humor, where the figure of the *Ostjude* often appears as a sympathetic and clever joker. Even Yiddish, ordinarily a *lingua non-grata* in German-Jewish society, appears to have had a noteworthy status in humor. Words like *schnorrer* or *nebbich* were far from the only ones that found their way to German-Jewish comedic texts. This relational issue will be explored later at greater length.

Moving forward to a closer investigation of German-Jewish diasporic humor during and after the mass migration from Nazi Germany, it is important to keep note of humor's various meanings throughout modern German-Jewish history. From the viewpoint of antisemitic observers, Jewish humor could supplement the indictment of cultural contamination. Mainstream non-Jewish audiences found Jewish humor entertaining but did not necessarily register its occasional subversive critique of prevalent German bigotry and intolerance. From a Jewish perspective, ambivalent reactions from some elements in the community signaled the anxiety of German Jewry about its parlous position in German society. For Jewish performers, comedians and artists, humor afforded an opportunity to tackle this anxiety by claiming antisemitic depictions for their own purposes. In doing so, they established in the Jewish comedic subject a dimension of strength, but a deliberately faulty one. When, following the rise of National Socialism, Jews began fleeing Germany and its annexed territories, humor was carried into displacement and emerged as a close companion at times of flight, refuge and rebuilding.

Punch Lines for New Realities

German Jews' search for refuge from increasingly perilous conditions at home brought these uprooted individuals to face the challenge of adapting to new environments hurriedly and often in difficult circumstances – insufficient material resources, poor language skills, fear for those left behind and, often, inadequate expectations. To cope with these conditions, the refugees relied on existing Jewish philanthropic organizations and newly established self-help associations that provided guidance and material aid.¹²⁰ These institutions were decisive for the adjustment and integration process that immediately followed arrival, providing assistance with housing, employment, professional training or language tutoring, and creating a social as well as cultural infrastructure for the refugees to engage with. The role of humor and entertainment in these efforts is not self-evident at first glance. Understandably, in the refugee hierarchy of needs a stable source of income, proper housing and the concern for loved ones stranded in Europe

¹²⁰ To name only a few, the Association for Jewish Refugees, founded in 1941 in Britain; the German-Jewish Club of 1933, founded in Los Angeles in 1933; the Committee for the Support of German-Jewish Refugees [CARIA] in Brazil, founded in 1934.

were more urgent than a good laugh. But humor offered a neutral and even friendly space where one could face the ongoing daily experience of displacement.

Refugees found a significant instrument of support in the emergent German-Jewish press, which provided both practical assistance and a sense of cultural cohesion. One such publication was the *Mitteilungsblatt*, established in Palestine in 1932 by a local organization, *Hitachdut Olei Germaniya* [Association for Immigrants from Germany, HOG, later named *Hitachdut Olei Merkaz Eiropa* or HOME – Association for Immigrants from Central Europe]. While initially the *Mitteilungsblatt* functioned similarly to a club bulletin, informing members of the HOG about the association’s activities, it soon developed into a press organ that covered local and international news. Yet the focus remained on the interests of the German-speaking Jewish community in Palestine and later Israel, with the *Mitteilungsblatt* offering readers important information to address their needs and further their integration. The following excerpt from the December 12, 1940 edition of the *Mitteilungsblatt* illustrates this dual function of the publication. While the *Mitteilungsblatt* appeared almost exclusively in the German language, the text titled “The Contemplations of a Jerusalem Tenant” appeared in Hebrew, aiming to expose new immigrants to a set of unfamiliar vocabulary. Many words in the text were annotated and an index at the bottom of the page offered German translations to these terms.

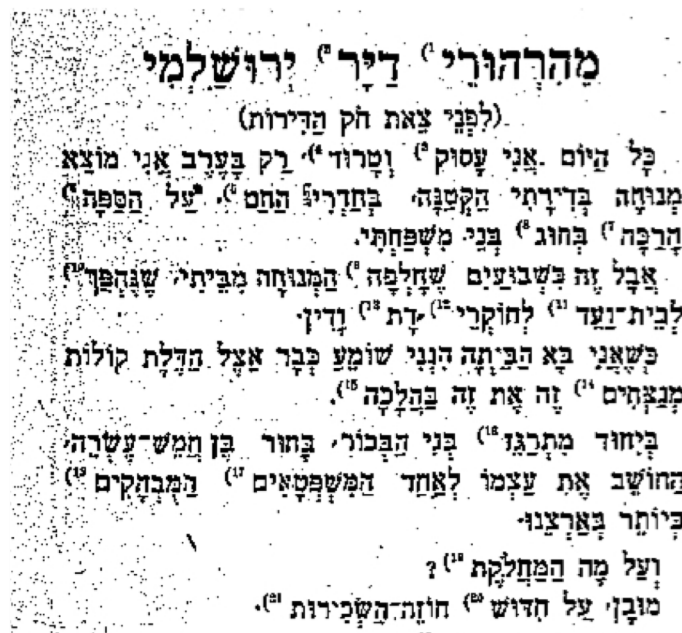


Figure 9. Y. Retznikov, “Mi-Hirhurey Dayar Yerushalmi,” *Mitteilungsblatt*, December 12, 1940.

The Contemplations of a Jerusalem Tenant (prior to the apartment-law)

All day long I am busy and occupied. Only in the evening do I find peace in my little apartment, in my warm room, on the soft couch and in the circle of my family members. But for these last two weeks peace has left my house, which has been transformed into a committee for the research of the law [...]¹²¹

¹²¹ Y. Retznikov, “Mi-Hirhurey Dayar Yerushalmi,” *Mitteilungsblatt*, December 12, 1940.

The matter that incited such commotion in the author's household was a debate surrounding the renewal of the family's rental agreement in light of renting reforms that were expected to pass imminently. The reforms would have ended the housing policy known as the "Muharram system," a remnant of Ottoman rule that limited the length of rental agreements to a period of one year only, to then be negotiated and renewed during Muharram, the first month of the Muslim calendar. The author's 15-year-old son and 13-year-old daughter are caught up in bitter discussions on the question of the reforms and how they should prepare for them. The author himself is also frustrated, though not directly by the potential hikes to the cost of his rent, but for a different reason:

And so each and every evening I hear fierce disputes and arguments about laws and regulations, of which I know nothing about. And frankly, new-comer [*Oleh Chadash*], can you understand the 'Muharram' business? Can you understand all the ins and outs of your renting agreement? Could you clarify for me what is a law that is about to pass but hasn't passed so far? A law that no one knows if it will actually materialize and if so, in which form and at what time? And then my other son, a 12 year-old – a natural skeptic – whispers in my ear in the midst of all the noise: "Let me tell you something, father, the law will pass for sure. It will pass, but only after 'Muharram'" ... That little rascal.¹²²

This humorous piece calls attention to the sense of alienation that characterized even the most ordinary events in a new immigrant's life, such as renewing one's rental agreement. Exaggerated for the sake of comedy, it nevertheless represented a real response to the bittersweet realization of the gap formed between the parent immigrant – the *Oleh Chadash*, who is at least partially "stuck" in the old country – and his children, who quickly adapt to the ways of the new homeland and are able to outsmart him.¹²³ His lack of fluency in the local legal and bureaucratic culture puts him at a disadvantage: he knows just enough to understand that the new legislation is unlikely to help him in negotiating a better deal on his rent.

The adjustment process that refugees had to go through clearly extended itself beyond the foundations of language skills to include social norms and administrative codes. The tenant's woes, as they were told in this short text, introduce humor as one prism through which German Jews approached this daunting learning curve. A playful tone enabled the articulation of a common concern about the immigrants' ability to adapt to new customs and rules. It illustrated through jest how the generational gap, exacerbated by displacement, influenced internal family dynamics. More practically, the text operated as a language instruction manual, inviting readers to expand their vocabulary while having a laugh at their own expense. Admittedly, it is unlikely that anyone unfamiliar with the Hebrew words for 'couch' or 'busy' would be able follow the flow of the text and get the joke. But with this short piece, the *Mitteilungsblatt* could address readers who sought language instructions, those who were primarily interested in entertainment, and those who desired both.

For communities of refugees, stranded in an unfamiliar environment and struggling with the reality of war, humor quite literally afforded a comic relief from the daily quest of navigating through novelties, oddities and strife. The example of German-speaking Jews who escaped to Shanghai offers an extreme example. The 17,000 refugees who reached the city chose it as their

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ This generational gap will be explored at greater length in chapter five.

exilic destination reluctantly, almost exclusively due to the city's open borders policy at a time when most countries severely limited or completely barred the entrance of Jewish refugees.¹²⁴ Unlike those who arrived to the United States or to England, most of the Central European refugees in Shanghai had no plans to start a new life in China and settle there permanently. The vast majority of them saw Shanghai as a temporary place of refuge, for which they were thankful. Once the war had ended, nearly all of them pursued every possibility to leave, with the acceleration of the Chinese Civil War adding to the urgency. For the German-speaking community that developed there between 1938 and 1948, humor both mitigated and reiterated the transitory nature of life in Shanghai.

The size of the Jewish refugee community in the city was on the one hand large enough to animate an impressive entertainment industry, including cinemas, theaters and dance halls, and on the other hand small enough to form a uniquely integrated fabric. When, for example, the owners of the Promenaden-Café, one of the many businesses established by German-Jewish refugees, wished to promote their establishment, they supplemented traditional advertising in the press by sending invitations, which were addressed personally to individual patrons. These invitations read: [emphases in original]:

We would like to inform you that as a **summer attraction** we are organizing on a weekly basis an **old Berlin** evening each Monday, in co-operation with Gerhard **Gottschalk** and Paul **Wiener**, and an **old Vienna** evening each Thursday, in co-operation with Jenny **Rausnitz**, Fritz **Heller** and Paul **Wiener**. On these occasions, we shall portray the unique character of each city in **song, humor and prose**, and we count on the participation of our honored guests. "Everyone can join". We hope to create a pleasant atmosphere, where everyone feels comfortably at home.¹²⁵

The clientele of the Promenaden-Café, a club-restaurant that catered to the cultural and culinary needs of the Central European community, was thus invited to a weekly celebration of places that it was forcefully removed from. But these places still represented old habits, familiar sounds, and a culture that German-Jewish refugees could understand, mock and relish. The demand for this type of entertainment in Shanghai was apparently so high that the café initiated two weekly events, each dedicated to a separate urban culture.¹²⁶

While this nostalgic appeal to humor exemplifies the *Shanghailänders'* (as German-speaking Jews in the city sometimes referred to themselves to themselves) gaze backwards in time and place, humor also operated as a conduit in turning their gaze forward, in anticipation of

¹²⁴ On the history of Jewish refugees in Shanghai during WWII see: Irene Eber, *Wartime Shanghai and the Jewish Refugees from Central Europe. Survival, Co-existence and Identity in a Multi-Ethnic City* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2012); Bei Gao, *Shanghai Sanctuary: Chinese and Japanese Policy Toward European Jewish Refugees During World War II* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013).

¹²⁵ Untitled and undated invitation template. USHMM, RG- 2010.240.1, Ralf Harpuder Collection, Box 5, Folder 2.

¹²⁶ In his chapter on soccer and the refugee community in Shanghai, Albert Lichtblau mentions a rivalry between Viennese and German teams: Albert Lichtblau, "Soccer and Survival among Jewish Refugees in Shanghai," in: Michael Brenner and Gideon Reuveni, *Emancipation Through Muscles. Jews and Sports in Europe* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2006). 171-186. It seems that in the realm of entertainment a distinction existed but on far more benign terms. Alongside the division there was a great amount of fluidity, discernible here in the fact that one of the performers, Paul Wiener, took part in both the Berlin and Vienna evenings. In the interwar period, famous Jewish comedians and cabaret artists from one capital – like Hermann Leopoldi, Kurt Robitscheck, Paul Morgan, Fritz Grünbaum and others – were hugely popular in the other, and traveled often between the two.

the departure from Shanghai and of the journey to a new destination. This impetus was a common motif in the humor works of Gerhard Gottschalk, who was mentioned in the Promenaden–Café invitation. Gottschalk, born in Berlin, arrived in Shanghai in the late 1930s and eventually settled in California in 1949. He was one of the most popular entertainers and cabaret artists in the Shanghai émigré community, with the immediate experiences of immigrant life serving as a chief source of inspiration for his skits and his musical performances. After the end of the war, while awaiting departure to the United States, Gottschalk channeled frustrations and expectations through his humorist production. “Have you heard the story about the affidavit already?” [“Kennen sie denn die Geschichte/ Von dem Affidavit schon”], opened one of his numbers, which followed the odyssey of a certain Herr Schlichte. Having finally obtained the immigration permits that he toiled to receive, Schlichte was awaiting the desired passage to America. One day the consul delivered the joyous news that his quota number has been called and he is finally free to board a ship and leave. Overjoyed, Schlichte bid his farewells, when he was suddenly struck with yet another blow:

All of sudden, would you believe it,
Can this really be the case?
Another call says: you’re not leaving
You need to give up your place
There’s nothing you can do but wait,
For another ship or freight.
Should one laugh, what do you say?
This is the world we live in today.
Schlichte just cannot believe;
All he wanted was to leave:
The hell with this piece of paper,
I’ll just stick around forever¹²⁷

Schlichte’s misfortunes, an all-too familiar ordeal to many refugees who, during the Second World War, were forced to relinquish life and death decisions to an entangled, chaotic and often hostile bureaucratic immigration system, convey a deep sense of powerlessness. With the papers he so fervently toiled for in hand, after patiently waiting his turn to depart, Schlichte finds himself suspended in time. Bureaucracy and luck both seem to only work against him. What else is left for him but capitulation? This was not the choice taken by Gottschalk himself, nor by so many other German Jews who found themselves in history’s waiting room. But the fictional Herr Schlichte had the prerogative of surrendering and even doing so with a laugh.

Gottschalk’s career as an entertainer in Shanghai was rather a side occupation, performed in his free time and alongside his activities as a leading official in local aid organizations, such as the Department of Relief and the Department of Welfare, sponsored by the Joint Distribution Committee. “[U]sing his wit and talent,” wrote fellow Shanghai refugee, Ralph Harpuder, “[Gottschalk] took advantage of which surrounded him in the Hongkew Jewish Ghetto and

¹²⁷ Untitled and undated. USHMM, RG- 2010.240.1, Ralf Harpuder Collection, Box 5, Folder 2.

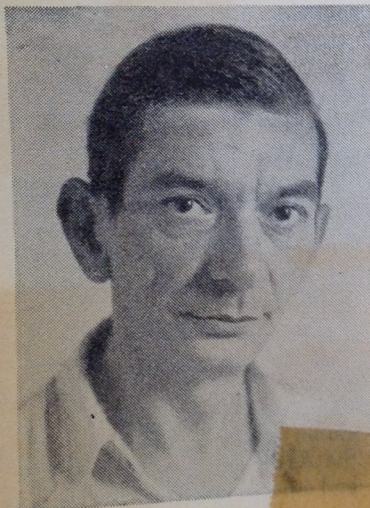
produced skits that made us forget our misery.”¹²⁸ The unique exilic experience of the Shanghai refugee community, here seen through the prism of entertainment and comedy, would take a paradoxical turn when, once settled into new homes in the United States, Australia or Israel (the three countries that became destination for the majority of the Shanghai refugees), the so-called *Shanghailänders* maintained their distinct group identification. And so, when Gottschalk later performed in front of audiences of German Jews in California, the mutual past that he sang about was just as much rooted in Shanghai as it was in Berlin.

Dr. humorus causa GERHARD GOTTSCHALK'S
★ Lachsanatorium ★

Sonnabend, den 28. Januar 1950, 8 Uhr 30
 Jewish Community Center, Little Theater

Einfuehrung, verbindende Worte und Ausklang:
DR. GERHARD GOTTSCHALK

Facharzt fuer musikalische Theraphie:
DR. PAUL WIENER



Ausserdem wird aus jeder Abtlg. des Sanatoriums der betr. Chefarzt sprechen und zwar die Herren Doktoren: Werner Fink, Senff-Georgi, Kaestner, Reimann, Rideamus, Salzer, Reutter, Toller und einige Praktikanten.

Teilnehmerkarten bei: Rositta, 127 Clement Str., Diller, 157 Mason Str., New Powell Cafe, 228 Powell Str. im Sekretariat des Sanatoriums SK 2-1919 und am 5.12.19. und 26.1. im Zimmer 204 des Center.

Gebuehren: \$1.20 (nummeriert) und \$0.90 unnummeriert. Tax inkl.

Figure 10. Advertisement for a Gerhard Gottschalk's show, "Laughing Sanatorium", which took place in Los Angeles in January 28, 1950.

The examples discussed here above depict immigrant humor as directed towards the "home audience" of German-speaking Jews. But diasporic humor could also be directed outwards to establish a link between immigrants and the societies that they were entering. At 21 years of age, Gabriele Gutkind was an aspiring art and portrait photographer who hoped to

¹²⁸ Ralph Harpuder, "Gerhard Gottschalk and 'Die Krumme Lanke.'" USHMM, RG- 2010.240.1, Ralf Harpuder Collection, Box 5, Folder 5. Hongkew was the city district where the Japanese occupation government established a ghetto for the Jewish refugees in 1941.

establish a career in London.¹²⁹ When she fled from Berlin in the fall of 1938, joining her father who had immigrated to the England beforehand, she relied on her camera not only for purposes of professional development, but also in mediating and studying her new place of residence. Several months after her arrival, a series of her photographs appeared in the local photojournalism magazine *Picture Post* under the title “A German Girl Came to London.”¹³⁰ Gutkind’s photos depicted everyday scenes from the cityscape, each with a title and caption presenting her own interpretation of her photographic observations. Expressing her appreciation for British society with a tinge of sarcasm, Gutkind’s photos and texts reveal her perspective as a newly-arrived refugee from Nazi Germany. “The German girl wrote these words herself...” is the title of the first photo, which featured two London Bobbies. The text then continued in Gabriele Gutkind’s own voice: “I am in your city one week. I send you the pictures of the things I see. I write for each picture what it is I like. The policemen, of course, because each one of them is to me a father.”



Figure 11. “The Englishers, They Talk of Nothing Else...” Gutkind here is amused with English small-talk habits.

Gutkind’s photos published in the *Picture Post* depict typical scenes from London’s urban landscape – a rainy day, a speaker at Hyde Park, shop windows – each clarified by her witty and amicable commentary. From her outsider perspective, she poked fun at the omnipresence of the weather in day-to-day conversations that she overheard, or at the indistinguishable bowler hats that English gentleman seemed so fond of wearing.

¹²⁹ “Fragebogen der Auswandererberatungsstelle,” September 10, 1938. Gabriele Gutkind Collection, R2002/61/10. Jewish Museum Berlin Archive.

¹³⁰ *Picture Post*, August 26, 1939. Gabriele Gutkind Collection, R2002/61/36. JMB Archive.



Figure 12. "...The Hard Hat of the Bowler..." Merging her experience as a foreign observer with the effort to acquire language proficiency, Gutkind encapsulates different ways in which migrants studied their new surroundings..

Gutkind's photos and the texts that accompanied them present a deliberate depiction of the encounter between the Jewish refugee and the recipient country, one curated by Gutkind herself with the intention of addressing the local readership rather than her fellow immigrants. Gutkind chose to frame her communication with British readers as humorous sketches of casual scenes. Her foreignness is evident, enhanced by the publication's decision not to impose proper editing on her texts; but at no point does it relay embarrassment or alienation. Rather, it appears that Gutkind embraced the position of outsider, from which she could comfortably acknowledge her appreciation towards her new home country while playfully poking fun at it as well.

The Comedy of Distinction

Uprooted from their familiar environments, German-speaking émigrés faced the strains of displacement and the challenges of integration into foreign societies, economies, nationalities and cultures. Humor, as the previous examples convey, offered a channel through which concerns and grievances could flow smoothly, without overburdening the attempts to overcome

them. Humor provided a constructively benign avenue for expressing frustrations as an accompaniment to genuine efforts at navigating the conditions of forced migration. But refugees used humor not solely as a means for tackling the difficulties of life in displacement. Humor also played a vital role in allowing German-speaking Jews to retain and even highlight a distinct culture and history that, in light of their removal from their homelands and the ongoing realization of Nazi genocidal crimes, were facing the threat of extinction. Humor made it possible to adopt a safe, tenable form of German-Jewish patriotism at the very moment when this hyphenated paradigm was becoming increasingly implausible.

One of the most interesting manifestations of this phenomenon unfolded in the Jewish settlement in Palestine, later Israel. The German-speaking community settling there posed a challenge to the Zionist melting pot ethos that aspired to rid the Jewish nation from centuries of diasporic imprints. The approximately 70,000 German-Jews who arrived to Palestine before the founding of Israel in 1948, the *Yekkes*, as they became locally known, proved resistant to the expectations of the Zionist leadership.¹³¹ They unambiguously retained cultural bonds and values, even further cultivating them after their arrival in what was meant to become a new Hebrew land. Many German Jews saw no reason to discard of their language, their habits and their cultural practices. At times, they even felt attacked by the demands to do so.¹³² The German-speaking *Olim* [immigrants], who did not consider their distinctive group identity an obstacle but a source of pride, were proud, too, of the laughable and ridiculous depiction of the stereotypical *Yekke*, which became a pillar of Israeli ethnic humor.¹³³

The *Yekke* character, an exaggerated caricature of the educated and acculturated bourgeoisie German Jew, was the protagonist of numerous jokes that centered on his (or, far less commonly, her) naïve and somewhat dim-witted nature. These jokes portray *Yekkes* as likable dupes, slightly ill at ease in Israeli society and not quite aware of it either. “Why can’t you tell a *Yekke* a joke on Passover? Because it’s forbidden to laugh in *Tisha Be’av*,” goes one of them, pointing simultaneously to the *Yekke*’s slow thinking and to the awkward relationships that *Yekkes* had with their surroundings.¹³⁴ And yet, the pejorative character of *Yekke* jokes did not offend the German-Jewish community in Palestine/Israel. To the contrary, they were immensely popular amongst German Jews, who were not only avid listeners but have also contributed many of these jokes themselves. The most common themes of the genre were the *Yekkes*’ difficulty in acquiring the Hebrew language, their absurdly literal interpretation of communications with

¹³¹ The etymology of the term *Yekke* is unclear. Two common theories suggest that it is derived from the German word for Jacket (pronounced Yah-kke), noting the German Jews’ formal attire, or that the word is an acronym for the Hebrew phrase ‘Yehudi Kshe Havanah’ – a slow-witted Jew.

¹³² The Jewish leadership in Palestine was just as hostile towards other immigrant groups whose response to the call of national merger fell short of what was anticipated, yet the approach towards the German community would develop particularly harsh overtones with the growing realization of the magnitude of the Nazi crimes against the Jews.

¹³³ More on the history of the German-speaking Jews in Palestine and Israel in Yoav Gelber, *Moledet Hadasha: Aliyat Yehudey Merkaz Eiropan U’Klitatam, 1933-1948* (Jerusalem: Yad Ben Zvi, 1990); Moshe Zimmermann and Yotam Hotam (eds.), *Beyn Ha-moladot. Hayekkim Bi-mkhozoteyhem* (Jerusalem: Zalman Shazar Center and Koebner Center, 2006); Ruth Gay, “Danke Schön, Herr Doktor: German Jews in Palestine,” *The American Scholar* 58, no. 4 (Autumn 1989) 567-577; Anja Siegemund (ed.), *Deutsche und Zentraleuropäische Juden in Palästina und Israel: Kulturtransfers, Lebenswelten, Identitäten. Beispiele aus Haifa* (Berlin, Neofelis, 2016).

¹³⁴ The Jewish mourning day 9th of Av [*Tisha Be’av*] takes place almost a month after the Passover holiday.

others, their inflexible thinking and their incompatibility with the local landscape and society. A few examples can illustrate.¹³⁵

Hans: How many eggs can you eat on an empty stomach?

Oskar: Five.

Hans: No, after the first egg your stomach is no longer empty.

Oskar goes back home and asks his wife the same question.

She answers: Two.

Oskar: Too bad, if you answered five I'd have a good joke to tell you.

In the factory where Yekkemeyer works the workday ends at four o'clock. The boss leaves at three and soon afterwards all the employees leave too. Only Yekkemeyer stays and continues to work until four. After being teased by his colleagues for it, he decided one day to leave at a quarter past three. When he came home to find his boss in bed with his wife, he shut the door in panic and said to himself: "Whoa, he nearly caught me!"

A *Yekke* meets a *Galitzianer*. The *Galitzianer* tells him in Yiddish: *veyst du, meyn zun iz a zeyger macher*.

The *Yekke* asks: How's that?

The *Galitzianer* answers: *er zeygt un er macht*.

The *Yekke* laughs and hurries back home to tell his wife in German: *Unser Sohn ist ein Uhrmacher*.

The wife asks: How's that?

The *Yekke* answers: I don't know, but when the *Galitzianer* told it, it was funny.¹³⁶

Rather than shunning these ridiculing depictions, German Jews embraced and promoted them. In turn, the jokes worked towards solidifying a group mentality by parodying values and traits that *Yekkes* gladly associated themselves with: orderliness, honesty and civility. Sociologists Limor Shifman and Elihu Katz analyzed *Yekke* jokes as a case study for assimilation humor and were surprised to encounter German Jews, now Israeli citizens, who enthusiastically shared an arsenal of self-deprecating jokes.¹³⁷ Their reaction overlooks the fact that the first generation of German-Jewish immigrants to Palestine/Israel found in *Yekke* jokes an expression of a particularity that they were interested in preserving. Freud, likening jokers to dreamers, wrote that the two turn to wit when they are "under pressure; the straight path is barred to them."¹³⁸ Similarly, the embrace of *Yekke* jokes by those who seemingly should have been

¹³⁵ Some of the *Yekke* jokes that I include were told to me by *Yekkes* or their descendants, and others were found on the web page *Yekke-Tzchok* [Yekke-Laughter], where the Association for Central European Immigrants invites community members to share their favorite jokes: <http://yeke.cet.ac.il/jokes.aspx> Accessed: January 2016.

¹³⁶ In the Yiddish part of the joke, the so-called *Galitzianer* tells the *Yekke* "my son is a watchmaker" [zeyger macher], because he "zeygt" and "macht," loosely translating to something like: "he eats and he shits." Trying to retell the joke to his wife in German, the *Yekke* is then literally lost in translation.

¹³⁷ Elihu Katz and Limor Shifman, "'Just Call Me Adonai': A Case Study of Ethnic Humor and Immigrant Assimilation" *American Sociological Review* 70, no. 5 (October 2005), 843-859.

¹³⁸ Peter Gay, *Reading Freud: Explorations and Entertainments* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), 134.

offended by them, depicts a creative bypass adopted by the German-speaking community in Palestine/Israel as a method to proudly proclaim their shared heritage. In their interpretation, it was not an insult to acknowledge that the *Galitzianer*, an analogous term to an Eastern European Jew, could tell the joke better than the German. It was a manifestation of a distinction that German Jews cultivated for decades, exaggerated and warped for the sake of the joke. Following their dispersion, when a group identity that German-speakers had self-fashioned in Central Europe was challenged by new surroundings and conditions, humor provided a neutral space where that constructed identity could be celebrated.



Figure 13. “You are welcome – Thank you very much – Yekke potz!” Illustrator Noam Yair, who fled Germany in 1938, captured in this caricature the prototypical Yekke, mocked by his new compatriots for his misplaced European demeanor.¹³⁹

Nowhere was this cultural particularity so present than in the coastal town of Nahariya, founded by German-Jewish immigrants in 1935. During the first three decades of its existence, Nahariya remained a homogenous domain of German-Jewish middle-class culture. It was a *Yekke* capital that, having failed as an agricultural cooperative, reinvented itself as a leisure town boasting traditional Central-European restaurants, coffeehouses and guesthouses.¹⁴⁰ The German culture that defined Nahariya was articulated in local jokes, combining familiar *Yekke* tropes with the town’s landscape and social fabric. Perhaps the most well-known of these tells of the constant rattle that could be heard even from a distance during the early days of Nahariya’s

¹³⁹ Rafaela Stankevich, “Sipur Ha-aliya Be-karikaturot Mi-shnot Ha-shloshim,” available at <http://yeke-yishuvim.org.il/PicturesGallery.aspx?Gallery=5>. Accessed November 2015.

¹⁴⁰ Klaus Kreppel, *Nahariyya und die deutsche Einwanderung nach Eretz Israel. Die Geschichte seiner Einwohner von 1935 bis 1941* (Tefen: The Open Museum, 2010).

founding, when the newly-arrived immigrants were busy building the town. Coming closer, one would discover the source of the commotion. As they were passing building blocks to each other, the “pioneers” were repeating: “*Danke schön, Herr Doktor,*” “*Bitte schön, Herr Doktoer.*” “*Danke schön, Herr Doktor,*” “*Bitte schön, Herr Doktor.*”

Fredi Durra (1922-2006), a comedian who fled his hometown of Breslau in 1939 and settled in Nahariya in the early 1950s, was a key figure in the town’s entertainment scene. Durra performed in front of mixed audiences of residents and tourists, making sure to season his comedy routine with *Yekke* jokes. Preparation notes for his comedy acts include the scribble “*Jecke*” in German next to many joke titles. Durra composed the jokes in Hebrew but often wrote them down in Latin characters and according to the German pronunciation, resulting in a strange transliteration that only Hebrew and German speakers can make sense of.¹⁴¹ His jokes included tales of *Yekkes* putting hot peppers on their television sets to get a “scharfer” image [the word *Scharf* meaning both sharp and spicy], or *Yekkes* employed as newspaper delivery agents who, before going on a unionized strike, made sure to go to door to door and announce it to each and every one of the clients.¹⁴²

Durra’s comedy was appealing to a variety of audiences. Non-German listeners frequented his shows and most likely found his *Yekke* jokes entertaining, just as German listeners in all likelihood enjoyed his extensive collection of jokes in Yiddish. But for the latter group, gathering to watch Durra perform in one of the popular cafés or clubs frequented by the town’s German-speaking population, *Yekke* jokes would signify more than just amiable entertainment. Just as they could most easily decipher the notes he wrote in his strange Hebrew/German transliteration, they were the most informed audience to laugh from his act. With every *Yekke* joke, Durra was telling an encapsulated version of their own story: their history culminated in the punch lines. His comedy act emerged in the particular cultural environment of Palestine/Israel, but it resonated with German-speaking Jews in other parts of the world as well. During the postwar decades, Durra performed frequently in Germany, Austria, the Netherlands and even in Australia, where, in addition to accommodating locals with an English-speaking show, he gave separate performances in German for the pleasure of the “home-audience” abroad.¹⁴³

Across the diasporic network, humor offered a convenient medium for German Jews to cleave to the demarcations of their group identity. Travelling back to Shanghai, we encounter a powerful example in the Purim 1940 edition of the *Allotria* [“Monkey Business”], a humor and satire magazine published by the local German-speaking refugee community. “The Transformations of the Lion (a contribution to study of names),”¹⁴⁴ is the title of a short text in this edition, consisting solely of the words: “Löw, Levi, Levy, Löwe, Lewens, Leviathan, Lewko, Lewensohn, Löwenrosen, Löwenbach, Löwenthal, Löwenstamm, Lewin, Lenhardt (previously Lewy).” This taxonomy of names is reminiscent of a key theme in modern Jewish identity – the power of names in revealing or concealing Jewishness. Throughout the modern period (and not only in German-speaking regions), the names that Jews bore have played a

¹⁴¹ For example, Durra transliterated ‘Znav Soos,’ Hebrew for ‘horse tail,’ into ‘Snaw Ssuss.’

¹⁴² Fredi Durra Collection, G.F 0432, folder 7, German-Speaking Jewry Heritage Museum, Tefen.

¹⁴³ Durra apparently toured Australia twice – first in 1975 and then again in 1978. Writing from Sydney, Karl Bittman corresponded with his old friend from Vienna, then living in London, Robert Lucas, and described Durra’s performances with enthusiasm. Letters from May 14, 1975, December 16, 1975 and December 5, 1978 in RLU 10/7, Senate House Library, London.

¹⁴⁴ Anonymous, “Die Wandlungen des Loewen (Ein Beitrag zur Namenforschung),” *Allotria*, March 24, 1940.

central role in shaping their interaction with the majority non-Jewish society.¹⁴⁵ Names have historically served as instruments to accelerate Jewish assimilation, as was the case with the 1787 decree that required all Habsburg Jews to acquire German-sounding surnames. Names were also used for alienating and isolating Jews, either by forbidding specific names to be taken by Jews; by bluntly mocking typical Jewish names; or, as was implemented by the Nazi regime, by officially imposing the names Israel and Sara on all Jewish men and women respectively. From a Jewish perspective, names had a potential to open doors to society. Assuming a new name – a less Jewish-sounding name, that is – was a step in the process of acculturation that many German Jews took in the nineteenth and early twentieth century. While some considered this a simple cosmetic change; others hoped that a new name would precipitate the emergence of an altogether new destiny.

Names, original and altered, are so central to the modern Jewish experience that they hold a unique status as a sub-genre in Jewish humor (as well as antisemitic humor), having inspired numerous jokes and tales. In this respect, “The Transformations of the Lion” stood in dialog both with the historical preoccupation with Jewish names and with the comical responses that it produced. As exterior markers that inscribe belonging or its absence, names and their renditions were symptomatic of the problems, conflicts and hopes that German-speaking Jews faced since the late eighteenth century. Building on this uneasy history, “The Transformations of the Lion” ridicules the impulse of acculturation without condemning it. Intertwisting the prominent Jewish last name Levi (or Lewy, as sometimes transcribed in German) with variations of the word *Löwe* [lion], which is frequently used in German last names, the text mechanizes name alterations and the transitional potential they came to represent. What may appear as an excerpt from the telephone book to the uninformed reader was easily identifiable as a self-parody to the readers of *Allotria*, who surely counted among themselves current or previous *Lewys*.

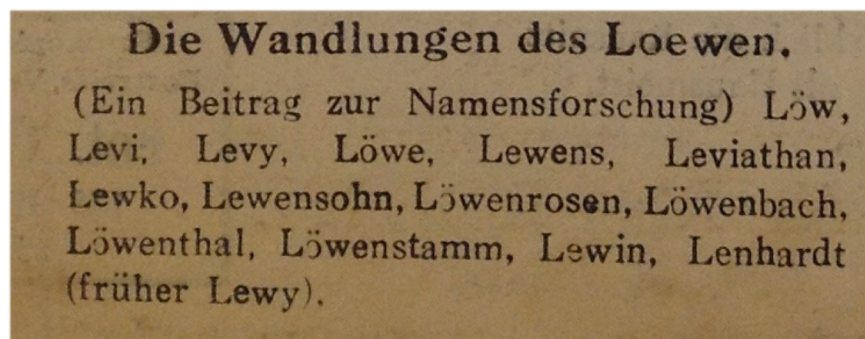


Figure 14. “The Transformation of the Lion” joined a tradition of name-change jokes in Jewish humor.

Another text featured in the same *Allotria* edition was titled “Engel, the Hero.” Accompanied by the portrait photograph of the author, Erwin Engel, dressed in the uniform of the Austrian-Hungarian army, the piece read:

¹⁴⁵ On names in German-Jewish history see Dietz Bering, *The Stigma of Names. Antisemitism in German Daily Life, 1812-1933*, trans. Neville Plaice (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992).

Surprised, aren't you, dear reader?
I can almost hear you say to each other:
"Engel was a first lieutenant?
I hardly recognized him in the photo."

Yes, you wretched civilians,
I was a hero like Mars himself.
during a wild battle on the Nida
I was shot right in the thigh
and I fell to the ground like a bag of sand.

As I prepared to give my soul to G-D
all of a sudden – terrible fright –
six Russians stand before me – I'm sweating bullets,
the corporal bends down towards me
and addresses me with perky confidence.

"Dear brother, I am your friend, [The corporal's words appear in broken Yiddish]
and I have one favor to ask you.
Dear brother, take us prisoners!"
I show him my leg and must insist:
"Can't happen, dear brother. I can't even walk."
He tells me: "No need to worry,
we'll carry you and get you there safely."

And so they carried me nice and easy
to the closest barracks of his majesty's army.
and there I proceeded with full authority
to imprison six tough enemy soldiers,
I was awarded a medal for my bravery
and – that's how we *nebbichs* lost the war.¹⁴⁶

For Jews of his generation, there would actually be little surprise in learning of Engel's fighting for the Central Powers during the First World War. Approximately 300,000 Jews fought for the *Kaiserlich und Königlich* army of the Habsburg Empire, and an additional 100,000 are estimated to have fought for the German military.¹⁴⁷ While it is difficult to tell where the historical reality ends and the playful malarkey begins in Engel's story, the parable was rooted in tangible events that shaped the history of Central European Jewry in the early twentieth century: firstly, the military service in the Great War, with the promise it held to deepen the bonds between Jews and the national community, and the disappointment upon the realization that such

¹⁴⁶ Erwin Engel, "Engel der Held," *Allotria*, March 24, 1940.

¹⁴⁷ Manfred Rauchensteiner, *The First World War and the End of the Habsburg Monarchy, 1914-1948*, trans. Alex Kay and Anna Güttel-Bellert (Vienna: Böhlau, 2014), 342; David J. Fine, *Jewish Integration in the German Army in the First World War* (Boston: De Gruyter, 2012), 17.

bonds were not mutually valued; secondly, the encounter with Eastern European Jews on the eastern front, adding a new dimension to the already entangled relationship between the two Jewish communities.

Jews in Central Europe were as caught up in the heady atmosphere of the “August Days” as were their non-Jewish compatriots. Amongst the Jewish war enthusiasts in Germany and Austria-Hungary, patriotic zeal was elevated by the hope that fighting for the nation would demonstrate their devotion to it, and in turn that zeal would be rewarded with greater social equality and acceptance. In Germany, this hope was met by the 1916 *Judenzählung*, the “Jew Census,” which was born out of populist accusations of shirking and war profiteering against German Jews.¹⁴⁸ Erwin Engel and the Jewish soldiers in Franz Joseph’s army were spared this humiliation but saw antisemitism endure in Austrian society despite the sacrifice they had made on its behalf on the battleground.

During the interwar period, Jews continued to see their service to the Central Powers’ war efforts as a source of pride, especially in response to the “stab in the back” accusation, which after the war emerged as one of the most powerful weapons of rampantly expanding Nazi antisemitism. Jewish membership in veterans’ societies testified to the patriotic honor that the war had come to symbolize for many Central European Jews.¹⁴⁹ That sense of honor in taking part of the war effort was also present in countless letters and petitions sent by German Jews to National Socialist state authorities, emphasizing the authors’ military record when pleading for exemptions from various measures of persecution. But what could this honor mean to a community of forced migrants banished from their homeland? There was no patriotic pathos to fall back on in 1940. Ober-Leutenant Engel, as he is portrayed in the story, is no hero, nor does he aspire to be one. When he narrated his Great War experience to an audience of fellow refugees, he chose to describe it as a ridiculous mixture of chance and foolery.

Engel’s reminiscences bring to the fore a unique encounter that underscores a particular Jewish war experience. It is not a bold face-off with the enemy or a bond of sacrifice with his grey-uniformed comrades that wins him decoration but an unexpected meeting with a group of Russian-Jewish soldiers who take advantage of the turmoil of war to try and escape Tsarist Russia. So hopeless are their lives there that they beg their “dear brother” to capture them as prisoners of war. In reality, the conditions of Russian Jewry in the Pale of Settlement acted as a key fighting motivation for the Jewish soldiers in the Austrian-Hungarian army.¹⁵⁰ The frequency and volume of antisemitic violence and discrimination, tolerated if not promoted by Tsarist authorities, designated Russia as *the* “enemy of the Jews” in the eyes of the Jewish communities across the Empire.¹⁵¹ To the extent that this solidarity manifested itself when German-speaking Jewish combatants faced the local Jewish population on the eastern front, these encounters also underlined the distinctions between the two groups. Reactions of acculturated Jewish troops from the West to the Jewish communities of the East fluctuated between hostility towards the latter’s supposed backwardness, a sense of paternalistic

¹⁴⁸ Derek Penslar, *The Jews and the Military: A History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013), 171-173.

¹⁴⁹ Tim Grady, *The German-Jewish Soldiers of the First World War in History and Memory* (Cambridge: Liverpool University Press, 2011), 21-65; Gerald Lamprecht, “Geteilte Erinnerung? Der Bund jüdischer Frontsoldaten,” in: Gerald Lamprecht, Ursula Mindler and Heidrum Zettelbauer (eds.), *Zonen der Begrenzung: Aspekte kultureller und räumlicher Grenzen in der Moderne* (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2012), 87-104.

¹⁵⁰ Penslar, 170.

¹⁵¹ Marsha Rozenblit, *Reconstructing a National Identity: The Jews of Habsburg Austria During World War I* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 86-89.

responsibility towards coreligionists in plight and admiration for the perceived authentic form of Jewishness that they represented.¹⁵²

Engel's tale introduces the possibility of a milder response that assumes favorable terms but preserves the inherent difference between himself and the Russian Jews. Their interaction is founded on a familiarity that is most poignantly reflected in the linguistic encounter between the Yiddish and the German. Engel and the Russian Jews understand each other perfectly well and yet they do not speak the same language. The two languages are similar enough to make the distinctions between them ever more conspicuous. Having established the parameters of the encounter, Engel then continues to reveal its comedic core, namely, that he and his brethren from the East share the same war objectives. Wounded, he allows the soon-to-be prisoners to carry him to the nearest command station, where they stage his act of bravery. Bending the order of alliances and hostilities upon which the Great War was founded, this unusual collaboration established a parallel front in which nominal enemies are fighting together to survive. With this kind of tactical thinking, Engel concludes, it is no wonder that "us nebbichs have lost the war," leaving the readers to wonder who exactly are "us" in this story.

The way in which that war was lost would have catastrophic consequences for Jews well beyond the German-speaking regions. It would come to play a decisive role in the historical developments that eventually pushed Jews like Engel to flee from their homelands and seek refuge in Shanghai or elsewhere. Engel's tale looks back at a past that was shaped by discrimination and alienation, but it also emphasizes choices and actions taken by German-speaking Jews as they contemplated their realities as an unwelcome minority. It would have been difficult to embrace this history uncritically in 1940. Laughing at it, however bitterly, was both an individual and a collective way to acknowledge this history as their own and to make sense of its outcomes.

An Inside Joke. Conclusion

It would be an exaggeration to claim humor as the defining characteristic of the German-Jewish experience of displacement and diaspora. Yet it would be wrong to overlook the ways in which humor reflected the history of displaced German-Jewish communities, the challenges they encountered and the possibilities that were available to them. A brief overview of pre-1933 German-Jewish culture revealed earlier in the chapter that humor produced by Jews carried a dialogue that problematized events and debates central to German-speaking Jewry during the modern period. In exile and flight, humor echoed in new ways the conditions experienced by German-speaking Jews, this time as a dispersed population, scattered across the globe.

Frustrations with immigrant life were translated into parodies, lyrics, wordplays and witticisms that reached fellow German-speakers through entertainment and media, forming a public and communal outlet for complaints and self-criticism. Expressed through humor, these grievances assumed a benign appearance but maintained a somber message at their core. Hermann Leopoldi and Robert Gilbert's playful song about language acquisition warned listeners of the social isolation that awaited those who remain linguistically alien. The text "Contemplations of a Jerusalem Tenant" from the 1940 *Mitteilungsblatt* portrayed a confused immigrant's realization that he would always be a couple of steps behind his children in deciphering the socio-cultural context of their new homeland. Gerhard Gottschalk's cabaret-

¹⁵² Aschheim, 139-184.

esque musings in Shanghai showed the precarious conditions of a temporary place of refuge and the sense of insecurity in the face of the absolute power of immigration bureaucracies.

German-Jewish diasporic humor, however, was not restricted to conveying struggles and obstacles. Gabriele Gutkind's photographic impressions of London spoke with a humorous voice that embraced the position of the foreigner with confidence. The stereotypical *Yekke* jokes from Palestine/Israel further demonstrated that German-Jewish émigrés did not necessarily understand their otherness as a problem. While the vast majority may have anticipated a rehabilitation of normality by means of integration into their new environments, many were not prepared to sever all links to their culture and history. The genre of humor evident in the self-deprecatory *Yekke* jokes provided such a thread of continuity that did not thwart the integration project as a whole. Finally, humor under the conditions of displacement and dispersion delivered a form of collective narration. When a satirical magazine of the refugee community in Shanghai addressed the Jewish experience in WWI through a comical lens, it chronicled key moments in German-Jewish history with a treatment that neither glorified nor castigated this history.

Elliot Oring has rightfully noted that any analysis of Jewish humor that assumes a unique content in its subject is primarily interested in addressing the unique content of Jewish history itself.¹⁵³ This chapter did not seek to portray German-Jewish diasporic humor as the bearer of inherently distinct qualities but to understand it as a reaction to historical rupture. National Socialism made German-Jewish existence in Central Europe impossible, catalyzing the flight of hundreds of thousands of people. Humor afforded the Jewish refugees from German-speaking countries a means to articulate the struggles of displacement and the challenges of rebuilding. At the same time, it used ridiculous stereotypes and whimsical narration to promote the preservation of a German-Jewish culture. Humor is often meant simply to amuse and provoke. But, depending on the circumstances in which it is produced, humor can become saturated with meanings that diversify its functions. In the case of German-Jewish diasporic humor, the experience of dispersion was manifestly present. As a function of diasporic life, humor gazed both forward – in addressing the conditions of immigration and integration – and backwards – in asserting some measure of continuity and narrating a shared history.

¹⁵³ Elliot Oring, "The People of the Joke: On the Conceptualization of a Jewish Humor," *Western Folklore* 42, no. 4 (Fall, 1983), 271.

Chapter 3: Encountering Jews, Probing Germanness

The indignation of the *Aufbau* editors was unmistakable. The American newspaper reported in January, 1950, that a member of the Israeli Knesset had purportedly complained during a parliamentary session that the Ministry of Justice and the office of the Attorney General are dominated by “people from Frankfurt am Main.” To stress the extent of the problem, the speaker added that “this Ministry is now referred to as Yekkistan.” It was no secret, the *Aufbau* appended, that known differences between German Jews and Jews from Eastern Europe existed in previous times, and were often expressed in the “Ostjuden’s not very friendly labeling of German Jews as ‘Yekkes.’” According to the unnamed author, while these resentments were increasingly diminished in the newly-established State of Israel, “old animosities surface [...] here and there,” as was the case with the incendiary remark by the Israeli politician.¹⁵⁴

The New York-based *Aufbau*, the most popular publication distributed across the German-Jewish diaspora, picked up the *Yekkistan*-incident from an Israeli newspaper, *Jedioth Chadashot/ Neuste Nachrichten* [“Latest News”] and communicated it in many directions to a wide readership across the United States and internationally. A sarcastic insult that was uttered in Jerusalem (and hadn’t even made it to the official proceedings of the Knesset), had found its way to affected readers worldwide. What was it about the incident that prompted the *Aufbau* editors to share it with their readership? Why did the politician’s remark strike a nerve if, as claimed in the report, tensions between German Jews and Eastern European Jews had mostly diminished? These questions open the path of investigation throughout the following chapter. In closely examining how German-speaking Jews responded to and reflected upon their encounters with other Jewish groups along their diasporic journeys, I make the argument that these encounters propelled German-speaking Jews to interrogate the parameters of their cultural identities. The condition of displacement fostered new forms of interactions with Jews of various backgrounds, prompting Central European Jews to consider whether the attributes, cultural norms and values that they believed to be unique to their particular community had any future, or any justification, in light of their mass-dispersion.

It is in this context that we can begin to understand the *Aufbau*’s *Yekkistan* report, *Yekkes* being the derogatory term assigned to the German-speaking community in Palestine/Israel. The heightened sensitivity to a comment directed at the “*Yekkes*” from an “outsider” arrived at a moment when German Jews themselves were questioning the meaning of this group identity and its role in engaging with the broader Jewish world. The encounter with other Jewish groups, which took place practically in every diasporic destination to which German-speaking Jews had arrived, often stirred pleas for unison. But acts of solidarity also served to highlight persistent distinctions, and they provoked discussions concerning the balance between merger of communities and erasure of identities. The *Aufbau*’s insistence that demarcations between German-speakers and Eastern Europeans were no longer a concern, while simultaneously distributing an act of grievance in publishing the report, demonstrates the delicate, multifocal framework in which these interactions took place.

German-speaking Jewry did not, of course, exist in total isolation from other Jewish communities before the Nazi regime forced so many of its members into displacement. Previous encounters that took place before 1933 (some transpiring through physical interactions in Central Europe, other in the terrain of imagined affinities) had shaped later encounters that evolved

¹⁵⁴ Unnamed, “*Yekistan*,” *Aufbau*, 20 January, 1950.

throughout the diaspora in significant ways. Primary amongst those interactions was the historical relationship between German-speaking Jewry and Yiddish-speaking Jewry. The *Aufbau* report echoes both the centrality of that relationship in the contemporary diasporic condition, as well as its historical dimensions. Interestingly, the politician who is reported to have made the *Yekkistan* comment was not of Eastern European descent. Born in 1899 in Ottoman Jerusalem, Eliyahu Elyashar was a prominent member of the Sephardic community and had, in fact, served in the Israeli parliament as a representative of the Sephardim and Oriental Communities party. Inferring that the sardonic remark could only come from a so-called *Ostjude* [Eastern-Jew, as the German-speakers referred to Jews from Poland and Russia], the *Aufbau* author revealed just how loaded the relationship between the two communities had been. The historicization and analysis of the author's assumption, together with a broader web of premises, stereotypes, self-perceptions and constructs that underlie it, stand at the focus of this chapter.

The forced migration of German-speaking Jews escaping Nazi persecution, and the near-total dispersion of their communities across the globe, generated interactions with new majority societies and the minorities living in their midst. Among these unintentional encounters, the contacts that they established with local Jewish communities were particularly meaningful in how they would come to view their own history as a minority and in envisioning their place in the societies into which they sought to integrate. In their observations of and their interactions with Jews of diverse ethno-cultural backgrounds, Jews from German-speaking regions found opportunities to explore the distinctions between these groups and themselves, and to contemplate the stakes in perpetuating or dismantling them. Encounters with Sephardim, Eastern-European Ashkenazim, Mizrachim; assimilated and non-assimilated; newcomers and veterans, prompted a probing of cultural and national allegiances, both on an individual and a collective level. That these encounters took place as a result of rabid anti-Jewish persecution that grew increasingly violent was pivotal in how dispersed Central Europeans had perceived them. At a time when their claim to German nationhood and German culture was forcibly denied, was it at all possible, or defensible, to affirm this heritage still? Did the most recent experience of antisemitic violence, resulting not only in displacement but in mass annihilation, urge a reckoning with the Jewish fate? Should the post-migratory impulse direct German-speakers towards integration with the new host society, or with its Jewish community?

These questions, while occasionally posed unambiguously by prominent intellectuals or leading figures in German-Jewish organizations, did not explicitly inform the ways in which the majority of German-speaking Jews interacted with other Jews on an everyday basis. Yet when such daily interactions are studied side-by-side, pieced together out of contemporary records of everyday life, they bring to light a collective self-interrogation. A close reading of these documents points to a lingering sense of differentiation that characterized these interactions, contrasting and comparing German-Jewish sensibilities with those of their fellow Jews. Such contemplations were not necessarily pejorative or defensive. At times, they expressed great admiration. Often they took the form of almost neutral observations, simply denoting that one is not the same as the other. Underlying them was a notion of distinction, albeit an elastic one.

The perseverance of different distinctions between Jewish communities was well-known to Jews throughout the world long before German-speaking Jews were driven out of Europe in the twentieth century. Diverging liturgical traditions, particular local circumstances and the vast geographic spread that Jews had been living in all led to inevitable demarcations. The fact that German-Jewry was alert to distinctions is, therefore, not a notable phenomenon in and of itself. Rather, it is the manner in which they perceived of this difference in the context of displacement

that is of interest and meaning here, along with the implications that these perceptions carried for interpreting the past and envisioning a future. These notable distinctions between German-speaking Jews and other Jewish populations were not solely the outcome of different national and cultural contexts of the various non-Jewish host societies. Encounters with other Jewish communities have themselves contributed to the emergence of a distinct German-Jewish consciousness. To better comprehend how German-speaking Jews themselves have perceived their cultural differentiation in the diaspora, it is first necessary to consider the nature of inter-communal encounters prior to 1933.

Prior Encounters

Neither the existence of distinctions between Jewish groups of different backgrounds, nor the attention of Jewish communities to these distinctions, was unique to the historical circumstances brought about by German Jewry's mass forced migration. Catalyzed by expulsions, migration, religious quests, trade or philanthropy, Jews in the pre-modern world who spoke different languages, wore different garbs and kept different customs had crossed paths with each other, bearing witness to the great diversity of Jewish life across the globe. Starting in the late eighteenth century, Jews populating German-speaking regions of Central Europe began to see Jewish variety in a new light. Currents of secularization, the formation of modern state borders and the drive towards acculturation and emancipation cultivated a new mode of relationship, in which boundaries and entanglements with other Jewish cultures became constitutive of an emerging German-Jewish subculture.

Guided by pressure applied from within the community and by the strains of prejudice prevailing among the non-Jewish majority, German Jews entered the era of emancipation by initiating a project of self-reform. Seen as a precondition for the granting of civil rights and social acceptance, this project sought to modernize Jews and Judaism, encompassing such spheres from language and religion to physical appearance and mannerism. One of the leading principles of this process was the desire to distance German Jewry from the Jews of Eastern Europe and the traits that the former had associated with the culture of the latter.

In his foundational study of German-Jewish attitudes towards Eastern Jews, Steven Aschheim described the discursive formation of the stereotypical figure of the *Ostjude* as a *doppelgänger* to the modernized, enlightened and cultured type that German Jewry was upheld as an ideal.¹⁵⁵ Initially adopted as a mode of self-critique, German-Jewish intellectuals in the first half of the nineteenth century sought to elevate their own communities from what they understood to be the pathologies of the Jewish ghetto. Once German Jewry more or less overcame these impediments, the denouncement was targeted towards Eastern European Jews, who came to embody the malaise of degenerate Jewry.¹⁵⁶

Severing ties with pan-Ashkenazic culture, the architects of the emerging German-Jewish subculture turned to Sephardic Jewry in a search for a Jewish "usable past" that could be adopted

¹⁵⁵ Steven Aschheim, *Brothers and Strangers. The East European Jew in German and German Jewish Consciousness, 1800-1923* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2010), 5-8.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 11-12

as a model.¹⁵⁷ Setting their sight on medieval Iberian Jews, German Jews in the nineteenth century glorified and celebrated Sephardic culture and beauty both as an ideal – an exemplary Jewish archetype that should be emulated – and as a constructed historical narrative – a validation of the achievement and splendor Jews can attain in an environment free of prejudice and discrimination. The Sephardic past was thus recruited to perform a twofold duty: provide German Jewry with rhetorical ammunition in the battle for emancipation and give shape to the self-actualization project Jews in Germany were embarking on.

German-Jewish perceptions of other Jewish communities were not formed purely in the realm of discourse and imagined encounters. Starting with the 1880s, violent pogroms and social unrest pushed Jews from Tsarist Russia westward. Mass migration waves brought dozens of thousands of Jews into Germany (the vast majority aiming to continue further towards the USA and England¹⁵⁸) and the encounter between German Jews and the Eastern Europeans as two distinct cultures materialized on German ground. And once it did, it was not only popular biases that determined interactions between the German-speaking Jews and the immigrants from the East. Jack Wertheimer has shown a variety of factors that shaped the tangible encounter between the two groups, one example of which was the internal political conflicts that preoccupied Jewish communities in Germany at the time. Disputes between the Liberal, Zionist and Orthodox factions intensified following the arrival of Jewish immigrants from the East, leading some members of the liberal camp to campaign for the disenfranchisement of alien Jews from voting in community elections.¹⁵⁹

Since attention to the question of incoming migrants from the East extended well beyond Jewish communities in Germany, the glare of non-Jewish society was always present in German Jews' attitudes and behaviors towards the Eastern Europeans. The popular identification of Eastern Europeans with political unrest, general hostility towards immigrants and the intensification of antisemitism all served to heighten the anxieties that German Jews cultivated around the masses arriving at their doorstep.¹⁶⁰ At the same time, German Jews displayed genuine concern for the fate of the migrants, organized aid and philanthropy projects to support them financially and, in some occasions, also intervened with local authorities on their behalf.¹⁶¹ This ambivalent approach – inspired by solidarity to provide assistance on one hand; driven by apprehension to display hostility on the other – became a key characteristic of German-Jewish attitudes towards Eastern Jews and would define much of the interactions between the two communities until the early twentieth century.

With the emergence of a new type of Jewish consciousness, mostly within Germany's Zionist circles, a different view of Eastern European Jews appeared in German-Jewish discourse. Propagating a confident and self-conscious Jewishness that was not reduced to religious affiliation and not subjugated to hyphenated national identities, Jewish intellectuals, artists and

¹⁵⁷ John Efron, *German Jewry and the Allure of the Sephardic* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2015); Ismar Schorsch, "The Myth of Sephardic Supremacy," *Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* 34, no. 1 (January 1989), 47–66.

¹⁵⁸ German cities such as Hamburg or Bremen were a popular port of departure for many Eastern Jews on their journeys further west. Aschheim, 37.

¹⁵⁹ Jack Wertheimer, *Unwelcome Strangers. East European Jews in Imperial Germany* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 123-144.

¹⁶⁰ Aschheim, 58-79; Wertheimer, 23-41; On non-Jewish attitudes towards the Jewish migrants from Eastern Europe at a later period see Annemarie Sammartino, *The Impossible Border: Germany and the East, 1914-1922* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2010), 130-137.

¹⁶¹ Aschheim, 35; Wertheimer, 169.

journalists in early twentieth-century Germany criticized their own communities for the antipathy they had expressed towards Eastern Jews. Infatuated with the idea of Jewish national rejuvenation, these young thinkers' celebration of Eastern Europeans as "authentic" Jews was in many respects a rebellion against the mentality held by acculturated German Jews of previous generations, a "confrontation with parvenus," in Shulamit Volkov's words.¹⁶² But just as their parents had stereotyped the figure of the *Ostjude* as a source of dread, followers of the new approach idealized *Ostjuden* as a source of exaltation.¹⁶³

The turn towards Eastern European Jewry as part of a quest for new Jewish identities was reinforced during World War I, when German-speaking Jewish soldiers fought on the eastern fronts in the name of the Kaiser and *Vaterland*. In previous encounters, Eastern Europeans appeared as foreign invaders to the native terrain of Germany Jewry. This time, it was the German-speakers who were invading, witnessing for the first time the world of *Ostjudentum* as an indigenous reality. Responses among the Jewish soldiers varied, ranging from pity or even revulsion at the conditions of Jewish ghettos, to compassion, appreciation and deep sentimentality. In addition to bringing German-speakers to the East, the Great War stimulated an additional wave of mass migration, as refugees from the Russian Revolution and from the war-ravaged eastern territories of the newly-deceased Habsburg Empire made their way westwards.

Though the refugee population that arrived in Germany between 1919-1923 was by no means a homogenous one, comprised of Jews and non-Jews of various national backgrounds, the so-called *Ostjuden*, while hardly the largest group, featured prominently in German public discourse on the migrant question. Their perceived ubiquity was repeatedly exploited by increasingly vitriolic, rampaging antisemitic voices to feed their fire of incitement.¹⁶⁴ In this climate, German-Jewish attitudes towards Eastern Europeans were indicative of the community's attempts to navigate the disruptive political atmosphere of the interwar years. Jewish community organizers spoke publicly against antisemitic attacks that targeted the migrant population, and a commitment to aiding Eastern European Jews through charity and relief work was widespread among German Jews. Yet their advocacy and support of Eastern Europeans remained tethered to a commitment to preserve a clear separation between the two groups.¹⁶⁵

George Mosse's memories from his childhood in Weimar Berlin forcefully capture this ambivalence. Young Mosse surprised his family one day with the declaration that he intended to become a rabbi, as well as a Zionist. "What did my father do?" he recalled decades later, "he sat me in the car and had the chauffeur drive me to the *Scheunenviertel*,¹⁶⁶ to the non-assimilated

¹⁶² Shulamit Volkov, "The Dynamics of Dissimilation: *Ostjuden* and German Jews," in: Jehuda Reinharz and Walter Schatzberg (eds.), *The Jewish Response to German Culture. From the Enlightenment to the Second World War* (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1985), 211. Volkov here is following Hannah Arendt's polemic distinction between the pariah Jew and the parvenu Jew, see: Hanna Arendt, "The Jew as Pariah: A Hidden Tradition." *Jewish Social Studies* 6, no. 2 (1944), 99-122.

¹⁶³ Aschheim, 100-120; David Brenner, "'Making Jargon Respectable.' Leo Winz, Ost und West and the Reception of Yiddish Theatre in Pre-Hitler Germany," in *Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* 42, no. 1 (January 1997), 49-66. See also Michael Brenner, *The Renaissance of Jewish Culture in Weimar Germany* (New Haven Yale University Press, 1996).

¹⁶⁴ Sammartino, 123-127.

¹⁶⁵ Aschheim, 217-220, 225-230.

¹⁶⁶ Berlin's *Scheunenviertel* district, often referred to as the city's "Jewish ghetto" was home to the largest concentration of Eastern European Jews from the late nineteenth century and until the expulsion of foreign Jews from Nazi Germany in 1938. In German public discourses, the *Scheunenviertel* had become a synecdoche, embodying all the ills that were associated with Eastern European Jews. See Anne-Christin Saß, "Reconstructing Jewishness, Deconstructing the Past. Reading Berlin's *Scheunenviertel* over the Course of the Twentieth Century,"

Ostjuden. Then he asked if I want to become like them, and I said, of course I don't." This incident was not the only interaction Mosse had with the *Ostjuden* as a youth. At the height of the refugee crisis after WWI, his mother had set up a stand at one of Berlin's train station, where she distributed food and refreshments to the incoming Eastern European refugees, with young Gerhard (as he was still called back then) occasionally joining to assist her in the task. The "*Ostjudenfrage*," Mosse recalled, was very much in the air in those days, and it was not viewed solely as a source of distress; rather, "there was a certain fascination with the *Ostjuden* back then."¹⁶⁷ Mosse's brief reminiscences encapsulate how German Jewry could gather and take action in support of Eastern European Jews in their plight, while simultaneously maintaining the position that the *Ostjude* – as a human type and as a condition – was inherently deficient. It was perfectly natural for his mother, Felicia Mosse, to give both material aid and personal attention to the suffering refugees, and just as natural for his father, Hans Lachmann-Mosse to instill in his son feelings of aversion towards the same people.

In this overview, three patterns of engagement emerge in German Jews' interactions with other Jews. The first aspired to draw a categorical line between West and East, castigating Eastern European Jews as archaic, inferior and dangerous. The second positioned German Jews in the role of patronizing guardians, elevating suffering Jews from their misery through philanthropy and education. The third, disquieted by perceived ailments and deficiencies, was intent on emulating other Jewish cultures based on misinterpretation and idealization of these cultures as correct forms of Jewishness. These three responses co-existed and operated with different degrees of influence throughout the decades of emancipation and upheaval. The driving force behind them had been the continuous struggle to define the relationship between Germanness and Jewishness in light of the agitating forces of secularization, nationalism and antisemitism. Beginning with 1933, the mass migration of Jews fleeing Nazism had set the stage for new types of encounters between the German-speaking refugees and a variety of Jewish communities. Like in previous decades, these encounters embodied a negotiation of the past, present and future of German-Jewishness. Only at that moment, however, the reality of displacement and the Nazi negation of the German-Jewish duality brought this internal questioning to a new terrain.

Seeing Difference

When Hans Kronheim was preparing to leave Germany, he sought to take all the necessary steps to guarantee a safe passage and a good future for him and his family. For several months during 1938, Kronheim, then working as a rabbi in Bielefeld, was writing letters to acquaintances who had already immigrated, gathering necessary documentation from various bureaucratic agencies and filing the required forms to obtain visas and permits. As many Jews did prior to their departure, Kronheim also collected affidavits from friends and colleagues, testifying to his professional capabilities and vouching for his character. In addition to his skills as a public speaker, his deep understanding of the Jewish religion, his experience in managing charitable projects and his profound knowledge of philosophy, the rabbi's advocates listed

in: Simone Lässig and Mirjam Rürup (eds.), *Space and Spatiality in Modern German-Jewish History* (New York: Berghahn, 2017), 197-212.

¹⁶⁷ Irene Runge and Uwe Stelbring (eds.), "*Ich Bleibe Emigrant.*" *Gespräche mit George L. Mosse* (Berlin: Dietz Verlag, 1991), 25.

another favorable quality: Kronheim's positive relationship with Eastern European Jews. The President of the Association of Liberal Rabbis in Germany wrote that Kronheim "has always been ready to help, especially [sic] in the case of the many Jews who came to his congregation from Eastern Europe."¹⁶⁸ The Association of Polish Jews in Germany confirmed, stating in their affidavit that Kronheim has always taken "great interest in the Community of Eastern Jews," and has employed his "activities and influence on their behalf." Responding to Kronheim's own request for the testament, the Association directed their letter to him, concluding that: "It is well known to us that you have maintained the closest connection with the Eastern Jewish members and have always obtained their fullest confidence."¹⁶⁹

As peculiar as this trait may appear in a recommendation letter, being able to demonstrate a positive relationship to Eastern European Jews did signify a meaningful advantage for a German rabbi intent on emigrating from his home country. At the very least, Kronheim (as well as his references) believed that it would aid him in obtaining a position in a Jewish community in the United States. Preparing himself for a new social reality in which the burden of integration rests upon the German immigrant, Kronheim took an initiative. His effort to secure testimonials that speak specifically to this matter points to the fact that he considered the fraught historical relationship between the two groups a consequential factor in building a life outside of Germany.

Kronheim's impression was not unfounded. First, the antagonism that characterized relationships between German and Eastern European Jews extended beyond Germany's borders as early as mid-nineteenth century, and was familiar in particular to Jewish communities in the United States, where he had hoped to arrive.¹⁷⁰ Even more pertinent was the fact that reports concerning the relationships between refugees and local Jewish communities were circulating across the informational network that came into existence with the flight of German-speaking Jews from Central Europe. Correspondences between friends and relatives across the German-Jewish diaspora dealt with the prospects of social integration extensively, and within this broad topic, social links with the Jewish population drew particular attention.

When during the 1930s, the German-Jewish self-help organization, Aid Association of Jews in Germany [*Hilfsverein der Juden in Detuschland*] published immigration guides to prepare community members for their departure, the editors of these publications solicited letters from Jews who already arrived at particular destinations. Based on their own experiences, the letter writers reported back with information on such relevant issues as bureaucratic procedures, employment opportunities or housing conditions. The nature of interactions with locals, and particularly with the Jewish community, was also discussed. Addressing the quality of the relationship between different Jewish factions, the level of hospitality shown to the newly-

¹⁶⁸ Affidavit from the Liberal Rabbis Association for Germany, October 1, 1938. In: Rabbi Dr. Enoch (Hans) Kronheim Collection, 2008.292, folder 7, USHMM.

¹⁶⁹ Affidavit from the *Verband Polnischer Juden in Deutschland*, October 13, 1938. In Kronheim Collection, folder 7. In August, 1938, Kronheim had obtained a similar letter from the Zionist Association for Germany, in which he is commanded for his support "despite opposition in his congregation," *Ibid*.

¹⁷⁰ On existing tensions between American Jewish communities, see Selma Berrol, "Germans Versus Russians: An Update," *American Jewish History* 73, no. 2 (December 1983), 142–156; Robert Rockaway, "Ethnic Conflict in an Urban Environment: the German and Russian Jew in Detroit, 1881–1914," *American Jewish Historical Quarterly* 60, no. 2 (December 1970), 133–150. In an 1888 essay, German-American rabbi Kaufmann Kohler laid out an analysis of the distinctions between the three main elements of American Judaism: the Portuguese, the German and the Polish. Kohler's essay is an interesting example of how German Jews living the United States in the nineteenth century approached the distinctions between separate Jewish communities both as a natural phenomenon and as a threat to the cohesive future of the American Jewish community. See Kaufmann Kohler, "The Three Elements of American Judaism," *The Menorah* 5, no. 5 (November, 1888), 314–322.

arrived refugees, as well as the capacity of local Jews to offer material support to those in need, letter writers in various countries aimed to portray social conditions reliably and objectively.

These reports, however, were not unison but rather reveal a divergence in individual experiences. For example, in the immigration guide focusing on Argentina, one writer, residing in Buenos Aires, stated that integration into the local community was extremely difficult. Interestingly, the writer likened the situation of the incoming German-speakers in Argentina to that of the Polish and Russian Jews who migrated to Germany in the 1920s: “You’d give a lot, you’d invite them over for holidays or Passover evening, and why not. But that was the extent of the social interaction. It’s very similar here. This is not meant as criticism since it’s actually quite natural, when you think about it (what’s actually interesting about it is... that they are themselves immigrants, with only 20 years difference).”¹⁷¹ Another letter, written at the agricultural settlement at Basavilbaso, one of the farms established by the Jewish Colonization Association [ICA], conveyed a different impression: “The people are very nice and are happy to get to know us and to offer their help. The second and third generation, whose parents and grandparents came from Russia at the turn of the century, are rather well-integrated [...] the children or grandchildren can’t or are not interested in reading the Yiddish newspapers anymore.”¹⁷²

The different environments in which both letters writers resided explain, to a large extent, the disparity between the two accounts. While the first letter described life in a metropole with a population of nearly three million people, the second was written on a provincial farm founded as a small agricultural community primarily for Jewish residents (the author stated that in 1937, about half of Basavilbaso’s 4,000 residents were Jews). Any number of situational factors could influence the ways in which individuals experienced displacement and integration. On the question of links between refugees and established Jewish communities, additional letters published in the immigration guides offer varied or even conflicted impressions as well. While seeking a common response to this question is futile, a certain kind of unity did prevail: many German-speaking Jews who approached the issue in correspondences, journals or autobiographies, represented the distinction between Jewish groups as natural. Whether they evaluated the links formed within these groups in a positive or a negative manner, they instinctively classified the Jews they encountered in separate categories.

In the case of Hilde Gabriel, who immigrated to New Zealand in 1938, this separation was so deeply anchored in her memory that when she was interviewed in 1986, she proclaimed decisively at one point that she had never heard Yiddish before leaving Germany, and that the first time she encountered the language was in the town of Palmerston North, New Zealand. In her telling, Yiddish only entered her life when “we got to know a family who came from Poland. They spoke Yiddish to us and we didn’t understand one word.”¹⁷³ At a later point in the oral interview, she told of a visit to a Yiddish theater performance that took place in the 1920s in Berlin, and quickly realized her prior assertion was mistaken.¹⁷⁴ Gabriel’s recollections demonstrate how encounters with other Jewish cultures did not necessarily mitigate the foreignness that they represented for German Jews, not when they took place in Germany itself, nor within the immigrant community in the neutral ground of New Zealand.

¹⁷¹ Hilfsverein der Juden in Deutschland (eds.), *Jüdische Auswanderung nach Südamerika* (Berlin, January, 1939), 18.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, 20.

¹⁷³ Transcribed oral interview with Hilde Gabriel from September 23, 1986. Sammlung Gabriel/Salomonis Kon 1032, Mp. 7. JMB. 7.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 21.

Language and habitus were not the only characteristics separating German-speakers from other Jews. The Argentinian *Semana Israelita / Jüdische Wochenschau* ["Jewish Weekly"], for example, published in December 1942 a detailed analysis of illnesses and discomforts particular to the population of German-Jewish refugees. The findings were based on an interview with Dr. Manuel Jutorán, who shared his observations about the physical state of the refugee community in Buenos-Aires. Dr. Jutorán began his analysis by outlining distinctions between German Jews and Eastern Europeans. He differentiated between his "compatriots, the Ostjuden," who arrived to Argentina "30 or 50 years ago, mostly destitute and impoverished, from a land filled with hunger and lacking culture," and the current immigrants from Central Europe, who have a "higher cultural and material background, and suddenly plunge from a high standard of living downwards."¹⁷⁵ Despite the known hardships these recent displaced immigrants suffer, he continued, the most common ailments troubling this group were actually related to gastrointestinal problems, not to mental strain. Deterioration in nutritional habits and the unfamiliar climate, the physician claimed, were responsible for most of the visits he received from patients in those days.

If Dr. Jutorán's framing of the illnesses of German Jews through a comparison with Jews of Eastern European descent was founded on medical observation, the interview does not explain so. He himself had no experience with treating the Eastern Europeans upon their earlier arrival as immigrants, but only many years afterwards, since he had only earned his medical degree in 1932. Furthermore, the article makes no attempt to assess whether the different standards of living prior to migration would account for different diseases among immigrant communities. Emphasizing the cultural and economic distinctions between the two groups, therefore, contributed little to the readers' understanding of the German Jews' medical conditions. What it did offer the German-language readership of the *Semana Israelita* is an affirmation of a narrative, that they, unlike the "Ostjuden," were not an undesirable and backward minority group. They were established Europeans, respectable members of their home societies, until they were degraded – physically and psychically – by alarming historical developments. "Many immigrant illnesses result from the fact that in their previous homeland, they lived in orderly conditions and were accustomed to a fine, rich diet, while here they are not in a position to properly feed themselves."¹⁷⁶ Deprived of the material benefits that they worked hard to enjoy, even their digestive systems bore testament to the trauma they had endured.

It remains impossible to say with certainty that the physical responses described in the article were unique to Jews from German-speaking regions and not simply a common side effect of forced migration. But while it is difficult to detect whether distinct medical conditions did exist between the two groups, other material distinctions did make themselves apparent. For example, in Sigmund Tobias' memoir of his family's escape to Shanghai, he recalled a significant capability that separated Eastern Europeans from German-speakers – the ability to bargain. Tobias' family originally stemmed from Poland, and while he himself was born in Berlin, he always considered himself "a Polish Jew."¹⁷⁷ Upon joining the thousands of Jews who sought refuge in Shanghai, his family found itself in closer proximity than ever before to the German-Jewish community. Yet the separate spheres that both groups inhabited remained intact:

¹⁷⁵ "Welches sind die Krankheiten der Emigranten?" *Jüdische Wochenschau/ La Semana Israelita*, December 4, 1942.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁷ Sigmund Tobias, *Strange Haven: A Jewish Childhood in Wartime Shanghai* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1999), 17.

Even though some of the people living in our house were born in Germany and Austria, we did not have very much to do with them outside of the usual daily greetings. [...] my parents often made fun of the Jews from Germany and of their habits. German Jews were always called *yeckes* behind their backs. We never went to services, family celebrations, or funerals for *yeckes*. On *Yom Kippur* I often prayed for forgiveness for all the bad things I had said about *yeckes* throughout the year, but since everyone in the yeshiva also made fun of *yeckes*, just the way my parents did, I joined them in poking fun at the German Jews as soon as the Day of Atonement was over.¹⁷⁸

One behavior that prompted his family's ridicule of the German Jews was their inability to navigate local commerce norms. "The Chinese bargained over the cost of everything," he writes. For his family, this was nothing out of the ordinary. "My parents were good at bargaining; they had been born in small towns in Poland where people also bargained. Also, as a textile peddler in Germany my father always bargained with his suppliers and his customers." This wasn't the case for the German-speaking refugees, who were not accustomed to these trading rules. Tobias recalls in the memoir how he and his parents joked about the German Jews for not realizing that they were being overcharged by the local merchants in Shanghai.¹⁷⁹

In this case, class distinctions fused with different social norms came to the disadvantage of German-speaking Jews. These distinctions took shape in places far removed from the marketplaces of Shanghai; yet for Tobias, as a child-observer, the unfamiliar environment of their accidental safe haven made them all the more evident. The vast majority of Jewish refugees who escaped to Shanghai did so after the outbreak of the war, once travel became increasingly precarious and entry to other destinations ever more restricted. Material conditions among the Shanghai refugees were remarkably destitute, especially in comparison to Jews who left Germany several years prior, did not experience the more radical stages of extortion and theft, and had been allowed to carry slightly more money and more goods with them. For the impoverished refugees in Shanghai, mastering the art of bargaining could have meant a significant improvement in their living conditions.

While the Germans that Tobias and his family observed may not have been aware of their limitations, the naiveté was not universal, or at least it did not endure very long. Vienna-born author Alice Schwarz-Gardos, who immigrated to Palestine in 1939, published throughout her life several books about Israeli society with special attention to its German-Jewish members. In one of her anecdotes, she described visiting a shoe store on one occasion and then again two days afterwards, inquiring in each of those times about the same pair of shoes. Remarkably, the price rose substantially on the second visit. This discrepancy, she explains to her readers, had nothing to do with the high inflation rates in the country but rather with the seller's poor memory. "Perhaps," she clarifies, "one's appearance changed a tiny bit in between, becoming more Yekke-looking or European-looking."¹⁸⁰ Schwarz-Gardos, a "seasoned Yekke" writing in the

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., 82.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., 17.

¹⁸⁰ Alice Schwarz-Gardos, *Paradies mit Schönheitsflecken. So Lebt Man in Israel* (Freiburg: Herder Verlag, 1982), 87.

1970s, understood better than Tobias' contemporaries how her cultural background could translate to increased living costs.

While Schwarz-Gardos described this attitude with a touch of humor, it was not always perceived by the German-speakers as harmless, certainly not in the early stages after their arrival. In Palestine/Israel in particular, interactions between both communities had developed uniquely tense overtones. This was, in part, a result of the ideologically-charged environment in which assimilated German Jewry was perceived as antithetical to the essence of the new Jewish nation. The so-called "Hitler immigrants," reluctant participants in the fulfillment of the Zionist project, were slow to follow the imperative to Hebraize themselves.

The Jewish Settlement in Palestine was, in addition, the only diasporic node where the minority-status of German-speaking refugees was based solely on their cultural background and their countries of origin. While in other countries, they would be distinguished for the majority society both on account of their Jewish origin and on account of their German culture, in Palestine they were distinguishable solely by virtue of their language, culture and history. An additional straining factor lay in the fact that the Jewish leadership in Palestine (that later stepped in as the political establishment of the State of Israel) was dominated by prior immigrants from Eastern Europe. German-speaking Jews who arrived there were thus received by a society established and shaped by Eastern-European Zionists. This sudden reversal of roles placed them in the position of disadvantaged refugees in need of the community's assistance and understanding. At such a meeting point, the two groups clashed against a background of established cultural and ideological conflicts.

Reflecting on the experience of the German-speaking community at the time, Walter Blumenthal wrote: "The language of the Yishuv [Jewish Settlement] was Yiddish or Hebrew. The immigrant had mostly no knowledge of Hebrew, and had an animus against Yiddish, which he considered to be a distorted, boorish German." Language was not the only challenge that they confronted. In addition to the financial hardships that most immigrants faced when trying to rebuild their lives, German-speaking Jews felt even greater difficulties: "The German immigrants, with their sense for order and punctuality seemed to [the Zionists] as Prussians whose lifestyle doesn't fit in with the oriental milieu [...] With their stiff, proper ways, they didn't possess the warm Jewish heart that they knew from their home in Eastern Europe." Lack of ideological conviction was another aspect that, according to Blumenthal, had worked against the Germans. He cited a case in which an ad for a position in a municipal administration listed one of the qualifications as "immigrated before 1933," intentionally excluding candidates who came not out of Zionist conviction but as a necessity, in flight from Nazi persecution. It was, Blumenthal wrote, simply another way to say that "Yekkes were not wanted."¹⁸¹

Clearly, observing and preserving the demarcations between the incoming German-speakers and other Jewish groups was not an activity performed solely by the former. Local Jewish communities too were sensitive to the refugees' Otherness, which, in some instances, even became a cause for concern. In England, for example, the Jewish Board of Deputies and the German-Jewish Aid Committee (an organization established by British Jews), published a booklet titled "While You're in England. Helpful Information and Guidance for Every Refugee," instructing the new arrivals on various points, such as the contact information of aid organizations, guides for bureaucratic procedures and a chart for converting measurement. Its primary purpose, however, was to introduce codes of conduct that the refugees were expected to

¹⁸¹ Walter Blumenthal, „Die Vorgeschichte der 'Kupat Milwe Haoleh,'" 1971. LBIJER 101, LBI Jerusalem Archive.

follow. The booklet opened with a note on “The tolerance and Sympathy of Britain and the British commonwealth” [emphases in the original]:¹⁸²

The traditional toleration Commonwealth of British Commonwealth towards the Jews is something which every British Jew appreciates profoundly. On his part he does all in his power to express his loyalty to Britain and the British Commonwealth, in word and in deed, by personal service and by communal effort. **This loyalty comes first and foremost, and every Refugee should realise how deeply it is felt.** The Jewish Community in Britain will do its very utmost to welcome and maintain all Refugees [...] and to assist in every possible way in creating new homes for them overseas. [...] All that we ask from you in return is to carry out to your utmost the following lines of conduct. Regard them, please, as **duties to which you are in honour bound.**

The recommendations included learning English in its correct pronunciation immediately, refraining from speaking German or reading German in public, avoiding any political affiliations and adopting local manners and customs. “While You Are in England” demonstrates the deep anxiety that the Jewish community leadership in Britain felt in light of the mass migration of refugees from Central Europe.¹⁸³ This anxiety was rooted in the fear that the refugees’ arrival would aggravate the local population, leading to increased anti-Jewish sentiments that would target native Jews as well. In addition, the immersion of so many foreign Jews into the UK threatened to tarnish the Britishness of local Jews.¹⁸⁴ The booklet, in response, stressed the absolute loyalty of British Jews to their homeland and repeatedly pled with refugees to show nothing but respect to England and the English people. Deviating from the recommended standards, the publication warned, would cause grave consequences for all Jews in the country. In stating that “[t]he Jewish Community would far rather pay out of its own pocket for the maintenance of Refugees, until they can find their own permanent homes overseas, than have it thought that work was being taken from British workpeople,” the booklet expressed both the authors’ dread of nativist xenophobia as well as the hope that the refugees would ultimately leave the UK.

The open anxiety expressed in this publication is reminiscent of the sentiments that defined attitudes of Jewish communities in Germany towards Yiddish-speaking migrants who gathered in their cities. Fleeing persecutions, revolutions and economic hardship during the turmoil decades of the turn of the century, the so-called *Ostjuden* were, broadly speaking, welcomed by local Jews with timid reluctance that reflected German Jewry’s enduring insecurities. While a sense of cultural superiority and the motifs of hygienic discourse (which permeated German-Jewish attitudes towards Eastern-European Jews) seem not to have penetrated British-Jewish approaches to the German-speaking refugees in their midst,

¹⁸² German Jewish Aid Committee and the Jewish Board of Deputies, “While You Are in England. Helpful Information and Guidance for Every Refugee” (London: ca. 1938).

¹⁸³ David Cesarani notes that British Jewry was torn on the question of how to respond to Nazi aggression against Jews, and on the question of welcoming German-Jewish refugees, with many in the community angered by the leadership’s decision to side with government policies at the expense of the refugees. David Cesarani, “The Transformation of Communal Authority in Anglo-Jewry, 1914-1940” in: Cesarani (ed.), *The Making of Modern Anglo-Jewry* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990), 115-140.

¹⁸⁴ Bill Williams, *Jews and other foreigners’. Manchester and the rescue of the victim of European fascism, 1933-1940* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2011), especially 9-33.

autobiographical accounts of former refugees do recall degrading and hurtful experiences in their encounters with local Jews.

The demeanor of German-Jewish refugees aroused grievances in other places as well. In 1940, the *Aufbau* published an English-language letter from an American reader named Dorothy Tocker, who protested that the “more or less common practice of German refugees is to flaunt their arrogance by passing disparaging remarks about Russian and Polish Jews.” This was not merely offensive, Tocker wrote, but might cause “a great deal of disillusionment among those who would help them.” Tocker found the behavior of the German-speakers not only haughty, but also rather unwise:

Twenty to fifty years ago, our parents and grandparents left Germany, Poland, and Russia for similar reasons. It is a matter of common sense to appreciate that present day Jewish Refugees can only enjoy security with the assistance and cooperation of those who came before them – so you in your Americanization program should strive to foster a spirit that will make these refugees just plain Jewish-Americans.

The *Aufbau* editors, distraught by the letter, were even more damning in a note that they added: “We have expressed our position regarding such incidents multiple times. However, one cannot denounce the idiotic and senseless practices of pigheaded people often and strongly enough.”¹⁸⁵ The enduring sense of disdain towards Eastern Europeans, despite the recent experiences of persecution and displacement under National Socialism, was evidently causing alarm both within and without the German-speaking community. The editors’ admonishing comment reveals that even if some elements in the community were eager to eradicate them, old biases proved to be more resistant than expected.

Seeking Solidarity

The premise of distinction between German Jews and other Jews was not always based on tension or animosity. Often, it was precisely in the expression of appreciation and respect towards other Jewish communities that the boundaries between them appeared most conspicuously. Under the conditions of forced migration, these positive interactions often took place in the context of aid and relief work. Acts of kindness in the name of Jewish solidarity were particularly meaningful to refugees en route the journeys of displacement. For Frau Schwarz, who traveled by train from Berlin, through the Soviet Union and Japan-occupied Manchuria, to Hong Kong, and from there by ship to Buenos Aires, the benevolence of Jews in various ports and terminals became the common thread of her travel chronicles.¹⁸⁶ From the Jews of Vilna, who provided food and supplies and invited the refugees for a Shabbat-dinner, through the “Russian-Manchurian Rothschilds” who cared for all their needs, to the aging Portuguese Sephardic author whose kindness made one of the passengers break down in tears, and finally,

¹⁸⁵ “Improper Arrogance,” *Aufbau*, March 8, 1940.

¹⁸⁶ The full identity of Frau Schwarz is not revealed in the journal. She had apparently borrowed the typewriter of fellow-traveler Else Goldschmidt, who took the same route as Frau Schwarz, and kept a copy of the text. It is today archived together with Goldschmidt’s family collection at the Jewish Museum in Berlin, Sammlung Familie Goldschmidt-Weil – K54, 2004/29.

the representatives of Jewish aid organizations in Buenos Aires, one of whom shed tears himself when a refugee recounted “only very little” of the misery endured by Jews in Germany, Schwarz’s journal documents multiple initiatives of individuals and communities who aided the refugees in an act of Jewish solidarity.

Her account of the journey is not limited to experiences of Jewish mutual aid. Non-Jews featured in her journal as well. She wrote about the moving gesture of a Portuguese worker who donated the only two suits in his possessions to them. In other instances, she emphasized the foreignness of the peoples they encountered, made into objects of fascination and exoticization. Schwarz described Japanese women donning kimonos as resembling butterflies, noted the black servants who distributed food to the refugees at the instruction of their Portuguese masters and criticized fashion trends in Moscow, particularly bothered by the fact that people did not seem to wear hats. The experiences of Jewish solidarity, however, are recorded in her travelogue in a different register than these other encounters. For instance, her narration of meeting the Jewish community in Vilna is fused with references to the city’s status as a prominent Jewish center. She also noted that members of the Portuguese Jewish community promised to inform other Jewish communities along the ship’s route of its expected arrival at their ports, so they could visit the refugees and provide them with aid.

In one of the remarkable encounters she recorded, the refugees from Germany themselves become aid givers to a group of Polish-Jewish refugees who fled Nazi-occupied Poland and ended up in Omsk, in the region of Siberia. “We had a shocking encounter there,” she wrote. “As the train came to a halt, a flock of ragged, frazzled and destitute-looking men, women and children, swarmed around us. Jewish refugees from Poland who are camping here in abandoned old wagons, not knowing what’s going to happen next.” Fellow travelers gave them food and offered money as well, which the Polish refugees refused to accept since it was Saturday.

The accounts of these interactions suggest that Schwarz recognized them as embedded in a network of pan-Jewish alliance. Charitable acts were not necessarily perceived as more generous coming from Jews than they were from non-Jews (thought they were far more common), but for the author of this travel journal, they did carry a different meaning. Such gestures of compassion were heartily appreciated by recipients, but could acts of giving alone sustain an enduring sense of solidarity between Jewish groups of different backgrounds? A harmonious relationship that extended beyond these charitable actions seemed to be more elusive. In many cases, vocal promotion of an enhanced Jewish solidarity communicated genuine desire and willingness, simultaneously with the barriers that stood in its way.

One such example is found on the bulletin pages of the Cuban *Asociación Democrática de Refugiados Hebreos*. The self-help organization, which was established by the German-Jewish community in Havana, published in June, 1944 an essay titled “Two Jewish Waves of Migration – One Destiny.” Originally, this piece had been published in the *Havener lebn/ Vida Habanera* [“Havana Life”], the newspaper of the Eastern European Jewish community on the island. Sender Meyer Kaplan, the original author, acknowledged both socio-cultural differences as well as real conflicts that existed between the two Jewish communities who migrated into Cuba – the veteran immigrants from Eastern Europe and the recent arrivals from German-speaking regions. These conflicts manifested themselves, for instance, in the German-speakers’ claim that the Eastern Europeans showed little concern for their plight as recent refugees, or in the Eastern Europeans claim that the German-speakers distanced themselves deliberately from their midst and from Judaism more broadly. Kaplan, however, was positive that a more harmonious atmosphere could be established, and he gave concrete examples for collaborations

between both communities to support his optimism (for example, a joint initiative to publish a history of Jews in Cuba). The collaboration between both communities was not only possible, Kaplan argued, it was a necessary precondition for the prosperity of the Cuban Jewish community. The responsibility to achieve it, he added, rested both with the leaders of each group as well as with every individual who considered themselves part of that community.

Kaplan's essay was originally intended for readers within the Yiddish-speaking community, but the editors of the German-Jewish bulletin found that it resonated perfectly with the attitudes that they were hoping to instill among their own readership as well. In the German introduction to the article (which was printed in the Spanish language), they wrote that: "We too consider the deepening of the understanding and the strengthening of the Jewish communal work to be a crucial task." They cited not only Kaplan's message but also *Vida Habanera's* willingness to allow their organization to reprint his article as a sign that "the conditions for a fruitful collaboration between veteran Jewish immigrants and the recent ones are present."¹⁸⁷ Conversations about Jewish harmony, it appears, were indicative of persisting separatism, even discord. This was true of other diasporic nodes as well.

Julius Preuss, who fled to Paraguay in 1940, was a regular contributor to the Argentinian *Semana Israelita*. His texts offered the readership of the paper (mostly based in Argentina but also in other Spanish-speaking countries in Latin America) an insight into the smaller concentration of German-speaking Jews who fled to Paraguay.¹⁸⁸ In an article from July 1943, he explored the Jewish community of his new host country, noting that the "standard division into three communities" existed there as well: "There's a Sephardic, a Polish and a 'German' community, each with its own synagogue." The oldest and most respectable, Preuss wrote, was the Sephardic synagogue, while the Polish one was the largest and most modern. Preuss added: "Our community holds regular services on Friday evening, while the other two hold them on Saturday morning." The division that he described was, on one hand, a liturgical one, representing three different streams within Judaism (Sephardic-Orthodox, Ashkenazi-Orthodox and Reform/liberal Judaism). It was, however, rooted even deeper in ethnic and cultural differences, as exemplified by Preuss' classification into Sephardic, Polish and German. Despite the separation, Preuss emphasized, the relationship between the three communities was "harmonious." He praised the executive committees for closely cooperating on issues related to the entirety of the Jewish community, and added that they even held a joint ceremony to mourn the Jewish victims of Nazism in Europe.¹⁸⁹

A different impression of the communal triangle in Paraguay emerges from another of Preuss' articles. "While the 'elders,' led by personal and partisan conflicts, prevent a closer alliance between the three communities," he wrote in January 1944, "the youth calls for unity amongst young Jews of all camps." Preuss was encouraged by a newly-established youth group that would integrate members of all backgrounds. But he was not entirely optimistic that this initiative would bring much change, since most young Jews in Paraguay, "especially from the

¹⁸⁷ S.M. Kaplan, "Dos Corrientes Inmigratorias Hebreas – Un Destino," Bulletin of the *Asociación Democrática de Refugiados Hebreos*, June 26, 1944, 3.

¹⁸⁸ It is difficult to ascertain how many German-speaking refugees arrived to Paraguay since the vast majority of arrivals to the country continued onwards to larger neighboring countries (particularly Argentina). The Bundeszentrale für Politische Bildung [the German Federal Agency for Political Education] estimates that only about 1,000 Jewish refugees from Central Europe settled there. Even among those who remained in Paraguay for several years, many eventually chose to immigrate further once the war had ended. This was also the case with Julius Preuss, who left to Argentina in the late 1940s.

¹⁸⁹ Julius Preuss, "Jüdisches Leben in Paraguay." *Jüdische Wochenschau/ La Semana Israelita*, July 7, 1943.

Russian-Polish camp, are raised entirely without religion, and are hardly familiar with the value of our religion and our history.” Only the small Sephardic community, he continued, invests in religious education, while the two other communities are content with minimal engagement with Judaism.¹⁹⁰ While Preuss’ personal archive does not include any documents that explain the contradictory accounts he put forth in the two separate articles, reading the two side by side indicates a clear sense of factional demarcation. For an observant Jew as Julius Preuss, this demarcation manifested itself in religious terms, but it was not strictly, or even primarily, defined in devotional matters.

Preuss’ articles on the Jewish community in Paraguay exemplify not only the perpetuation of divides; they also testify to the qualities that characterize them, specifically, his admiration of Sephardic Jewry, already visible in the articles discussed above. Another text, which he dedicated entirely to the Sephardic community of the Paraguayan capital, Asunción, illustrates the point further. After outlining the community’s history in the city, Preuss continued to describe its rituals. “The services are characterized by decorum and discipline,” he determined. “Conversations are strictly forbidden. Such inappropriate customs as sitting with legs crossed are immediately reprimanded.” Preuss also stressed the tolerant nature of the Sephardic community, emphasizing that non-Sephardic Jews are invited to join the community (but are prohibited from serving on the board), and that the Jewish cemetery established by the community is used by “Jews from all countries.” For that, he added, the German Jews must be thankful to the Sephardim, since they arrived in destitution that prevented them from founding their own cemetery.¹⁹¹ The religious-cultural customs that Preuss identified with the Sephardic community resonated with his own sensibilities, and with the respectability and piety that he idealized as the desired Jewish way of life. In this respect, his articles represent a transference of German Jewry’s fascination with Sephardic Jewry into the diaspora.

Pan-Jewish solidarity repeatedly emerges in the sources as a constructed vision, not as a reality, certainly not one that existed by default. For the small German-speaking community who spent the war years in the Philippines, it was the arrival of American-Jewish GIs during the Pacific campaign that created a significant encounter with a markedly different group of Jews and stimulated aspirations for unity. After the defeat of the Japanese military forces, Jewish-American soldiers stationed in Manila were greeted by the community of Jewish refugees as liberators and war heroes. The soldiers quickly established a relationship with that community and took an active role in its everyday affairs. At the initiative of Jewish GIs involved in the military occupation of the Philippines, a youth group for Jewish children and teens was established in the fall of 1945, called *Kvutzat Chaverim* [“group of friends”].¹⁹² Promoting Jewish unity through youth education was one of the key goals pursued in this project, and the relationship formed between the children, nearly all of whom were German-born, and the American soldiers, provided an immediate example of how it might work in practice.

When the group, comprised of about 25 members, published a bulletin documenting their activities in the winter of 1946, they invited some of the Jewish soldiers who accompanied their activities to contribute texts as well. Staff Sergeant Leo Laufer’s essay, “A Home Away from Home,” reflected on the encounter that took place when “Jewish soldiers, stretched a friendly hand to their sorely tried brethren and assisted them in many of their needs, following the horrors

¹⁹⁰ Julius Preuss, “Briefe aus Paraguay.” *Jüdische Wochenschau/ La Semana Israelita*, January 21, 1944.

¹⁹¹ Julius Preuss, “Die Sephardim von Asunción.” *Jüdische Wochenschau/ La Semana Israelita*, October 29, 1943.

¹⁹² Frank Ephraim, *Escape to Manila: From Nazi Germany to Japanese Terror* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2003), 176.

of war. The liberated communities, on the other hand, received the Jewish men and women, not as strangers, but as intimate friends and companions.”¹⁹³ Laufer’s message resonated not only with the young members of the youth group, but also with the leaders of the local Jewish community, including Rabbi Josef Schwarz, himself a refugee from Germany who arrived in Manila in September, 1938. Schwarz’s own contribution to the group’s bulletin praised the American GIs’ efforts in restoring Jewish life to the remote community and for introducing “the love for our people [...] into their hearts.”¹⁹⁴ In celebrating the group’s activities, Schwarz’s note implied that kinship and solidarity were not primary characteristics of Jewish life in Manila prior to the arrival of American military forces.

If during the 1940s, talk of Jewish solidarity throughout the German-speaking diaspora often took the form of an appeal, indicating a reality still marked by factionalism or even atomization, different approaches emerged a few decades later. The president of the CENTRA Association (representing all German-Jewish communities and organizations in Latin America), Wolfgang Siebner, spoke in the fall of 1973 about the urgent need to develop a home-grown Jewish orientation in Latin America. Speaking during the annual convention of all Jewish communities in the region, which took place in Lima, Siebner’s speech addressed the crisis of diminishing participation in Jewish communal life. He warned community leaders of the danger of Jewish life disappearing from the region and stressed the need for new, radical solutions to strengthen local Jewish communities. One key problem that Siebner diagnosed in his speech was that current Jewish life in Latin America was founded on traditions brought by previous generations of Jewish immigrants. Founding a new Jewish way of life that was rooted in their immediate environment of current-day Latin America, not in the European past (nor, Siebner added, in Israel), was crucial for the survival of Jews and Judaism in the region.

Siebner’s speech should be read against the backdrop of a long debate between CENTRA and the Council of Jews from Germany, an international umbrella organization that brought together German-Jewish organizations from different countries. CENTRA had been a member of the Council since 1959, representing all Latin-American communities, and it had often clashed with the Council administration since the beginning of the cooperation. One heated issue that stirred conflict between the two bodies was CENTRA’s efforts to invite Jews from outside the German-speaking community to join their activities. “The Council’s work is based on the premise, that the situation of Jews from Germany necessitates and legitimizes a coalition of organizations to promote on social and cultural collaboration,” the head of the Council, Siegfried Moses, wrote to then CENTRA president, Rudolf Hirschfeld, on January, 1960. “We know that the times in which this type of organized activity is needed are coming to an end,” Moses added, calculating that it would be no longer than 20 years. Moses clarified that everyone in the organization wished to strengthen ties with other Jewish communities, yet they did not believe that this poses a contradiction to the Council’s focus on intentional work within the German-Jewish communities throughout the world.¹⁹⁵ This letter, pleading with CENTRA to exercise more exclusion in its activities, reveals deep insecurities about the future of German-Jewish culture. In Moses’ understanding of the Council’s work, preserving a German-Jewish sphere

¹⁹³ Leo Laufer, “A Home Away from Home,” in the bulletin of *Kvutzat Chaverim* from Purim, 1946. Collection of the families Wurm – Fürstenberg, K861, 2011/111, Mp. 3 JMB.

¹⁹⁴ Rabbi Josef Schwarz, “A Restored Outpost,” bulletin of *Kvutzat Chaverim*.

¹⁹⁵ Siegfried Moses to Rudolf Hirschfeld, January 3, 1960. CENTRA Collection, LBIJER 1016, folder 1. LBI Jerusalem Archive.

outside of Central Europe was not a measure of maintaining separatism; it was a way to bid farewell to a world that was coming to an end.

Probing German-Jewishness

Several factors could have led Moses and his contemporaries at the Council of Jews from Germany to the conclusion that German-Jewish culture was, by 1960, approaching dissolution. The global dispersion of the vast majority of its native proponents; the relatively smooth social integration experienced by this dispersed population in their postwar homelands; and the deeper rootedness of the second generation within these societies all contributed to the blurring of German influences on everyday life. If these characteristics are common to other migrant communities, in this case they were amplified by the traumatic realization of the magnitude of Germany's crimes against Jews, rendering the notion of German-Jewishness not only opaque but, to some, even illegitimate. This was not the case for many German-speaking Jews across the diaspora, especially not in the initial years that followed their displacement. For many, it was the encounter with other Jewish cultures along their routes of displacement that stimulated deeper reflection on their German-Jewish heritage.

Ludwig Hermann, who immigrated to Springs, South Africa, in 1934, had sensed an irk among the largely Eastern European Jewish community of the city: "The German Jew who arrives here is in a difficult position. In the eyes of these circles he is branded as not sufficiently Jewish. In most cases, he can't speak Yiddish or Hebrew, which, to the coreligionists from the East, is the requirement for being a good Jew." If engaging with Eastern European community revealed to Hermann differing understandings of Jewishness, his Germanness proved even a greater challenge: "If he happens to display any signs of homesickness, there will be absolutely no understanding, and that is the emotional torment that no German Jew is spared here in the initial period: Combining the love of the homeland, beyond all politics, with the demands that this land makes on him." For Hermann, preparing for life in new surroundings, being confronted with an expectation to reject his German roots provoked him to consider what role his old homeland could hold in his new life:

And so the German Jew makes his way through South Africa, searching for a new homeland with the old homeland in his heart, and in the hope that there will come a better time and more peaceful days, when the new homeland that he chose for himself, and the old homeland where he grew up, will give him the internal stability that he needs in order to reach happiness and contentment.¹⁹⁶

Hermann's contemplations are not those of an exile, but of an émigré. He did not yearn for a return, but a fusion; a life in a new homeland that is confident enough, stable enough, not to be threatened by the continued attachment to the old one.

The risk of imbalance or instability, which is often described as a defining feature of the German-Jewish duality before 1933, were further compounded in the diaspora by the introduction of the "new homeland," in Hermann's words. In Los Angeles in 1939, this topic was

¹⁹⁶ Ludwig Hermann, excerpt from *Israelitisches Gemeindeblatt*, summer 1934. Jewish Immigration Collection, BC 719, D5, University of Cape Town Archive.

raised in the bulletin of the German-Jewish Club, celebrating the club's five-year-anniversary edition. One of the essays in the publication condemned the behavior of "those immigrants who believe that they must forget their German-Jewish heritage as soon as they step foot in this wonderful country, so that they can become 100%, and better yet 101%, American as soon as possible." The author, Siegfried Bruno Bernstein, believed this was true of only a small portion of the community. For the majority, he suggested, the events of 1933 had served as a kind of "awakening of the German-Jewish soul," that would help carry their generation through the horrors of the present day and towards a better future. In addition to the pressure to Americanize, Bernstein's essay addressed the imperative to integrate into American Jewry. Referring to the choice to name the association the "German-Jewish Club," Bernstein wrote:

One could argue, whether Irish or French, we are all Jews. Why differentiate? And in response: Polish, Russian or Romanian Jews also keep together. One doesn't negate the other. Holding on to German Jewry doesn't require a separation from that which binds us with other Jews in America. To the contrary, a friendly relationship between the different associations has and will continue to contribute to the overcoming of misunderstandings.¹⁹⁷

While the urge to hastily assimilate appears here as a sign of lack of confidence, the choice to adhere to the German-Jewish heritage is portrayed as a conscious act of a community that is proud of its history and culture, one that doesn't pose any risk to the maintenance of a healthy bond with both America and American Jews. While the club did eventually change its name from "German-Jewish Club" to "Jewish Club of 1933," the emphasis on German-Jewish culture continued as its guiding principle for decades.

If Ludwig Hermann (in 1934 in South Africa) and Siegfried Bernstein (in 1939 in Los Angeles), still firmly embraced a German-Jewish orientation, the rather brief time period that they had spent outside of Central Europe would have certainly contributed to that. While the opinion of these two specific authors at a later point remains unknown, other accounts from the postwar period indicate that these sentiments did not necessarily fade away with time. Writing in London during the late 1940s, Kurt Alexander named the attachment to German-Jewishness as one of the defining characteristics of the Central European immigrant community, as well as a unique source of hardship. "We were all raised in a distinct and very vibrant Jewish community," he explained, "[...] and we came in contact with a Jewish world that is very different from the one that we were used to. It was perhaps one of the greatest disappointments for many of us, that we were only able to adjust to this new Jewish environment with difficulty and hesitation." One reason for this painful adaptation, according to Alexander, was that Jewish communities were not willing to accept the German-speakers into their midst. A long time was still needed, he predicted, for mutual interactions to evolve and allow "the German immigrant to no longer feel like an immigrant in his own Jewish environment."¹⁹⁸

Alexander was writing to a readership of former members of the *Kartell-Convent*, an umbrella organization of German-Jewish university fraternities, founded in the 1880s in response

¹⁹⁷ Siegfried Bruno Bernstein, „Zusammenschluss,“ *Neue Welt*, September 1939. German Jewish Club of 1933 Collection, AR 6466, folder 4, LBI.

¹⁹⁸ Kurt Alexander, "Die Probleme der Jüdischen Emigration aus Deutschland", *Kartell-Convent deutscher Studenten Juedischen Glaubens Collection*; AR 966; box 1; folder 3; LBI.

to the exclusion of Jewish students from the existing fraternities in Germany. The *Kartell-Convent* was known as a staunch advocate of assimilationism, promoting German patriotism and Jewish confidence as completing rather than competing elements. To members of this organization who remained active in the postwar period (like Alexander and hundreds of others), much of the ideological commitment that drew them to the *Kartell-Convent* in the first place remained valid, though they did adjust their principles to an era in which militarist-style loyalty to the *Vaterland* was no longer a viable ethos. Lamentations such as the one authored by Alexander were common in the organization's postwar publications, and they often sounded with a defense of the particular type of self-conscious Jewishness for which the *Kartell-Convent* had advocated – one that was shaped in Central Europe – as well as an appeal for it to be recognized as a legitimate form of Jewish existence.¹⁹⁹

Considering the *Kartell-Convent's* history, Alexander's position may not appear all too surprising, yet it was not confined to this ideological camp alone. Ernst Markowicz was a lifelong member of the Zionist *Kartell Jüdischer Verbindungen* [KJV], the student organization that opposed the *Kartell-Convent's* politics of assimilation. He shared an even more embittered impression of the encounter with the non-German Jewish world. Markowicz became an active Zionist following the murder of Walther Rathenau in 1922, fleeing Germany to Palestine in 1937 and continuing his association with the KJV there. In April 1971, he contributed to the organization's bulletin, *Kolenu*, and wrote an autobiographical piece that included a description of how his "internal relationship to the Jewish people" first grew from his interactions with Eastern European Jews and "Jews from Israel."²⁰⁰ Markowicz credited his national awakening to this first encounter, which also led him to the study of Hebrew and Yiddish.²⁰¹ In a private letter he wrote to a friend in 1976, however, there was no mark of this favorable impression. Markowicz first affirmed his friend's "very correct remark about the fundamental difference between Western and Eastern Jewry." During his time living in Leipzig, he added, he met the "finest representatives of Eastern European Jews" and even developed an "idealization of Ostjuden." This changed, he wrote, after meeting "the other side" of this community in Israel. The diasporic encounter left him so disappointed that he even asked his cousin for an affidavit to be able to join him in the United States.²⁰²

Markowicz and Alexander, two German Jews of the same generation and from a similar cultural background, each subscribed to a different meaning of being Jewish.²⁰³ While the latter became a prominent member of the Jewish community and an advocate of its causes through participation in Jewish community organs, the former joined the political movement that had rejected such advocacy efforts as futile and promoted Jewish national rejuvenation.²⁰⁴ A shared

¹⁹⁹ On the history of the *Kartell-Convent*, see Keith H. Pickus, *Constructing Modern Identities. Jewish University Students in Germany* (Detroit: Wayne State University, 1999); Miriam Rürup, *Ehrensache. Jüdische Studentenverbindungen an deutschen Universitäten 1886-1937* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2008); Lisa Fetheringill Zwicker, *Dueling Students: Conflict, Masculinity, and Politics in German Universities, 1890-1914* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2011), 103-140

²⁰⁰ Markowicz may be referring to Jews who had already immigrated to Palestine.

²⁰¹ Ernst Markowicz, "Von Bundesleiter der 'Kameraden' zum Zionisten", *Kolenu*, April 1971. In Ernst Markowicz Collection, LBI JER 193, folder 4, LBI Jerusalem.

²⁰² Ernst Markowicz to Menachem Gerson, November 11, 1976. Ibid.

²⁰³ Kurt Alexander was born in 1892, Ernst Markowicz in 1901. They had both been born to a post-emancipation reality in Germany.

²⁰⁴ Before 1933, Alexander was a member of the executive committee of the *Central Verein deutscher Staatsbürger jüdischen Glaubens*. After Hitler came to power, Alexander continued his work with the *Reichsvereinigung der*

fate drove both of them into displacement, with Markowicz choosing Palestine as a natural outgrowth of his ideological development, and Alexander first spending one decade in England before continuing to the United States. Despite the conflicting modes of Jewishness that they had lived by, both men shared a similar outlook on the relationship between German Jewry and other Jewish groups, each expressing strong alienation from the Jewish environment that they encountered in their new places of residence. Did life in the diaspora yield a new perspective that both men could share? Perhaps, though it cannot be confirmed from the biographical sources pertaining to these two individuals. More important to the issue at hand, the diasporic condition created circumstances that brought both Alexander and Markowicz into contact with other Jews at a density and frequency that they had not experienced before. This encounter left both of them feeling disappointed and disoriented.

The role that shared culture and history came to play in the lives of displaced German-speaking Jews varied among individuals, but for many of them, the bond with this heritage remained significant throughout their entire lives. The interactions that they had with Jews from different cultural backgrounds was a unique sphere where they explored the meaning of this enduring connection. A 1985 correspondence between two relatives who had just then resumed contact for the first time since the family's dispersion offers a striking example. Hanan [previously Hans] Mannheimer from Kibutz Glil Yam in Israel, confessed to "aunt Trude," living in São Paulo, Brazil, that "the theme 'German-Jewish' has kept me torn my entire life – in what terms we Jews are 'German,' and what is Jewish to begin with."

Mannheimer wrote about a conversation that he had held with a non-Jewish friend in Berlin, shortly before he left for Palestine. "Don't you think that you have more in common with me, the Christian German, than you do with a Jew from the Atlas Mountains or from Yemen?" the friend inquired, to which Mannheimer responded that that was indeed the case, but that he believed the Jewish people can come together and be united as one. From the perspective of his present day, in 1985, he was skeptic of his previous assertion, "[i]n light of the enormous differences in mentality and cultural level. In the fields of music, conversational language, business conduct, order, cleanliness, punctuality and diligence." While he wasn't sure whether the situation was comparable in Brazil, he assumed that Trude probably did not have the same aspirations to integrate into Brazilian society in the way he had been able to do so in Israel. He spoke good Hebrew, he assured her, was active in the community, and even presided as the Kibbutz general secretary. "But there's always a gap, even with Alisa [his wife, whose family was originally from Poland]. No one understands how I can cling to Germany still, how I maintain contacts with Germans and visit (visited) there."²⁰⁵ Unlike Alexander or Markowicz, whose observations were antagonistic, Mannheimer's description of the gulf that he experienced emphasize its endurance almost as self-afflicted, a haunting condition of peculiar displacement. While he viewed his life story as that an immigrant's successful integration, a fundamental misunderstanding had shaped his existence (even the relationship with his own wife!), to the point that he never ceased feeling torn by it.

deutschen Juden. Peter Pulzer, *Jews and the German State: The Political History of a Minority, 1848-1933* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2003), 232.

²⁰⁵ Hanan Mannheimer to Tante Trude, January 14, 1985. Mannheimer Collection, G.F.0444-5, German-Speaking Jewry Heritage Museum, Tefen.

Others and Otherness

In his autobiography, *From Berlin to Berkeley: German-Jewish Identities*, Reinhard Bendix wrote that he preferred life in Chicago, where “recent German refugees did not constitute a community of their own, separate from American life,” to what he had observed during short trips to New York, where German Jews “recreated for themselves a ‘Germany in exile.’”²⁰⁶ At 22, Bendix had fled from Berlin via Paris and arrived in the United States in 1938. As a refugee, he was taken in by a Jewish fraternity that supported him during his studies at the University of Chicago. There he became acquainted with an American-Jewish lifestyle that seemed familiar to his own assimilated German-Jewish background, especially with regard to lax religious observance. The similarities he thought he observed between the two cultures turned out to be superficial, however, since both communities were guided by very different principles: “The Americans regarded America as a land of freedom for them; The Germans identified with Germany as the country of culture and self-cultivation (*Bildung*).”²⁰⁷

Bendix, who preferred avoiding frameworks that kept German Jews in isolation from American society, still sought familiar signposts as he navigated through life in a new and foreign country. One did not need the steadfast embrace of a German-Jewish diasporic community to be attuned to its impulses, to bear out the tensions and negotiations that marked life in that diaspora. In this chapter, I have suggested that German-speaking Jews expressed one of these powerful, shared impulses through encounters with other Jews, establishing a dual mode of observation that always looked inwards – unto German-Jewishness itself – as it simultaneously looked outwards, at the new place of residence. This was the mode of observation that Bendix applied to American Jewry. If secular identities offered a point of parity between what was familiar and what was novel, noting this similarity ultimately served to accentuate deeper points of disparity. And so, in the process of learning the codes and mindsets that defined American-Jewish life, Bendix, the young foreigner, saw the ones that defined German Jewry anew.

Interactions between German-speakers and Jews of different backgrounds produced a range of responses among members of the former group. In these diasporic encounters, German-speakers sometimes condescended toward other Jews and sometimes were mocked by them. German-speakers protected the particularity of their own culture, but also pursued pan-Jewish solidarity. Moved by acts of kindness performed by strangers, they nevertheless found themselves feeling ostracized by the community to which they hoped to belong. Contradictions abounded by necessity. The interplay between affinity and detachment appeared as a recurring theme across the widespread dispersion. If utter rejection of other Jewish cultures would have been impossible (nor was it desired), a total immersion and embrace of Jewish unison was also unattainable, certainly for the first-generation immigrants if not for their children. Between these polarities, gradations of good will, curiosity, unease, sentimentality, resentment and empathy commingled. There is, however, one thread that ran through the divergent attitudes of German-speakers towards the Jews that they encountered. All of their judgments, aspirations and disappointments reflected back on the self-interrogation of their own relationship with German

²⁰⁶ Reinhard Bendix, *From Berlin to Berkeley: German-Jewish Identities* (New Brunswick: Transaction, 1990), 201.

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 202.

culture, with the histories of their German-speaking communities and with prospects for the future of German-Jewishness.

For the first generation of displaced Jews from Central Europe, the encounter with Jews of different backgrounds was a peculiarity of life in displacement. For their children, German-Jewish cultural imprints inevitably played a diminishing role, blurring, as a result, the distinctions and barriers that characterized their parents' cross-community relationships. They did not disappear altogether, though. An Israeli Facebook group for self-ascribed *Yekkes*, a virtual community of nostalgia and reverence, recently hosted a lively discussion on the matter. One of the group's members jokingly warned others that it appeared that "*Ostjuden* had infiltrated" their midst. This remark elicited dozens of responses. Many members took the statement at face value, expressing outrage at what they perceived as the author's bigotry. When other members pointed out the whimsical intentions of the original author, some commentators suggested, also humorously, that the stern and stiff *Yekkes* could not be expected to get the joke. Others took the opportunity to share memories and stories from their own family mythologies about German-speaking Jews and their attitudes towards Eastern Europeans.²⁰⁸ In the era of digital media, the encounter between the so-called *Yekkes* and other Jews cannot occupy the same role it that once held in the everyday experiences of German-Jewish immigrants. Yet for their descendants, the mere mention of this history attests to its original power and still offers a contentious opening for an exploration of their past.

²⁰⁸ From: Hoppe Hoppe Reiter, Tse'etsa'ey Yeckim Tse'irim Lema'an Shimur Moreshet Hayekkim, *Facebook*, February 4, 2017.

Chapter 4: The *Wiedergutmachung* Network The Diaspora at the Junction of Memory and Bureaucracy

So, as you can see, old Hans Strauss is still alive! At the moment he's staying in Germany. Yea, the Arabs and the war couldn't wipe him out, and so for the time being I'm here with my wife and my daughter, and I want to see what Adenauer can "make good" for me again [was Adenauer bei mir 'Wiedergutmachen' kann].²⁰⁹

Hans Strauss wrote these words in June 1957, in a letter to his old-time friend and employer, Leo Abraham. Through a chance meeting with a mutual acquaintance in Frankfurt am Main, Strauss had learned of Abraham's whereabouts in Brooklyn, New York. He had recently returned to his place of birth after living in Palestine, later Israel, since 1933. The purpose of Strauss' long-term visit, the letter revealed, was to tend to his reparations claim, *Wiedergutmachung* as it was officially known in Germany at the time – literally meaning, "to make good again."²¹⁰ After briefly sharing an account of his experiences in exile from Nazi Germany, Strauss apologized for making an unpleasant request: perhaps Herr Abraham could provide him with a notarized affidavit to testify for Strauss' employment at his old textile company?

Affidavits such as the one requested by Strauss were a common feature in reparations claims filed by victims of Nazi persecution in the postwar period. Together with other documents, claimants collected affidavits and sworn statements to piece together the details of a previous existence – the loss of which was now to be made good again, at least in some sense. In this chapter, I argue that the administrative nature of the *Wiedergutmachung* system, which necessitated research efforts, gathering evidence, and a degree of personal engagement with its apparatus and legislation, created a cohesive framework around which an "imagined" German-Jewish community could solidify after being displaced and dispersed across the globe. As they were assembling proof of their past lives; as they were revisiting – mentally and sometimes also physically – places and routines that they used to inhabit to assess their material worth; as they were following news updates concerning *Wiedergutmachung* legislation and politics, German Jews living in different corners of the world produced a network that reinforced their distinctive

²⁰⁹ Letter from Strauss to Abraham, June 5, 1957; Leo Abraham Collection; AR 25425; box 1; folder 3; Leo Baeck Institute.

²¹⁰ I am following Hans Günter Hockerts in arguing for the use of the term *Wiedergutmachung*. Hockerts noted a historiographical trend of shunning away from the term, with scholars wishing to resist the implication that financial transactions could possibly "make good" for genocide. He points to the etymology of the word to indicate that it traditionally carried the practical meaning of paying back for debt. More importantly, Hockerts argues that conscious avoidance of the term *Wiedergutmachung* is a moralist and anachronistic intervention, perpetuating a skewed depiction of the historical reality. Between 1940s-1980s, *Wiedergutmachung* was simply the common term, frequently used by all parties involved in indemnification procedures, including claimants, litigators, perpetrators, administrators, politicians or journalists. Hans Günter Hockerts, "Wiedergutmachung in Deutschland. Eine historische Bilanz 1945-2000," *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 49, no. 2 (Spring 2001) 167-214. Throughout the chapter, I use the original word in German because it simply does not lend itself to translation, but also because I am using this term in describing a system that extends beyond the practical procedure of filing and processing a claim. To this purely practical aspect of *Wiedergutmachung* I refer here as "reparations," which is meant to encompass restitution of property and monetary compensation.

collectivity. Through this network, they communicated information and advice, support and frustrations, empathy and hostilities.

The study of *Wiedergutmachung*'s history has produced a rich body of literature. Several scholars have devoted full monographs to the topic, a number of edited volumes offer thorough and insightful examinations of its various facets, and the subject is frequently discussed in works that examine the reestablishment of Jewish communities in Germany after 1945.²¹¹ The vast majority of these works, however, focus primarily on the diplomatic history of *Wiedergutmachung* (i.e. the various negotiations between Germany, the victorious allies and states that demanded postwar compensations); on the structural system of the German reparations administration, its successes and failures; on the moral applicability and symbolic significance of the project; or on the developments and contingencies of *Wiedergutmachung* history as a manifestation of German *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* – the national process of coming to terms with the Nazi past. Few have chosen to focus on the meanings and effects of *Wiedergutmachung* for the individuals whose fates gave body and basis to the claims.²¹²

In this chapter, I approach the topic of *Wiedergutmachung* from a different perspective, examining how it constructed channels through which individuals and groups could access their memories to assess their previous lives. The procedure of *Wiedergutmachung* opened roads into people's private pasts and shared histories; yet travel along these routes followed rules created under the logic of a complex bureaucratic system charged with administrating shattered pasts into legally legible claims. In weaving together various spheres in which *Wiedergutmachung* manifested itself, I show that it was instrumental in shaping the ways in which German Jews came to think about their past. Integral to my argument is approaching *Wiedergutmachung* as a meeting point between memory and bureaucracy. The need to administer individual life stories of trauma, expulsion, exile, expropriation, imprisonment and/or murder, inverted the Weberian understanding of bureaucracy as the segregating authority between officialdom and private life.²¹³ While individual claims introduced private histories into the consideration of an administrative

²¹¹ To name only a few: José Brunner, Norbert Frei, and Constantin Goschler (eds.), *Die Praxis der Wiedergutmachung. Geschichte, Erfahrung und Wirkung in Deutschland und Israel* (Bonn: Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, 2010); Dan Diner and Gotthart Wunberg (eds.), *Restitution and Memory: Material Restoration in Europe* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2007); Constantin Goschler, *Schuld und Schulden. Die Politik der Wiedergutmachung für NS-Verfolgte seit 1945* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2005); Hans Günter Hockerts and Christiane Kuller (eds.), *Nach der Verfolgung. Wiedergutmachung nationalsozialistischen Unrechts in Deutschland?* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2003); Jürgen Lillteicher, *Raub, Recht und Restitution. Die Rückerstattung jüdischen Eigentums in der frühen Bundesrepublik* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2007); Christian Pross, *Paying for the Past. The Struggle over Reparations for Surviving Victims of the Nazi Terror* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1998); Angelika Timm, *Jewish Claims against East Germany. Moral Obligations and Pragmatic Policy* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 1997). On *Wiedergutmachung* in the context of Jews in Germany after 1945, see Jay Howard Geller, *Jews in Post-Holocaust Germany, 1945-1953* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Anthony Kauders, *Unmögliche Heimat. Eine deutsch-jüdische Geschichte der Bundesrepublik* (Munich: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 2007); Andrea Sinn, *Public Voices. Jüdische Politik und Presse in der frühen Bundesrepublik* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2014).

²¹² Notable exceptions are: Leora Auslander, "Beyond Words," *American Historical Review* 110, no. 4 (October, 2005), 1015-1045; Christine Kausch, "Unlösbarer Widerstreit. Stationen zweier deutsch-jüdischer Familien," in: Brunner, Frei and Goschler (eds.), 79-98; Mark Roseman, "'It Went on for Years and Years'. Der Wiedergutmachungsantrag der Marianne Ellenbogen," in: Brunner, Frei and Goschler (eds.), 51-78; Tobias Winstel, *Verhandelte Gerechtigkeit Rückerstattung und Entschädigung für jüdische NS-Opfer in Bayern und Westdeutschland* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2006).

²¹³ Max Weber, "Bureaucracy," in: H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills (eds.), *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1958), 197.

system, the bureaucratic code of *Wiedergutmachung* in turn penetrated the realm of these histories, regulating not only the conduct of how one should file a reparations claim, but also the ways in which victims of Nazism articulated their pasts.

Wiedergutmachung captivated the attention of contemporaries from its very inception. Even before the end of the Second World War, when representatives and leaders of dispersed German Jewry were conceptualizing a future reparations agreement, they foresaw it as an endeavor that will bear implications for German Jewry in its entirety – both as a collective and on an individual basis. From the onset, they emphasized the role of the community in applying public pressure and in the practical realization of such an agreement. After 1945, *Wiedergutmachung* legislation, which was first initiated by the allied powers and then taken over by the Federal Republic of Germany, acknowledged the parallel need for individual reparations pursued by private persons and for collective reparations pursued by groups, for instance, a local Jewish community in Germany that sought to reclaim stolen land or assets.²¹⁴ When an official group or community decided to pursue restitution in this manner, the investigation process and its outcomes became matters of public interest.²¹⁵

Due to the sensitivity of the issue, public discourse on the topic often resulted in turmoil and ongoing conflicts. Holocaust-related financial agreements laden with moral stakes were at no point unequivocally accepted by either of the parties involved. For many decades after the end of the Second World War, reparations remained a public matter that sparked controversies. Debates on the topic extended beyond the German-Jewish world and included, for example, questions on compensation for ethnic German expellees from the relinquished territories or for forced labor victims.²¹⁶ But the unique history of German Jewry among victims of Nazism, its circumstances of persecution and displacement, guaranteed the endurance of a distinct overtone that characterized debates around *Wiedergutmachung* among members of that community.

The broad interest in the reparations apparatus, its structures and its consequences was not limited to public discourse but permeated the spheres of affected individuals as well, fusing together public and private concerns that constituted an important aspect of German-Jewish life after 1945. In this capacity, *Wiedergutmachung* had a binding effect on dispersed communities of German Jews. It provided members of these communities with a common topic of

²¹⁴ In the former case, the legislation distinguished between physical or monetary restitution of lost property and compensation for human rights violations (such as loss of liberty, health damages, restrictions in occupation, etc.).

²¹⁵ The most well-known example of a collective reparations claim was the Luxemburg Agreement signed between the Federal Republic of Germany and the State of Israel in September 1952, in which West Germany acknowledged a moral responsibility to bear the material costs of the Third Reich's genocidal regime, and recognized Israel as a representative of large populations inflicted by Nazi policies of persecution. I will return to this case and its implications for the *Wiedergutmachung* network later in the chapter. For further reading: Yaakov Sharett, *The Reparations Controversy: the Jewish State and German Money in the Shadow of the Holocaust, 1951-1952* (Boston: De Gruyter, 2011). For other examples of collective negotiations see Richard Buxbaum, "From Paris to London: The Legal History of European Reparation Claims: 1946-1953," *Berkeley Journal of International Law* 31, no. 2 (2013), 323-347; Ronald Zweig, *German reparations and the Jewish world: A History of the Claims Conference* (Boulder: Westview, 1987).

²¹⁶ On the former case, see Iris Nachum, "Reconstructing Life after the Holocaust: The *Lastenausgleichsgesetz* and the Jewish Struggle for Compensation." *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book* 58, no. 1, (January 2013), 53–67; Rüdiger Wenzel, *Die große Verschiebung?: Das Ringen um den Lastenausgleich im Nachkriegsdeutschland von den ersten Vorarbeiten bis zur Verabschiedung des Gesetzes 1952* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2008). On the latter, see Ulrich Herbert, *Hitler's Foreign Workers: Enforced Foreign Labor in Germany Under the Third Reich*. trans. William Templer (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997); Detlev Vagts and Peter Murray, "Litigating the Nazi Labor Claims: The Path Not Taken." *Harvard International Law Journal* 43, no. 2 (Summer 2002), 503-530.

conversation, a mutual concern and a reason to quarrel. Filing for reparations reestablished connections between the claimants and their old life in Germany, manufactured new bonds based on semi-incidental routes of displacement, and merged past and present under the unique circumstances of material compensation for mass atrocities. To illustrate how this process took place, I continue to address three avenues through which the *Wiedergutmachung* network traveled simultaneously.

At the first level, we encounter the contact between claimants and Germany, a connection immediately reconstituted as soon as a reparations claim commenced. The nature of this contact varied quite substantially. Some claimants chose to travel to Germany themselves, revisit old haunts and habitats and conduct the procedure in person, confronting the German administration face-to-face. Others preferred to delegate as much of the responsibility as possible to attorneys and minimize their personal involvement. The latter group too, however, had to engage in practical contact, even if often at a remove from Germany, its representatives and its institutions. Regardless of the level of personal engagement, a mental encounter between claimants and the society that had expelled them was inevitable. The pre-history of the claims – the claimants’ lives before 1933 and the harrowing paths that followed it – made it virtually impossible to remain entirely detached from the process.

The second level manifests itself in the printed medium. An analysis of three publications based in three different continents will demonstrate how *Wiedergutmachung* reinforced a public consciousness of German-Jewish pasts and of the possibilities of German-Jewish futures. The German-Jewish diasporic press, as will become clear, addressed *Wiedergutmachung* in a way that emphasized both its collective and its individual implications. The study of these three publications traces how they carried a flow of information that assisted claimants with the complex and often frustrating procedure, and how they created a space where professionals (attorneys, administrators, accountants, etc.) and non-professionals (claimants and their relatives) could communicate their interests.

The third level can be seen in the act of Hans Strauss writing to Leo Abraham after years of silence and across thousands of miles. It is the grassroots channel of communication that *Wiedergutmachung* re-opened when claimants began reaching out to people that could help them substantiate the reality of their previous lives. In this channel, parallel narratives converged and memories were translated into evidentiary material to face the bureaucratic requirements of the German legislation.

Back to the “German Circle”

For many German Jews residing outside of Germany after the Second World War, pursuing a reparations claim meant reigniting contact with their former homeland for the very first time since their departure. Tobias Winstel, who studied reparations cases in the state of Bavaria, noted that the process that began with the paper initiation of a claim often led to visits, prolonged stays and even re-emigration to Germany.²¹⁷ The physical encounters that *Wiedergutmachung* fostered will be discussed at further length later in this section. It is important to recognize, however, that renewed contacts between claimants and Germany did not always take that particular form and often proceeded without the claimants taking physical steps on German soil.

²¹⁷ Winstel, *Verhandelte Gerechtigkeit*, 291-294.

Initial contacts set in motion from a distance were dictated by bureaucratic requirements. Obtaining copies of several official records numbered among the very first steps involved in filing reparations claims. This documentary demand impelled communication between claimants and the government agencies that produced birth, marriage and death certificates, as well as criminal records and proof of residence. After assembling these elemental documents from Germany, claimants would append them to the reparations application form and send them back to Germany, to be inspected and studied by local authorities. While this international circuit of requests and submissions could be avoided by extending power of attorney to a third party, archival records of German-Jewish claimants show that many of them reached out to the relevant German authorities themselves, even in cases when they were working with a lawyer to facilitate their claim.

Yet those who relied on the mediation of attorneys or other professionals would have nevertheless found it extremely difficult to bypass any type of contact with Germany, whether as a physical entity or an abstract idea. For former Bielefeld residents Senta and Hans Kronheim, for example, *Wiedergutmachung* required the maintenance of an active bank account in the Federal Republic of Germany. The couple was granted reparations in 1953 for Hans Kronheim's previous employment as Rabbi of the local Jewish community, and they received monetary compensation in 1958 for lost silverware and jewelry. On both occasions, the German reparations authorities were unable to transfer the funds in their entirety to the Kronheims' bank account in Cleveland, Ohio. Keeping a German bank account proved to be necessary for the full execution of the settlement.²¹⁸

In the case of the Kurt and Hilde Gabriel, who settled in Palmerston North, New Zealand, the connection elicited by the *Wiedergutmachung* process resulted in a spatial imagination of their former home. Fritz Rump, the lawyer who assisted them with their property restitution claim, communicated frequently about real estate developments on the *Kurfürstendamm* boulevard and its adjacent streets, a Berlin neighborhood that came to embody West Germany's remarkable financial recovery during the early postwar decades. The Gabriel family property was located precisely at the epicenter of this booming area, as Rump repeatedly informed them. In his reports, the attorney did his best to accurately describe the changing urban space for the benefit of his clients. He wrote about new high-rise buildings, about construction work done to expand streets and sidewalks, and about new U-Bahn train lines and stations that would surely accelerate development in the neighborhood.²¹⁹ It was from their lawyer that the Gabriels, then living in their suburban house in New Zealand, learned about the establishment of new department stores right across the street from their old building, the new hotel being built around the corner, and the one that was planned for construction in the near future.²²⁰ These exchanges, chiefly meant to anticipate ebbs and flows in real estate prices, inadvertently produced a visualization of a changing cityscape for its former residents, the Gabriels. In his letters, Rump

²¹⁸ *Abrechnungsbogen* from the *Bundesstelle für Entschädigung der Bediensteten jüdischer Gemeinden* in Cologne, December, 1953; Letter from *Oberfinanzdirektion* Hannover, June 30, 1958, Rabbi Dr. Enoch (Hans) Kronheim collection, 2008.292, Box 3, folder 10, USHMM. The Kronheims's case was not unique. German-Jewish claimants often needed to provide reparations authorities with German banking information to process payments. Tobias Winstel adds that monetary payments involved in reparations cases were not taxed in Germany, while in Israel, for example, claimants would have to pay taxes for receiving these funds. This may have acted as incentive for some claimants to keep these funds in German accounts. Winstel, *Verhandelte Gerechtigkeit*, 293.

²¹⁹ Letter from Rump to Hilde Gabriel, November 24, 1953, Gabriel/Salomonis Family Collection; Konvolut/317; Mappe 1, Jewish Museum Berlin Archive.

²²⁰ Letter from Rump to Kurt Gabriel, January 31, 1958, *Ibid*.

took them on an imagined tour of a new Berlin, a version of their city that required mental construction atop memories to envision.

Wiedergutmachung cultivated contacts that moved beyond the practicalities involved in finance and property administration. It forced claimants into close proximity with a still recent and painful past, prompting a direct confrontation with the history of Germans and Jews, as well as consideration of possibilities for future interactions. At one point, this confrontation was written into the law itself. In the 1956 *Bundesentschädigungsgesetz* [Federal Compensation Law, BEG], section 150, paragraph 1, required claimants to prove their “affinity to the German linguistic and cultural circle” when applying for monetary compensation. Iris Nachum and José Brunner, studying the implementation of this paragraph in applications filed by Israeli claimants, note the absurd situation that it created: the provision essentially introduced “Germanness” as a scale on which the validity of a reparations claim was to be measured. In addition to a language test that claimants had to pass, they were encouraged to submit letters, diaries, books, club membership cards, evidence of working experience and any other type of proof that could show connections to the German language or the German culture.²²¹

The demand that victims of Nazi persecution highlight their affinity to Germany in order to receive indemnification may appear perplexing to contemporary readers. For German-Jewish claimants, their belonging to the so-called German circle was a particularly fraught issue. On one hand, large sections of German-speaking Jewry saw their connection to the German language and to German culture as a matter of fact, despite the violence they had experienced under Nazism and despite their forced migration from their homeland. Yet on the other hand, it was precisely the negation of their belonging to German society that had energized attacks against them. After the war, when the German *Wiedergutmachung* project sought to atone for these crimes, German Jews were suddenly required to authenticate themselves as Germans in the eyes of the examining authorities to qualify for reparations. If the paragraph rejected the Nazi policy that denied Jewish belonging to the German nation, it nonetheless saw the state place a premium on Germanness in evaluating the identity of Jews.

The German-Circle clause was finally removed in 1965 following public protests. When active, it indicated one way in which *Wiedergutmachung*'s reach into the lives of affected claimants extended far beyond a straightforward bureaucratic process of impersonal paper transactions. Indeed, the legal process sanctioned this long reach in seeking to measure the precarious subject of German Jewish identity. At stake was not only the resurgence of painful memories but also unresolved tensions lingering in the present. One personal response to these circumstances came in an unpublished poem that Julius Preuss wrote in his notebook. It portrays an embittered understanding of the realities of the *Wiedergutmachung* process:

I never was anti-Jewish.
My heart was always true.
I even had one as a friend.
He was a good Jew.

²²¹ José Brunner and Iris Nachum, “‘Vor dem Gesetz steht ein Türhüter’. Wie und warum israelische Antragsteller ihre Zugehörigkeit zum deutschen Sprach- und Kulturkreis beweisen mußten,” in: Brunner, Frei and Goschler, 387-424.

The warden took away his house,
The things he found in that place.
When they brought the Jew outside,
I hardly recognized his face.

Then I took over that house,
But soon came close the enemy,
Und kicked me out of there at once,
Oh, the injustice done to me.²²²

Preuss, who titled his poem, “The Good German,” escaped from Berlin in 1940, first settling in Paraguay and then moving to Argentina after 1946. Trained as a lawyer but unable to pursue his profession post-migration, Preuss took up journalism and published frequently with the *Jüdische Wochenschau/La Semana Israelita*, a German-Jewish publication based in Buenos Aires. He often wrote about *Wiedergutmachung* related matters, voicing adamant support for claimants’ rights and critique of the legal and administrative flaws of the system. His poem revealed a different, personal type of frustration: his disappointment with the blindness of ordinary Germans to their complicity in the Nazi crimes and with their resentment towards *Wiedergutmachung* as a project. Making good again, the moralistic imperative explicitly attached to the procedure by the Adenauer administration, resulted, as it appears in this case, in the exact opposite. Preuss, who closely followed news and updates related to reparations and further relayed them to German-Jewish communities in South America, was disheartened by the German response he captured in his poem. The contact that *Wiedergutmachung* generated between him and postwar German society was one characterized by a deep sense of betrayal, cynicism and disillusionment.

If Preuss’ viewpoint was conceived from a distance, many German-Jewish claimants who traveled to Germany to personally attend to their claims would have agreed with his verdict. Karoline Furchheimer, who in 1949 traveled from Switzerland to her native town of Erbes-Büdesheim, in Rhineland-Palatinate, returned with a similar impression. Upon visiting the house that her late husband, Gustav, had lost, and which was soon to be transferred back to her ownership, she noted in a letter to a friend that

All the linen, the silver, etc. are gone. Ida’s fur coat too, and it’s a case of the pot calling the kettle black. I asked the women to give me some peace in Gustav’s honor, but you have no idea the type of attitudes that people still have. I generally noticed that the German people have learned nothing. The few good ones are still good, the others are the same old antisemites, not one iota better. It’s a sad realization, but there’s no point weeping over it.²²³

²²² Julius Preuss, “Der Gute Deutsche,” Preuss Family Collection; Konvolut/430 (2004/297); Mappe 4, JMB Archive.

²²³ K. Furchheimer to C. Siesel, September 18, 1949. Siesel Family Collection; Konvolut/244 (2013/23); Mappe 15; JMB Archive.

Furchheimer's pursuit of restitution led her back to her hometown, to the real-life encounter with the residents in her soon-to-be returned property, and to her general observations of German society. If *Wiedergutmachung*, which induced her return, was initiated to mark a break with Germany's past and to signal the founding of a new era in German and Jewish relations, Furchheimer experienced its unfolding as evidence to the contrary.

Taking place shortly after the end of the allied military administration and the subsequent establishment of the Federal Republic of Germany, Furchheimer's visit confronted her with German society as it still grappled with the immediate outcomes of utter defeat. Arnon Tamir, whose visit to Germany took place in the 1970s, witnessed Germany at a very different stage of its postwar history. But while he did not find German society as unchanged or unrepentant, his encounter with Germany – also occasioned by *Wiedergutmachung* – nevertheless left him with deep discomfort.

Tamir documented his journey in a travel memoir titled *A Journey Back. Injustice and Restitution*, published in German in 1992 and translated into English in 1997. His account begins by the poolside in the Israeli Kibbutz where he had settled after leaving Germany. The older members of the Kibbutz, Tamir informs the readers, were able to finance the construction of this pool by donating some of their reparations payments. From this artifact of *Wiedergutmachung*, he commences a chronicle of his visit that moves continuously between past and present. Flashes of memory from his childhood in Germany fuse with the events of his return as an adult. His mission, as he describes it, was to “procure statements from witnesses in this city in which my parents were deprived of what little property they had. And I am supposed to pursue the claims that have been submitted in my name.”²²⁴

Tamir's memoir culminates in a meeting at the Stuttgart reparations office. The night before it took place, the hotel owner delivered Tamir a message from one of the office clerks, adding that “I've been asked to take good care of you. As if we had to be asked... We know perfectly well what our Jewish guests feel when they return to their old home.”²²⁵ If the German-Circle paragraph of the BEG paradoxically resulted in highlighting the German part of the hyphenated “German-Jewish,” the hotel owner's remark shows that *Wiedergutmachung* also served to emphasize the claimants' ongoing Jewish otherness in German society.

Important parts of Tamir's life story are revealed to the readers for the first time through his visit to the Stuttgart reparations office. Only from his conversation with the administrator employed there do we learn his birth name, Arnold Siegfried Fischmann, his family background and the circumstances of his life in Nazi Germany. Throughout their conversation, Tamir became visibly agitated by the clerk, himself not even sure why. When she expressed surprise to learn that he voluntarily left school at 1933 to find employment and had not actually been expelled due to racial discrimination, he explained his decision by telling her: “They said: ‘Jews don't want to work.’”²²⁶ To the readers, he revealed more:

How am I to explain to this young woman what it means to be compelled by circumstance and how the will is born that turns this compulsion into a voluntary decision? If I claim that I was a victim, and only a victim, what becomes of my dignity as

²²⁴ Ibid., p. 15.

²²⁵ Ibid., p. 43.

²²⁶ Ibid., p. 86.

a human being responsible for his actions? But if I insist that I was acting of my own free will, they may very well point out that I have been blessed with the greatest prize that can fall to a person's lot.²²⁷

As the meeting progresses, his reactions to her grew more and more peculiar, and he perceived her disposition as “irritating patience.”²²⁸ When he openly displayed his frustrations to her, she immediately reassured him that she takes no pleasure in her work, and that she was perfectly aware of the fact that ““money can't make up for *that*.”²²⁹ And at that moment, Tamir realizes that “[a]cross from me sits the city that expelled me and that is now ready to compensate me with money for a disrupted and poisoned youth. Across from me sit the girls with whom I played and the young women I was forbidden to love.”²³⁰ They then engaged in an open conversation about her family, what they had known and what they believed during the war years, and about responsibility and guilt. Explaining that her work gave her a sense of mission, she revealed to Tamir that she had been looking forward to meeting him because she had a feeling that his case would strengthen her decision to take up this occupation. They continued the conversation in a coffeehouse, where she asked why he waited for so long to come to Germany and settle the claim. He responded by asking why she was not married. She told him that she often goes on walks in the Jewish cemetery and asked if he would like to join her. And then they sat there in silence. Contemplating their conversation, Tamir concluded in his memoir that “the time has not come. Not yet [...] Restitution will not bring me peace.”²³¹

Tamir's extraordinary account of his visit is rare in its openness and suggestiveness, as well as in the conscious choice to write explicitly about his reparations case.²³² While atypical, it provides a fascinating example of the intensive and intimate contact that the *Wiedergutmachung* system was able to produce between claimants, German society and the German-Jewish wound. It was an encounter that inexorably invoked history and memory, taking the form of a quest for financial reparations that ultimately became a reconstruction of one's past. Tamir's reparations claim created an opening for him to revisit the site of his previous life; but it was precisely this renewed, palpable connection that exposed the chasm that lay between him and his former homeland.

The next section of this chapter proceeds to examine a different mode in which *Wiedergutmachung* manifested itself in the lives of German-Jewish claimants. On the pages of diasporic press publications, German Jews launched a campaign of knowledge transfer in which they learned from each other the workings of the *Wiedergutmachung* system, both its pitfalls and its potentials. Through this medium, *Wiedergutmachung* was cemented as a collective concern that touched the lives of German Jews residing all across the diaspora. Press coverage, however, also revealed that when it came to reparations, German-Jewish communities in different parts of the world did not always face the same challenges or share the same goals.

²²⁷ Ibid.

²²⁸ Ibid., p. 87.

²²⁹ Ibid., p. 88.

²³⁰ Ibid.

²³¹ Ibid., 91.

²³² In a private correspondence, two scholars who analyze personal memoirs and autobiographies of German-Jews have mentioned the scarcity of texts that openly engage with the topic. Social conventions around the acceptance of reparations money may influence the decision to exclude it from autobiographical writing, especially in Israel.

Communicating *Wiedergutmachung*: The German-Jewish Press

In the German-Jewish press, the collective essence of the *Wiedergutmachung* project was evident. The diaspora prompted an abundance of print organs for a scattered people. In various countries, German-language bulletins and newspapers catered to the needs of immigrants who sought not only the convenience of reading in their native tongue, but also the attainment of their “imagined community.”²³³ Shared texts provided a connective tissue between German Jews in a single locale, as well as between dispersed German Jews in other parts of the world. The voluminous coverage of *Wiedergutmachung* attests to its status as a signal concern for this diasporic imagined community.

This was certainly the case with the most successful German-Jewish newspaper, the *Aufbau*, which was published in New York. Between 1949 and 1965, the *Aufbau* addressed *Wiedergutmachung* in approximately 3,000 reports and articles. The emphasis on the topic reached its peak in the fall of 1957, with the decision to add a separate insert to each edition that dealt exclusively with *Wiedergutmachung*-related news. This insert, sponsored and closely monitored by the Jewish Claims Conference, continued to appear in print until 1984.²³⁴ *Aufbau*'s coverage of *Wiedergutmachung* themes offered a mixture of journalistic reportage on legal developments, lobbying efforts to reform and improve the process and recommendations for individual claimants. Useful guidelines and inside information were continuously disseminated to the paper's readership in the United States and abroad. Readers flipping through the January 20, 1950 edition, for example, would find an explanation on how to pursue compensation for imprisonment despite the lack of a legal framework on the matter; a report on the establishment of a new court of appeals in *Wiedergutmachung* matters in Frankfurt am Main; recommendations for claimants against the state of Baden-Württemberg to apply using forms printed by the states of Hesse or Bavaria (since the former has not yet printed its own); and an ad published by an “American businessman” in West Germany, offering to personally represent claimants in reparations cases.²³⁵

This collage, reinforced by a message printed on the page - “*Aufbau* connects you with your friends all over the world” – illustrates the routine ways in which the German-Jewish diasporic press disseminated valuable information, aiding readers in the process of filing and advancing reparations claims. But papers like the *Aufbau* acted not only as unofficial channels for shepherding knowledge from authorities and professionals to individual claimants. They had an important role in cementing the transnational network of German-speaking Jews, with *Wiedergutmachung* acting as a primary catalyst.

Hugo Windmueller, a former attorney from Dortmund who settled in Richmond, Virginia, worked closely with *Aufbau* reports when assisting friends, acquaintances and clients

²³³ Benedict Anderson famously analyzed the link between the rise of print media and the emergence of constructed national communities. In the case of diasporic German-Jewish press organs, the relationship between the two is reversed, with the publications intentionally and explicitly seeking the preservation of the collective. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (New York: Verso, 2006).

²³⁴ Susanne Bauer-Hack, *Die jüdische Wochenzeitung Aufbau und die Wiedergutmachung* (Düsseldorf: Droste, 1994), 45-50.

²³⁵ “Wiedergutmachung,” *Aufbau*, January 20 1950.

with filing their claims.²³⁶ In his records, excerpts from the *Aufbau* appear often in references to various claims he was involved with. The file of his friend and client, Harry [Horst] Cohn, for example, includes an article titled “Conflict in Restitution Law Settled” from the September 13, 1968 edition, upon which Windmueller scribbled: “Re: Harry.”²³⁷ Windmueller recommended that Cohn publish a “search ad” in the *Aufbau*, in an attempt to locate his aunt, Paula Jülich, who immigrated to South America in 1936, and with whom he had no contact since. Windmueller, furthermore, eventually authored the content of this ad and mailed it to the editors. It appeared in December 1968 and read: “I’m searching for my relatives: Ernst Jülich & Paula neé Tilles and children Rolf and Gisela, previously in Cologne, Rhein, Wiethasestr. 62. News requested urgently by Horst Cohn.”²³⁸ A few days after it saw print, Cohn received a letter from his aunt, then living in São Paulo, Brazil. A friend who happened to stumble upon the ad informed her of it and she hurried to respond to her nephew. “Receiving a life signal after 33 years. It’s almost unbelievable,” she wrote.²³⁹ It was through this renewed contact that she learned for the first time about the murder of her sister, Thea Therese Cohn, and her niece, Ruth Ellen Cohn, in 1942 in Auschwitz. It was also an opportunity for her nephew, Harry, and for his representative and friend, Windmueller, to address her with questions about the family property, hoping she could help to advance the claim.²⁴⁰

The *Aufbau* was certainly the largest and most well-known of all diasporic German-Jewish newspapers. Its treatment of *Wiedergutmachung* questions, however, was not unique. All major publications that tended to this readership covered the topic extensively, while often reflecting particular concerns that arose in their specific geographic contexts. This was the case of the *Mitteilungsblatt* [MB], published in Palestine/Israel by the Organization for Immigrants from Central Europe [*Irgun Olej Merkaz Eropa* – IOME]. Similarly to the *Aufbau*, the MB provided readers with practical updates and recommendations meant to assist in the process of successfully settling claims. MB editors repeatedly encouraged readers to apply by emphasizing deadlines and highlighting cases where missed deadlines could be negotiated. The paper appealed to readers through direct ads stressing the urgency of the matter. One such ad insisted: “Did you live in Berlin before emigration? Yes! Did you file a compensation claim? No! Do you want to waiver your lawful rights? No way! So apply immediately! Time is of the essence!”²⁴¹

Wiedergutmachung was an issue of critical importance to the work of the IOME in its capacity as a representative body of the German-speaking population in Palestine/Israel. Before the war had ended, the organization vocally advocated the establishment of a reparations system for Jewish victims of Nazi persecution. Later, this approach would translate into explicit support for a collective reparations agreement between Israel and the Federal Republic of Germany. This issue generated fierce debates when the Israeli government embarked on negotiations with the

²³⁶ In the US, Windmueller did not officially pursue a career as a lawyer. He held a full-time position as a bookkeeper but assisted dozens of the members of the German Jewish community in Virginia with their claims for a fee.

²³⁷ Windmueller focused on a specific paragraph that discussed cases in which wrong categorization of the claim could lead to an exemption from deadlines. “Streit über Rückerstattungsrecht entschieden”, *Aufbau*, September 13, 1968. Viewed in Hugo Windmueller Collection; AR 25214; box 1; folder 6; LBI.

²³⁸ “Gesucht wird”, *Aufbau*, December 27, 1968.

²³⁹ Letter from Jülich to Cohn, May 1, 1969; Hugo Windmueller Collection; box 1; folder 7.

²⁴⁰ Letter from Windmueller to Jülich, January 21, 1969, Ibid.

²⁴¹ Advertisement, MB, November 16, 1951, 1.

Adenauer administration in 1951.²⁴² At that time, when Israel still refused official diplomatic relations with Germany, a large portion of the Israeli population saw a financial agreement for reparations with Germany as a disgraceful bargain over the honor of Jewish Holocaust victims. Many demanded a complete and total refusal to hold any state-level contact with Germany.

The *MB* openly opposed this viewpoint in articles such as “Politics of Reason?” in which the anonymous author endorsed the Israeli government’s decision to pursue a collective agreement. The writer proclaimed: “This demand, which supplements the individual claims, is naturally and unanimously supported by the entire Jewish nation, in Israel and in the world. The moral legitimacy of it is beyond any doubt.”²⁴³ As protests among the public intensified, escalating to a virtual riot outside of the Israeli parliament building in Jerusalem, the *MB* could no longer suppose that world Jewry in its entirety shared unequivocal support for the agreement. Instead, the paper adopted a harsh line of criticism against protesters. In an article titled “After the Germany-Debate,” an unnamed author expressed aversion to popular objections to the negotiations, describing the oppositional voices as “an orgy of the lowermost instincts of the mob, guided by a handful of so-called intellectuals.”²⁴⁴ The protests, according to the piece, revealed not only hatred towards Germany, but also the hatred of Jews towards other Jews. The author added [emphases in original]:

It seems that at this time it is our duty to say one more word: We speak as **German-Jews**, who suffered more than anybody from the satanic attack. Our suffering was not only a physical one; it was also the deepest disappointment, the most deplorable humiliation, the most terrible bitterness that was inflicted upon us. At this moment, though, as a small fracture of the evil might be compensated [“gut gemacht werden soll”], the whole world – both Jews and other nations – should see, that we are trapped in our pain. **The house of Israel surely does not want to become a symbol of suffering in this world [...]**

With this, the author addressed critical issues that many German Jews believed to be at the heart of the *Wiedergutmachung* controversy. The heated opposition toward the agreement came largely from political camps associated not with the German-speaking community in Israel but the with former immigrants from Eastern Europe. The author’s text reflected persistent ethnic demarcations within Israeli society, diverging visions on the future of the Jewish people in the post-Holocaust era, and the adamant adherence of German Jewry to its cultural and historical particularities despite global dispersion it had endured.

Such debates were not limited to journalists and community leaders. *Wiedergutmachung* catalyzed these conversations among *MB* readers as well. In a letter to the editors published in January 1951, reader M.S. from Tel Aviv wrote against the demands of certain members of the parliament to cut all ties with Germany. M.S. asked that the Israeli public consider the needs of German-speaking immigrants, people who were immersed in German culture and still dreamt in the German language. As a result of the demand for a total boycott, the letter argued, members of

²⁴² On the negotiations see: Dan Diner, *Rituelle Distanz Israels deutsche Frage* (Munich: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 2015), 11-34; George Lavy, *Germany and Israel: Moral Debt and National Interest* (Portland: Frank Cass, 1996); Sharett, *The Reparations Controversy*.

²⁴³ “Politik der Vernunft?” *Mitteilungsblatt*, March 23, 1951.

²⁴⁴ “Nach der Deutschland-Debatte,” *Mitteilungsblatt*, November 1, 1952.

this community were facing “mental isolation” in their new country.²⁴⁵ Another reader, Erich Bloch from Nahariya, expressed similar opinions in his letter from February 1951, titled “Against the Hate.” He warned the young State of Israel against cultivating collective hatred towards all things German, which would ultimately include some of its own citizens.²⁴⁶

Beyond the question of financial compensation, the German-speaking population in Israel experienced the debates over the ethical validity of the negotiations at an intimate, personal level. Anti-German sentiment threatened an integral part of their identity. While German-speaking immigrants in Israel generally considered themselves supporters of their new state, though most were not ardent Zionists, their link to the German culture and language did not weaken as a result. A glimpse through the pages of the *MB* – which was published almost entirely in the German language – demonstrates this point clearly. The historical references incorporated into the paper’s essays, the novelists that it celebrated, the concerts and movies that were reviewed, and the advertisements featured, they all depicted the strong affiliation of the readership with the culture, traditions and habits that these individuals acquired in their previous homelands.

The *Association of Jewish Refugees Information* [*AJR Information*], a paper published in England, offers another example of how local circumstances could shape the ways in which a particular German-Jewish community approached *Wiedergutmachung*. With approximately 65,000 arrivals between 1933 and the late 1940s, England was the third largest destination for German-speaking Jewish refugees fleeing Nazi persecution (the first two being the United States and Palestine/Israel). In England, these immigrants faced the challenge of integrating into a relatively homogenous national and cultural sphere, creating, according to historian Anthony Grenville, a distinct diasporic German-Jewish identity.²⁴⁷ One expression of this particularism is evident in the fact that the *AJR Information*, unlike the *Aufbau* or the *MB*, was published mostly in the English language.

The *AJR Information*, similar to the two previous publications discussed here, provided readers with practical advice and information on the procedure of pursuing claims. In November 1949, for instance, the “Restitution News” section highlighted such items as news updates on legislation in Austria; a report on the situation of restitution in West Berlin; news concerning possessions falsely defined as “enemy property” in England; an update on a recent act for settlement of securities; and advice for individuals traveling to West Germany for reparations purposes – what should be declared, what can be brought out of Germany, who to turn to for assistance, and so forth.²⁴⁸

In March, 1951, the *AJR Information* greeted the apparent progress in the execution of the reparations legislation in West Berlin and pointed out to the remaining deficiencies that new legislation in that field did not attend to. In this context, the editorial piece introduced an interesting perspective, emphasizing the responsibility of the German-speaking community in the campaign towards improving *Wiedergutmachung* legislation:

In all these and many other questions the Jews from Germany themselves have to take up their case through their appropriate representative bodies. Every claimant, whether he is able to employ a lawyer or whether, being indigent, he entrusts his case to the United

²⁴⁵ M.S., “Wir und Deutschland”, *Mitteilungsblatt*, June 1, 1951.

²⁴⁶ Erich Bloch, “Gegen den Hass”, *Mitteilungsblatt*, September 2, 1951.

²⁴⁷ Anthony Grenville, *Jewish refugees from Germany and Austria in Britain, 1933-1970 their image in AJR information* (London: Vallentine Mitchell, 2010), 98.

²⁴⁸ “Restitution News,” *AJR Information*, November, 1949.

Restitution Office, must realize that the legal settlement of his claim depends on general developments which call for permanent action and vigilance. Therefore, under the aspect of restitution as among so many others, every Jew from Germany has a vested interest in the successful work of the AJR and of the 'Council of Jews from Germany.'²⁴⁹

All members of the German-Jewish diaspora, according to the article, were equally invested in seeing the *Wiedergutmachung* project successfully implemented. But the realization of this project should be guided by appropriate representative bodies, such as the AJR itself. The article was thus attempting to rally the support of German-speaking Jews in England for the AJR's "permanent action and vigilance." If this editorial piece implies an institutional insecurity that affected the AJR with regards to its members' interest and dedication, the authors of the text clearly thought of *Wiedergutmachung* as a topic that would help them resolve this problem by rallying support for the organization's work.

As for debates on the legitimacy of *Wiedergutmachung*, the *AJR Information* voiced a clear opinion in the matter. In February 1952, following the Israeli protests against the negotiations, the publication's head article, titled "Let Right Be Done," stated that

When, during the War, the Executive of the AJR tentatively discussed whether any restitution or compensation to the Jews would be feasible after the end of hostilities, a member remarked: "If the future Germany pays pensions to her post- or railway-men but does not compensate the Nazi victims, the War would be morally lost."

The expulsion that German Jews had endured, the author further explained, resulted in destitution and deprivation. These former refugees were still experiencing the outcomes of lingering financial hardships, and the "last hope to improve their lot centres [sic] around the term 'Compensation.'²⁵⁰

A further point emphasized in this article differentiated the *AJR Information*'s position on the matter from the ones expressed on the pages of the *Aufbau* and the *MB*. The author made a clear demand for a fair distribution of the anticipated funds among the dispersed German-Jewish communities worldwide, implying that an agreement mostly benefitting the State of Israel or large Jewish organizations in the United States would prove to be "a dangerous precedent" in which Jews have confiscated property from other Jews.²⁵¹ Concerned that the community it represented would be overshadowed by the larger and more vocal diasporic centers, the *AJR Information* was prepared to fight for its constituents' rights.

The "competition" with the Israeli assertion for recognition as the just heir and representative of Nazi victims, and subsequent demands for a global reparations settlement with Germany (rather than individual-based claims) continued to pose a problem for the editors of the *AJR Information*. In May of 1952, they even recruited an unexpected ally in battling against it. "German Paper Advocates Priority for German Jews," read a headline introducing a short article from the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* [FAZ]. The FAZ author, as described in the *AJR Information* article, "expresses the view that the Zionist ideology and thus the creation of the State of Israel was the Jewish reaction to the Russian pogroms, to Schoenerer and Lueger, to the

²⁴⁹ "Progress in Restitution," *AJR Information*, March, 1951.

²⁵⁰ "Let Right Be Done," *AJR Information*, February, 1952.

²⁵¹ Ibid.

Dreyfus Trial and to Stoecker and Ahlwardt.”²⁵² According to the author, the antisemitism that inspired Zionists to establish a Jewish land in Palestine predated Nazism, and the State of Israel, therefore, cannot be linked exclusively to its victims. The *AJR Information* further summarized the *FAZ*'s conclusion: “It would imply the acceptance of Hitler’s theories if Germany subordinated her obligations towards her own present or former citizens to the claims of the State of Israel, however justified these may be.”²⁵³ Germany’s chief responsibility, the *AJR Information* suggested in this piece, was not towards Israel but rather towards its former Jewish citizens, wherever they may reside.

The *AJR Information*'s coverage of *Wiedergutmachung* negotiations illustrates the way in which this theme contributed to the shaping of a distinct diasporic identity, one rooted in a shared history but informed by local conditions. When viewed alongside the North American *Aufbau* and the *MB* from Palestine/Israel, these three publications demonstrate that the German-Jewish press, in its various geographies, became a crucial medium through which the *Wiedergutmachung* network could spread and evolve. It provided local community leaders with a forum for sharing vital knowledge about legislation and practice, and it gave room for German Jews to express concerns, hopes and frustrations about *Wiedergutmachung*'s possibilities and implications. As important communication organs with a substantial readership, the German-Jewish press gave readers and writers in various locales a space for developing interpersonal contacts that revolved around questions of reparations.

Consolidating the Network

The *Wiedergutmachung* project created an administrative need for German-Jewish claimants to reconnect with places, people and pasts, influencing, in turn, their postwar experience and shaping the ways in which they understood their history. Reestablishing contacts with Germany, an inevitable outcome of the bureaucratic procedure, and maintaining a print community that shared information pertaining to both individual and collective ramifications of *Wiedergutmachung* characterized the architecture of this process. Individual cases often unfolded through a third feature found in the transnational dialogue that surfaced between claimants. Grounded in the procedural nature of verifying the validity of their pleas, this dialogue eventually produced an effect that extended beyond the settlement or rejection of claims.

Returning to the instant that opened this chapter, the correspondence between Hans Strauss and his former employer Leo Abraham offers a particularly lucid example. When Abraham replied to Strauss' initial inquiry, he first expressed his excitement at receiving life signals from an old friend and assured him that he would be happy to provide him with an affidavit. Yet he wished to correct his friend's assertion that life in America had spared him the troubles that Strauss went through after immigrating to Palestine in 1933. Abraham then continued to relate the events that befell him and his family after contacts between the two men had ceased. He wrote of the car accident in April 1937 that cost him his immigration visa to

²⁵² In addition to the Pogroms in Imperial Russia and the infamous Dreyfus affair, the author references Georg von Schönerer, Austrian politician of the 19th century famous for his antisemitic views; Karl Lueger, fin de siècle mayor of Vienna who contributed to the anti-minority and specifically antisemitic atmosphere in the city at the time; Adolf Stoecker, German theologian and leader of the antisemitic Berlin Movement in the 1880s; and Hermann Ahlwardt, German journalist and antisemitic political activist.

²⁵³ “German Paper Advocates Priority for German Jews,” *AJR Information*, May, 1952.

Palestine, and how the police officer that helped him was removed from his post for saving a Jew's life. He wrote of the night of November 10, 1938, that left most of his property destroyed and the synagogue of their small Jewish community in Altenkirchen, Rhineland-Palatinate, burnt down. Abraham himself was arrested that night and sent to Dachau. Upon his release, he was forced to sell his textile business for half of its actual worth. Soon afterwards, he recounted in his letter, he and his wife had to separate from their two daughters, who were no longer allowed to visit the German school in Altenkirchen. Since the town had no Jewish education institution but school attendance was nevertheless mandatory, the girls were sent to live in a Jewish orphanage in Cologne. The couple wanted to follow them there, wrote Abraham, but he had to leave Germany following his arrest, accomplished through a visa to England.²⁵⁴ In March 1940, he traveled further to New York and immediately set out to arrange for immigration permits for his wife and daughters. He did not succeed. Shortly before the war ended, he learned that the three were deported and murdered near Riga in early 1942. The nervous breakdown he experienced afterwards, Abraham wrote to Strauss, still afflicted him. He had remarried and opened a new textile business, "and so you have a brief account of my last 20 years," he concluded before continuing to write about the whereabouts of their mutual acquaintances from Altenkirchen.²⁵⁵

As renewed contacts between old friends often do, Hans Strauss' letter to Leo Abraham rekindled a conversation of their mutual past and sparked the opportunity to catch up. What is remarkable about this correspondence and many others like it is the context that ignited the reconnection. It arose in the course of a claim for reparations and spoke to the German-Jewish story of the twentieth century, a shared fate that was nevertheless multifaceted and dispersed, the past that impelled *Wiedergutmachung* to begin with. "This sort of injustice can't be atoned for with money," Strauss wrote to Abraham after reading the latter's account of his life, illustrating the extent to which in 1957, the possibility of "making good again" was a central trope in how German Jews were thinking of their shared past.²⁵⁶

Abraham's and Strauss' reconnection illuminates – for the present-day reader and for the two correspondents then – the divergent yet linked nature of German-Jewish histories; yet contacts that reemerged through *Wiedergutmachung* could also integrate and consolidate individual memories of shared events. Awakened by the administrative system's need to substantiate a claim, the memories of claimants and of their network of witnesses resurfaced and were thus reinforced in conjunction with one another. Such was the case of Hertha Freund, born in Breslau in 1904, who was able to immigrate with her husband and daughter in 1939 to Guatemala and later settled in New York. Together with her nephew, Hans Chotzen, who immigrated to London, Freund was pursuing reparations for the destruction of the textile business that belonged to her father, Elkan Weiss. A crucial question in Freund's and Chotzen's claim revolved around whether Weiss had to shut down his business in 1935 due to financial constraints – as was claimed by Erich Pohl, the German owner of the property at the time of the claim – or whether the business was fully operative until the events of November 1938, when the *Kristallnacht* attacks essentially destroyed the company.

To support the latter claim, Freund and her attorney collected sworn testimonies that specifically recalled the events of *Kristallnacht* and those that immediately followed. Hermann Gronowetter, a former employee, swore in his testimony:

²⁵⁴ Dozens of thousands of Jewish men were arrested during the events of *Kristallnacht*. The majority of them were released within several weeks, but only under the condition that they will leave Germany immediately.

²⁵⁵ Letter from Abraham to the Strauss family, June 11, 1957; Leo Abraham Collection; box 1; folder 3; LBI.

²⁵⁶ Letter from Strauss to the Abraham family, June 14, 1957, Ibid.

I guarantee that the Elkan Weiss Company still existed in November 1938 at the Karlsplatz 2 address, and that during or following the Kristallnacht the company's facilities were destroyed by Nazi hordes, the entire merchandise was thrown to the street, parts of it stolen and parts torn or made unusable, and that the company was only liquidated following November 1938.²⁵⁷

Max Knoch, another former employee, recalled the following:

When I speak of the November 1938 events, I mean the plunder of goods from the Elkan Weiss company by the Nazi hordes, who after the murder of vom Rat [sic] stormed into the company building. I remember the events so clearly, because I myself was employed at the Elkan Weiss Company in Breslau until my own arrest in November 10, 1938.²⁵⁸

Supplementing these two testimonies is the one given by Chotzen, Elkan Weiss' grandson, who recounted:

A few days after November 10, as I felt safe again to walk in the streets without being arrested, I went to my grandfather's business to help with the cleaning. A few employees were there. I mostly helped with carrying boxes of broken glass out to the courtyard. Later my grandfather himself came by. He asked one of the employees who was evaluating the inventory – whatever wasn't stolen, torn or made unusable – what was the estimated damage. I don't recall anymore what reply the employee gave my grandfather, I only recall that he was so devastated by it, that he retreated to one of the back rooms and began to cry loudly. In tears he said that he worked his entire life for this company, and now his life's work is destroyed. The business was liquidated after the November events.²⁵⁹

In this case, three voices were combined to form evidence in justification of Freund's and Chotzen's claim for reparations. By revisiting their own memories of the November 1938 attack on the company building, they contradicted the claim that Weiss went out of business in 1935 and verbalized the devastation resulting from the attacks. But in grouping their accounts they were not only denying the validity of Pohl's claim: they were also protesting the rejection of their histories and memories. Witness Max Knoch, when asked to testify to the events' timeframe, turned to the temporality of his own persecution, asserting that he worked for Elkan Weiss until his own arrest. Hans Chotzen delivered a painfully vivid account of his grandfather's utter desolation following the attacks, recalling how he himself had to empty broken glass from the company building.

When grouped together, the three testimonies gained added resilience, each strengthening the others against contestation. Their proximity also reveals a similarity in vocabulary. Both Knoch and Gronowetter speak of the "Nazi hordes" ["Nazihorden"], and both Gronowetter and

²⁵⁷ Sworn testimony by Hermann Gronowetter, Freund Family Collection, Gross-Strehlitz.; AR 6485; box 1; folder 3; LBI.

²⁵⁸ Sworn testimony by Max Knoch, Ibid.

²⁵⁹ Sworn testimony by Hans Chotzen, Ibid.

Chotzen describe the inventory as “stolen, torn or made unusable.” It is not unlikely that they were consciously expressing themselves in a unified tone, in an effort to address the *Wiedergutmachung* apparatus in the language that it best understood. Memories and histories, when invoked for such an administrative procedure, would occasionally assume a performative expression, one that could best serve the legal process at hand.

In his landmark study of collective memory as a sociological phenomenon, Maurice Halbwachs noted that “[i]t is not because memories resemble each other that several can be called to mind at the same time. It is rather because the same group is interested in them and is able to call them to mind at the same time that they resemble each other.”²⁶⁰ In this case, the process described by Halbwachs was energized as a byproduct of the *Wiedergutmachung* network, the meeting point of memory and bureaucracy. Chotzen, Freund and the witnesses that they integrated into their claim created and inhabited together one strand of this network.²⁶¹ Invoked by the procedural requirements of the German reparations system, their individual memories of persecution and violence mirrored each other, and in so doing, enhanced their authenticity in the eyes of the inspecting authorities.

The historical narrative depicted in sworn testimonies could at times bear direct influence from the German legislation language, as is evident in Cäcilie Siesel’s claim. Siesel immigrated with her husband and two daughters to Bolivia in the spring of 1936. After the war, she initiated a restitution claim for her family home in the town of Erbes-Büdesheim, Rhineland-Palatinate, as well as a compensation claim for the persecution and murder of her parents. In the matter of the latter claim, Siesel followed her lawyer’s advice and sought out corroborating testimonies. A handwritten note she had composed sometime around 1960 sheds light on her efforts. In it, she listed the names and addresses of three women: Karoline Furchheimer in Maryland [whose account of her visit to Germany was featured earlier in the chapter], Fanny Ehrenberg in New York and Ruth Schweitzer in Venezuela. The note also identified three questions she wanted to address to these women: Whether they were deported together with her mother from Cologne; whether they were imprisoned together with her mother in Theresienstadt; and whether they could testify that her parents wore the so-called “Jewish star.”²⁶²

The entanglement of memory and bureaucracy comes to light through the last question in particular. In the section pertaining to reparations for restrictions of liberty, the 1953 Federal Restitution Law [BEG] made direct reference to the infamous yellow badge that Jews were forced to prominently display on their clothing. According to paragraph 47 of section II, “the persecuted is entitled to compensation if between the time period of 30 January 1933 and May 8 1945 he wore the Jewish star or had survived in hiding under inhumane conditions.”²⁶³ Siesel, guided by the knowledge and experience of her attorney, tailored her requests for sworn testimonies to match the fine print of the BEG. She contacted at least two of the women she listed in her note. Her letter to Ruth Schweitzer read:

My dear Rutschen! You’re probably surprised to receive a letter from me and wondering: what does she want! And you are right. One always plans to write and then leaves it at

²⁶⁰ Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, trans. and ed. Lewis A. Coser (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 52.

²⁶¹ Freund’s archived collection includes additional testimonies not cited here.

²⁶² Items 2013/23/238-239, Siesel Family Collection; Mapped 14; JMB Archive.

²⁶³ *Bundesgesetz zur Entschädigung für Opfer der nationalsozialistischen Verfolgung*, (online edition: Outlook Verlag, 2013), 21.

that. I hope you and your loved ones are doing well. Your children are big by now and bring you surely much joy. Well, I come to my request. The authorities in Cologne are demanding witnesses for the reparations claim for my dear parents.²⁶⁴

The two distant relatives then continued to correspond for a while, exchanging news about their children and memories of their past. Schweitzer, willing to provide an affidavit, responded to the questions to the best of her knowledge. Siesel forwarded the answers to her lawyer, who transformed them into a written testimony, which, Siesel reassured Schweitzer: “you can take to the consulate in Caracas for notarization with a good conscience.” Siesel expressed her gratitude, adding that she understood how hard it is to recall those difficult times. She, however, was eager to fulfill her claims against Germany, where “they are doing everything they can to get away with paying.” Appended to this letter was the lawyer’s formulation of Schweitzer’s testimony. It declared tersely that “Frau Johannette Strauss nee Hochschild wore the Jewish Star on her clothing visibly and constantly. She was deported from Cologne. I cannot say where to, since I have never seen her afterwards.”²⁶⁵ Fanny Ehrenberg also provided Siesel with an affidavit, testifying that both parents wore the yellow badge while living in Cologne before the father’s death and the mother’s deportation in 1942.²⁶⁶

The persecution endured by Siesel’s parents was thus communicated in these testimonies through the legal definition of what constituted limitations on liberty. On the advice of her lawyer, whose role in advancing the claim extended so far as to compose one of the testimonies himself, Siesel initiated conversations with the individuals who were amongst the last to see her parents alive. To the extent that these renewed contacts were able to reveal information about their last days living in Germany, they did so in accordance with administrative demands of the *Wiedergutmachung* apparatus.

If postwar trials such as the Auschwitz Trial (1963-5) or the Eichmann Trial (1961) made the history of Nazi genocidal violence the subject of litigation that captivated public attention, reparations claims represent an intimate version of such historical-judicial procedures. They often confronted claimants with a version of events that contradicted their own experiences. The success or failure of their claims often depended on their ability to persuasively narrate their life stories. Ernst Wertheimer was one of many claimants who relied on the aid of others in substantiating his history. Wertheimer immigrated in 1938 from his hometown of Ludwigsburg (today Baden-Württemberg) to the United States. He did so shortly after being informed by the local leader of the Nazi organization, the German Labor Front [Deutsche Arbeitsfront], that the only way he could rescue the family business from total annihilation was to “aryanize” it.²⁶⁷ Wertheimer, together with his uncle and business partner, Karl Weis, decided to follow the hint and sell their light metal work manufacturing company as soon as possible. After the war, from his new home in New Jersey, Wertheimer sought to reclaim the business, which at the time was still owned and managed by Albert Helberholz, who purchased it from the family during their duress in 1938.

²⁶⁴ Letter from Siesel to Schweitzer, ca. 1960, Siesel Family Collection; Mapped 21.

²⁶⁵ Letter from Siesel to Schweitzer, March 1, 1961, Ibid.

²⁶⁶ Sworn Testimony by Fanny Ehrenberg, ca. December, 1960, Ibid.

²⁶⁷ Testimony by Ernst Wertheimer, September 10, 1948, Ernst Wertheimer Family Collection; AR 6305; box 1; folder 1; LBI.

Wertheimer's archived collection contains more than 1,300 pages of correspondences, documents and evidence related to various restitution and compensation claims he pursued.²⁶⁸ The network that he built around his case is a distinctly complex one. An interesting branch in this entanglement was his continued correspondence with Hermann and Irma Bach. The exchange between the two parties reveals that the Bach couple were old friends of Wertheimer and his family, and that they both worked at Wertheimer's former company after the war, though it is unclear whether they were employed there during the war or whether they were appointed as administrators when the restitution process began. In addition, Irma Bach assisted Wertheimer with his various claims, acting as his official representative with local authorities.

In April 1948, shortly after the claim had been filed, Irma Bach informed Wertheimer of a visit by an attorney who arrived to inspect the company's operation as he was preparing to take Herberholz' case against Wertheimer's claim. She described the scene:

It was Herr Dr. Koch, who before 1934 was the council of the Chamber of Industry and Commerce in Stuttgart. You are well familiar with the type. The man was very proper and very matter-of-fact!

H. [Herberholz] not so much. He [Koch] asked him, for instance: What was the actual worth of the company at the time of the takeover? The following answer given:

Goodwill: 0, company reputation: worthless, operating value: completely run down and broke!

What do you have to say about that? I had a good laugh and put forward the corresponding figures of turnovers, profits and financial statements. Dr. Koch simply shook his head.²⁶⁹

This letter, and many others in the correspondence, reveals how *Wiedergutmachung* operated in eliciting contested historical perspectives. Bach, witnessing this occurrence in her capacity as a member of Wertheimer's *Wiedergutmachung* network, reported to him that she was able to validate his claim – his past, as a matter of fact – against the counter-narrative of Herberholz, who was attempting to twist the historical reality to account for the unusually reduced price that he had paid when he purchased the company from its Jewish owners.

If the dialogue established by the *Wiedergutmachung* process was instrumental in rejuvenating relationships, communicating historical narratives and corroborating past experiences, it could also spark moments of conflict. The lengthy and complicated case of Wertheimer's reparations claims was not free of difficulties, and the contacts with the individuals who aided him likewise not always as friendly as Bach's letter implies. At times, the Bach couple were defending themselves against complaints of delays and inaccuracies from Wertheimer or from his attorney. His relationship with his cousin, Kurt Weis, together with whom Wertheimer filed a claim for the restitution of the family's real estate, seems also to have deteriorated during the long process. While in 1948, the two cousins still corresponded with each other directly on *Wiedergutmachung* matters, later they seem to have communicated through their attorneys only.

²⁶⁸ The Weis/Wertheimer family owned several properties in the area. Wertheimer also sought reparations for bank accounts that were left behind and for personal possessions that were confiscated or stolen.

²⁶⁹ Letter from Bach to Wertheimer, April 20, 1948; Ernst Wertheimer Family Collection; box 1; folder 1.

Wertheimer's attorney, Hans Strauss, was a vital actor in the developments of this case.²⁷⁰ Strauss, working in New York, apparently disliked Kurt Weis' attorney in Stuttgart, Benno Ostertag. In the early stages of the claim, the cousins considered hiring an attorney in Germany who would represent them locally and work with Strauss directly. Wertheimer, echoing warnings from Strauss, wrote to his cousin, then living in London, in June 1948: "I am advised against Dr. Ostertag [...] he is weak and entirely unreliable in his activities, presumably as a consequence of his experiences under the Nazis and due to shattered health."²⁷¹ It's unclear why the lawyer Strauss would deliver this verdict on Ostertag, especially considering the fact that the latter was a prominent member of the Jewish community in postwar Germany and one of the most active reparations attorneys working there. Ostertag was, in fact, known as an experienced specialist in the field.²⁷² He frequently published articles on the matter and even held personal contacts with then German President, Theodor Heuss.²⁷³ Despite this, Strauss was constantly dissatisfied with his performance in the Wertheimer/Weis case and frequently complained about it to his client. Strauss' accusations that Weis, via Ostertag, is causing delays in the progress of the claims, was most likely one reason for the cooling in the relationship between the two cousins.²⁷⁴

These last four examples bring to light relationships and conversations that emerged between German Jews as they were seeking the help of others in making a case for the actuality and authenticity of their pasts. *Wiedergutmachung*, as seen from the perspectives of the claimants, appears here as a collaborative effort that brought together memories, transforming them into evidentiary material for validating claims for reparations. Hans Strauss contacted Leo Abraham asking for an affidavit to support his claim, and was then confronted with a very tangible alternative to his own life trajectory had he not immigrated in 1933. Hertha Freund and Hans Chotzen articulated their grandfather's experience of *Kristallnacht* in three different voices, each one working towards supporting the others as trustworthy accounts of persecution and loss. Prompted by her attorney's familiarity with the administrative requirements, Cäcilie Siesel assembled a version of her parents' life under Nazi rule, written in the language of the legislator. Ernst Wertheimer's past was represented by his friends' ability corroborate it, and the network that came into existence through his pursuit of reparations proved to be both beneficial and problematic. *Wiedergutmachung*, in all of these cases, prompted human connections, allowed memories to resurface within these connections and influenced how those memories articulated historical events.

Undevised Consequences

A decisive component of German-Jewish life in the aftermath of the Holocaust, *Wiedergutmachung* offered claimants more than a financial settlement for something that they had been robbed of – be it property, future prospects, dignity, the lives of their loved ones or some combination of these losses. It reinstated a tangible contact between the claimants and the

²⁷⁰ No relations to Hans Strauss whose correspondence with Leo Abraham is cited here.

²⁷¹ Letter from Wertheimer to Weis, June 29, 1948. Ernst Wertheimer Family Collection; box 1; folder 1.

²⁷² Sinn, *Public Voices*, 185.

²⁷³ Geller, *Jews in Post-Holocaust Germany*, 215 (footnote 140).

²⁷⁴ We only know one side of this story, as transmitted through Wertheimer's collection. So far I haven't been able to locate sources to illuminate Ostertag's or Weis' version.

societies that had banished them, confronting German Jews in unmitigated ways with their recent, still bleeding, history. It also animated forceful debates on the legitimacy of monetary compensation for mass atrocities and on the nature of relationships between diasporic communities of dispersed German Jews. When considered purely as legal procedures, reparations cases naturally required the participation of third parties to ratify or contradict statements that were essential to the final decision. In this way, *Wiedergutmachung* fostered interactions between individuals who, despite ruptures caused by displacement and war, were still bound by shared experiences and by the memories of these experiences.

Not despite but because of its bureaucratic nature, this system necessitated a network of knowledge transfer, support and assistance. Lawyers, experts, aid organizations, administrators, relatives, friends, neighbors, colleagues – all were points in the emerging circles that formed around reparations claims to validate personal histories. Adhering to the legal architecture that administered the procedures, the corroborations of these histories sought to transform memories into pieces of conclusive evidence. Assembled with the aim of substantiating claims, they chronicled the story of German Jewry under National Socialism for the intended readership of reparations clerks, lawyers and judges.

Wiedergutmachung paved ways for claimants to revisit their pasts and encounter people, places and identities that they had left behind as they were thrust out of their homes and into unfamiliar places of refuge. The prerequisite return to the so-called “German circle,” an unavoidable element in the reparations process, brought claimants in renewed contact with Germany and its institutions, and resituated them in the actual or mental landscape of the land they used to inhabit. On the pages of public press organs, *Wiedergutmachung* was a constant presence, linking readers not only with experts, but also with other readers who could become pivotal to realizing claims. Lastly, in seeking to substantiate the content of their claims, German Jews called on the assistance of individuals whose memories could testify to the truth of their own narratives and thus to the reality of their pasts.

The *Wiedergutmachung* network was built from numerous individual histories, a tiny portion of which featured in this chapter. Writ large, these private stories tell the shared history of German Jews who lived through and after the Nazi terror, narrating the experiences of marginalization, persecution, dispossession and genocide. Told through the prism of *Wiedergutmachung*, these individual experiences emerge in the form of an entangled web and, in turn, gain their position within a broader historical event. Furthermore, the paper trail produced by reparations claims illuminates the framework and machinations of the German-Jewish diaspora. The network of *Wiedergutmachung* – its branches spread across all corners of the world, growing in response to the political and cultural realities of various diasporic sites – offered the displaced and dispersed German-Jewish community a space for reconsolidation. Conjoining history, memory, law and bureaucracy, *Wiedergutmachung* moved beyond regulating guilt, responsibility and indemnification. It realized, inadvertently, a global endeavor through which a diasporic collective confronted its shattered past.

Chapter 5: Generation In-Flux Diasporic Parents and their Children

One of the anecdotes in Manfred George's 1950 book about his first visit to the newly established State of Israel centered on a conversation between a boy and a girl on the topic of marriage. The boy, according to George, declared that he knew exactly what marriage is all about: first, the young couple goes to the rabbi; then they celebrate in a feast; and afterwards, they go into a room. 'And then?', the girl pressed him to proceed. 'Then', the boy continued, 'they lock the door and start talking in German.'²⁷⁵ George shared this story, amusing but striking, to impress upon his readers how wide the linguistic gap had remained between parents and children within the German-speaking community in the country. In Israel, he emphasized, language was a marker of age. Even though most German-speaking Jews had arrived in Palestine at least one decade prior, the realm of the adults, as it appeared in the perception of the young discussants, remained the realm of German – a private place behind locked doors.

This chapter explores the nature of the gap rooted in age – tied to place – that Manfred George sought to represent in his travelogue. To be sure, this generational divide had a distinct meaning in the context of Israeli society and its youth-venerating ideal of a new Hebrew nation. Yet it was not unique to Israeli society alone, and the gap, in fact, existed in various ways across the diaspora. Weaving together perceptions of both parents and children who populated the diaspora of German-speaking Jews, the chapter illuminates how members of both generations, adult émigrés and children of the diaspora, came to understand the inevitable demarcations that surfaced between them as they navigated everyday experiences in their places of settlement all over the world. Families with children of all ages were part of the mass-exodus of refugees who fled Nazi persecution in Central Europe.²⁷⁶ In new places of residence, young refugees established their own families and reared children who were raised as natives of the new homelands. Parents who migrated with young children, as well as those whose children were born in the immediate years following displacement, witnessed their children growing up in environments distant in all manner of ways from the ones that they were born into.

For the most part, parents encouraged a swift and successful integration of their offspring. But the acclimation of their children into host societies involved the adaptation of everyday norms and cultural customs that were foreign to them. Language, as pointed out in Manfred George's story, was a central marker distinguishing between members of diasporic families, present in daily discourse, though not the only one. Tastes, mannerisms and values that were common in the German-Jewish milieu of Central Europe often seemed out of place and in tension with the new physical and cultural surroundings into which they were transplanted. Child refugees and children of refugees may not always have felt themselves fully embedded into the

²⁷⁵ Manfred George, *Das Wunder Israel. Eindrücke von einer Reise durch den jungen jüdischen Staat* (New York: Aufbau, 1950), 21.

²⁷⁶ Exact numbers are difficult to determine, but the percentage of children and youth amongst the refugees was substantial. Hagit Lavsky's research shows that 29% of the arrivals to Palestine between 1933-1938 were between ages 1-20; that 15% of the arrivals between 1933-1939 in England were between ages 1-18; and that in the US between 1934-1938, 30% of arrivals were between ages 1-20, while the percentage dropped to 18% between 1938-1941. These numbers include children arriving alone and not with their families. See Hagit Lavsky, *The Creation of the German-Jewish Diaspora: Interwar German-Jewish Immigration to Palestine, the USA, and England* (Oldenburg: De Gruyter, 2017) 69, 78, 81. Marion Kaplan estimates that by 1939, 82% of German-Jewish children under the age of fifteen (excluding the annexed territories of 1938) had immigrated. Kaplan, *Between Dignity and Despair: Jewish Life in Nazi Germany* (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998) 118.

receiving societies, but they were usually better able than their parents to acclimatize to them.²⁷⁷ With pieces of their cultural identity still linking them to their old homelands and denoting their foreignness in the new ones, adults observed gulfs emerge and widen between their own generation and the one that had followed.

By the beginning of the twenty-first century, almost one in every four children and adolescents under the age of eighteen in the United States was either foreign-born or the child of immigrants.²⁷⁸ In light of this fact, it is no surprise that scholars in fields such as sociology or social geography have turned their attention to the topic of child migration and to the second-generation experience in immigrant families. Scholars in the field have pushed for research that “highlights social and emotional relations organized in globalized spaces, and that looks at children as actors in the immigration process.”²⁷⁹ There still remains a need, however, for greater integration of children’s perspectives and family relations into the field of migration studies.²⁸⁰ Historical analyses of migration and displacement in particular have much to gain from entering these conversations. Studies that take seriously the experiences of displaced children can shed new light not only on the children themselves, but also on the dynamics of immigrant families and dynamics within immigrant communities more broadly.

Childhood, in the words of historian Paula Fass, “is at once a universal experience, and one of the most culturally specific.”²⁸¹ The universality and ubiquity of childhood and inter-generational familial relationships is precisely what makes it such an important element in the history of displaced German Jewry. As one of the most pervasive life experiences, it offers a lens through which to see the tint of displacement and peculiarities of everyday life in the German-Jewish diaspora. The common parallel process of parents’ negotiating their children’s dependence and independence on one hand, and the children’s grasp of their autonomy from their parents on the other, can become particularly strained and complicated through the experience of family migration.²⁸² In the case of German-speaking Jewish families, these interactions were marked first by the marginalization and persecution that took place in Europe and culminated in the displacement, and then further by the growing realization of the magnitude of the Holocaust.

The particularly fraught generational gap that forms amongst immigrant communities was certainly not unique to Central-European Jews. What sets the case of the German-Jewish diaspora apart from other mass migration waves is the emergence of this gap precisely at a moment when German-speaking Jewry was facing the threat of extinction. National Socialism violently negated the shared claim to German-Jewishness as a culture and an identity, and the bearers of that identity faced expulsion and a near total dispersion, or worse, deportation and

²⁷⁷ For two particularly illuminating discussions of the prolonged sense of otherness experienced by children to German-Jewish refugees see Carl Ascher, Renate Bridenthal, Atina Grossmann and Marion Kaplan, “Fragments of a German-Jewish Heritage in Four ‘Americans,’” in: Abraham J. Peck (ed.), *The German-Jewish Legacy in America, 1938-1988. From Bildung to the Bill of Rights* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1989), 365-384; Thomas Laqueur, “Diary. Memories in German,” *London Review of Books* 25, no. 23 (2003), 38-39.

²⁷⁸ Alejandro Portes and Rubén Rumbaut, “Introduction: The Second Generation and the Children of Immigrants Longitudinal Study,” *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 28, no. 6 (2005), special issue: “The Second Generation in Early Adulthood,” 986.

²⁷⁹ Marjorie Faulstich Orellana, Barrie Thorne, Anna Chee, Wan Shun Eva Lam, “Transnational Childhoods: The Participation of Children in Processes of Family Migration,” *Social Problems* 48, no. 4, (November 2001), 573.

²⁸⁰ Madeleine E. Dobson, “Unpacking Children in Migration Research,” *Children’s Geographies* 7, no. 3 (August 2009), 355–360.

²⁸¹ Paula Fass, “Children and Globalization,” *Journal of Social History* 36, no. 4 (Summer 2003), 964.

²⁸² Orellana, Thorne, Chee, Lam, “Transnational Childhoods,” 578.

annihilation. The children of the German-Jewish diaspora, it became increasingly clear to their parents, would have no physical ‘metropole’ to observe from a distance. If their parents were successful in instilling German-Jewishness unto them, it was in the form of a remembered and constructed heritage, not as a lived reality that remained intact elsewhere in the world.

Familial relationships and generation-specific tensions remain little explored within existing historical research of displaced population. Such is specifically the case within the history of the German-Jewish diaspora.²⁸³ This omission prevails despite the fact that both contemporary sources and autobiographical recollections often address these issues explicitly. This chapter places familial, generational tensions at the center of inquiry, examining different ways in which German-speaking Jews understood the nature and the consequences of boundaries that arose between the generation that was still attached to *drüben* [“back there”] – the geographic and mental terrain of the past – and the generation of children and youth who were more meaningfully immersed in their immediate environments. In keeping with Mary Jo Maynes’ paradigm of age as a category of historical analysis, this chapter examines children and youth as historical actors, as well as emblems that were loaded with historical meaning by their surroundings.²⁸⁴ Synthesizing perspectives from members of both generations, parents as well as children (often writing as adults, reflecting on their childhood), the following pages explore the relationship between the two groups as a locus of hopes and fears, of comfort and conflict. As these tensions unfolded in various geographies and different societal contexts, a defining question echoed in the background, haunting generational relations. In light of the displacement, dispersion and dissolution, and in light of the Nazi genocidal assault, could there be a future for German-Jewishness?

Before delving further into relationships between displaced parents and their children, it is important to note that a generational divide within German-Jewish families was not triggered solely by the experience of forced migration. Under the National-Socialist regime, marginalization and violence affected members of different age groups in different ways, creating distinctions even before the departures from Central Europe. Jewish children’s education was disrupted by legal restrictions early on in April, 1933. In the recollections of children who remained in public educational programs until banned entirely in November 1938, accounts of antisemitic bullying at the hands of both teachers and fellow students are pervasive. Werner Angress, who was born in 1920 in Berlin, described how, in addition to the rejection that

²⁸³ Notable exceptions that have dealt specifically with the age group of children and youth who came of age in the diaspora include Christian Bauer and Rebekka Göpfert, *Die Ritchie Boys: Deutsche Emigranten beim US-Geheimdienst* (Hamburg: Hoffmann und Campe, 2005); Andreas Daum, Hartmut Lehmann and James Sheehan (eds.), *The Second Generation: Émigrés from Nazi Germany as Historians* (New York: Berghahn, 2016); Gerald Holton and Gerald Sonnert, *What Happened to the Children Who Fled Nazi Persecution* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006); Walter Laqueur, *Generation Exodus: The Fate of Young Jewish Refugees from Nazi Germany* (London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 2004). On rescue programs of child refugees, see Brian Amkraut, *Between Home and Homeland: Youth Aliyah from Nazi Germany* (Tuscaloosa: Alabama University Press, 2006); Judith Tydor Baumel-Schwarz, *Unfulfilled Promise: Rescue and Resettlement of Jewish Refugee Children in the United States, 1934-1945* (Juneau: Denali Press, 1990) and *Never Look Back: The Jewish Refugee Children in Great Britain, 1938-1945* (West Lafayette: Purdue University Press, 2012). On family dynamics in the diaspora, see Judith Gerson, “Family Matters. German-Jewish Masculinities among Nazi Era Refugees” in Benjamin Maria Baader, Sharon Gilleman and Paul Lerner (eds.) *Jewish Masculinities. German Jews, Gender and History* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2012), 210-232; Andrea Hammel, “Representations of Family in Autobiographical Texts of Child Refugees,” *Shofar* 23, no. 1 (2004), 121-132.

²⁸⁴ Mary Jo Maynes, “Age as a Category of Historical Analysis: History, Agency, and Narratives of Childhood,” *Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth* 1, no. 1 (2008), 114-124.

his generation experienced from former friends, teachers and neighbors, Jewish children and youth in Nazi Germany had to also witness their parents' increasing social and economic degradation and their helplessness in combatting it.²⁸⁵

Jewish schools and educational initiatives adapted their programs to the reality of life under Nazism, introducing fields and amplifying classes that promoted the students' prospects to emigrate safely. Corresponding to the most popular destinations – the United States, England and Palestine – one Jewish school in the city of Ulm added more English and Hebrew instruction hours, placing special emphasis on “the practical use of the language rather than the scholarly command of it.” This school also introduced changes to the curriculum to support professions understood to have technical vocational value, and it shifted the focus of instructions in topics like mathematics and geography to better support practical implementation.²⁸⁶ Supported by community organizations, pedagogical initiatives were established with the explicit purpose of preparing German-Jewish children and youth for emigration. Such was the case of the Youth Agricultural Farm established in 1936 in the small Silesian village of Gross-Breesen. Approximately 260 trainees, aged 15 to 17, lived on the farm and immersed themselves in the learning of various agricultural and labor skills, from dairy farming to carpentry. Initially, the organization planned for the farm's entire population to emigrate together. With the goal of establishing a German-Jewish agricultural youth community abroad. But the intensification of violent persecution eliminated this option and the self-control over fates that it required. By 1940, the majority of the young trainees were already dispersed throughout the globe, with or without their families.²⁸⁷

From the perspective of the legal regimes administering the forced mass migration out of Europe in the 1930s and 1940s, children's greater potential for assimilability made them stronger candidates than adults for receiving legal immigration papers. This coincided with a growing attention of health and welfare professionals in the western world to the well-being of children as the main focus of humanitarian efforts, a process that had commenced in the aftermath of the First World War and continued to intensify during and after the Second World War.²⁸⁸ Children were considered preferable to adults for the additional reason that they would not pose an immediate threat of competition over jobs in the eyes of the native population. Rescue organizations generally believed that children refugees could elicit greater sympathy than their parents, prompting a number of initiatives to secure the flight of unaccompanied children, most notably the *Kindertransport* operations to Britain and the *Youth Aliyah* to Palestine.²⁸⁹

The aggregated result of these conditions – a strained home environment, public rejection from social circles, intensifying preparations for flight, and in some cases the physical separation from the family – generated marked tensions for German-Jewish children and youth. The

²⁸⁵ Werner T. Angress, *Between Fear and Hope: Jewish Youth in the Third Reich* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988) 7-11.

²⁸⁶ “Über die Einrichtung Eines Praktischen Lehrgangs im Landschulheim Herrlingen b. Ulm,” undated (ca. 1934); Landschulheim Herrlingen Collection ; AR 4686; box 1; folder 2 and “Bericht über das Landschulheim in Herrlingen für die Zeit vom 15. Februar 34 – 28. Februar 35,” February, 1935; Ibid.; Box 1; Folder 6; Leo Baeck Institute.

²⁸⁷ For more on the Gross-Breesen Agricultural Community, see Angress, *Between Fear and Hope*, and the Jüdisches Auswanderungslehrgut (Gross-Breesen, Silesia) Collection; AR 3686; LBI.

²⁸⁸ Tara Zahra, *The Lost Children Reconstructing Europe's Families after World War II* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2015), loc. 352-839 in Kindle edition.

²⁸⁹ On children as desirable refugees, see Judith Tydor Baumel-Schwartz, “Jewish Refugee Children in the USA (1934-1945),” in Simone Gigliotti, Monica Tempian (eds.), *The Young Victims of the Nazi Regime: Migration, the Holocaust and Postwar Displacement*, (London: Bloomsbury, 2016), 11-30; Zahra, loc. 860.

familial relationships at the center of this chapter, as they took form after displacement, cannot be viewed as independent from these earlier fissures that emerged within Jewish families under the strain of Nazi rule. The situation was quite different for children who were born across the diaspora, or for children who emigrated with their families as infants. They were spared first-hand experiences of life under Nazism. Beyond this stark difference, they also lacked their own personal, first-hand frame of reference for Central Europe and Germanness, which separated them from parents and from older members of German-Jewish diasporic communities. Unlike their parents or older siblings, they did not, as a matter of memory and body, live in two places.

Engaging the Young

When the philosopher and pedagogy scholar Ernst Simon traveled at the behest of the Leo Baeck Institute [LBI] in Jerusalem to visit German-Jewish communities in Latin America in 1958, he authored a detailed report on his journey, paying particular attention to the topic of the younger generation. The youth living in the countries that he visited, Simon wrote, generally understood the German language, though they seldom read in it and could only speak German with difficulty. With some bitterness Simon noted that the children of former refugees were acquiring the local culture at a rapid pace, a process quickly “consuming the fragments of the Jewish culture that their parents still possess, and which they attempt to pass on to their children with inadequate means.” Simon’s report also examined the character of specific communities that he encountered. In Rio, Brazil, for instance, he noted that the community branded itself not as “German-Jewish” but as “liberal,” and in doing so, he judged that “it loses a part of its German-Jewish character, but wins over the youth.”²⁹⁰ In another section, he lamented the influence of North American culture on the descendants of German Jews in Buenos Aires, Argentina, but did mention that a significant portion of children in that community continue to attend the local German-Jewish ‘Pestalozzi-School.’²⁹¹

Contradictions abound in Simon’s report. He was not in favor of separatist educational programs for German-Jewish children, but regretted the decline of a pronounced German-Jewish community. He criticized local German-Jewish communities for lacking education on Judaism, but was uncomfortable with religious programs that lacked in Zionist content. He reported seeing accelerated assimilation of the younger generation into their local surroundings but emphasized the youth’s attraction towards American and English-language culture. These contradictions, more than reflecting idiosyncrasy or ineptitude in Simon’s analysis, illustrate the difficulties that inhered in trying to formulate a coherent characterization of the conditions of youth across the German-Jewish diaspora. In a broader sense, however, the report is instructive in highlighting the urgency with which German-Jewish community leaders observed the generation of their descendants growing up in the dispersion, as they tried to identify patterns of integration and struggled to find opportunities for fostering communal cohesion.

During his journey, Simon gave public lectures in almost every city that he had visited, speaking in German or English on such topics as “The Cultural Legacy of Germany Jewry,” “New Developments in Hebrew Literature” or “How to Educate Our Children as Jews.” These

²⁹⁰ The term “Liberal” refers here to the religious leaning associated in North America with the denomination of Reform Judaism.

²⁹¹ Ernst Simon, “Bericht ueber meine Reise nach Sued-Amerika,” October, 1958. In: CENTRA Collection 1958-1971, LBIJER 1016, folder 3, LBI Jerusalem.

events were very well-attended, gaining considerable attention in the local Jewish and German-Jewish press. In his view, their popularity was due to “intellectual and emotional longing [*Heimweh*] to the German-Jewish ‘cultural climate,’” to a particular interest in his own biography – Simon had been a prominent figure in the German-Jewish community throughout the 1920s and 1930s – and especially to the hope that one could learn how to “remain Jewish” and to safeguard ones children within the community.²⁹² The concern around the growing remove of the next generation from “our circles,” as Simon referred to it in his report, extended beyond community leaders, pedagogues and organizations such as the Leo Baeck Institute, who were explicitly invested in preserving German-Jewishness. It was shared, according to Simon, by the parents as well.

While his report did not specify whether parents took direct action to sustain the collective affiliation within their own families, examples from across the German-Jewish diaspora suggest that they would have. Around the time that Simon composed his report, similar questions regarding the engagement of children in German-Jewish communities were being raised in various diasporic nodes. In New York, members of the American Jewish K.C. Fraternity devised a creative approach to tackle the issue of inculcating identity. This group was one successor organization to the *Kartell-Convent* [KC], the traditional umbrella association of Jewish university fraternities in Germany and Austria before the Second World War. In Europe, KC members had strongly identified as German patriots. In their displacement, many held on to their idealism but attached it to German-Jewish values that they associated with their now international fraternity organization, rather than to Germany as a nation. Concerned that their descendants would not get the opportunity to experience German-Jewish fraternal life, several members tried to initiate an “au pair” exchange program, in which children of KC members from various countries would be hosted by families associated with the organization in another country. The benefit of such a program, as they advocated it in their proposals, in addition to the exciting travel that would await the young participants, would be to expose the descendants of the old fraternity members to the meaningful tradition of the KC organization and to the bond shared by its members worldwide.²⁹³

Although a KC Youth Group did indeed operate in the 1940s and early 1950s in New York, it appears that it did not enjoy a great following and only attracted a handful of participants from the ranks of KC families.²⁹⁴ It is not surprising that the KC, with its emphasis on nineteenth-century German fraternity practices and an ethos of “German students of Jewish faith,” would have seemed distant and foreign to a generation coming of age in radically different cultural contexts. The idea for establishing a children’s exchange program arose as an alternative means to better incorporate the young generation into the KC experience and legacy. Yet this plan had even less success than the KC Youth Group. The initial invitation to participate in the program, shared during the 1950s, was unsuccessful and the plan was abandoned.

In 1961, another attempt to revive the program was made in concert with an appeal for members to acknowledge that the KC is on its “deathbed.” Supporters of the youth exchange program placed their hopes for a form of institutional legacy or continuity as well as their resistance to what they regarded as otherwise certain demise of an organization that had fused

²⁹² Ibid.

²⁹³ Unsigned, “Fuer KC –Eltern und Grosseletern,” *Kartell-Convent deutscher Studenten Juedischen Glaubens* Collection; AR 966; box 1; folder 17; LBI.

²⁹⁴ See for instance, American Jewish KC Fraternity, INC. Bulletin, No. 2 (March 1950), Bruno Weil Collection; AR 7108 / MF 516; box 6; folder 23, LBI.

with their own identity. “Isn’t it a wonderful thought,” member John Elton wrote in the organization’s bulletin, “that the next generation and the one after that, or at least some of them, will build friendships on cornerstones laid by ourselves? That we were able to contribute something to the possibility that a group of people from different parts of the world would feel close to each other?” Elton recognized that the ideals that motivated his generation and his parents’ generation to join the fraternities can no longer suffice, but he still believed in the ability to sustain the KC, “when not in name then in spirit.”²⁹⁵

It is not unlikely that Elton’s plea did indeed resonate with his fellow KC members. The organization’s bulletins and reunion speeches dealt with the question of its uncertain future on numerous occasions as well, but the exchange program failed once again to come to fruition. The majority of the *KC Brothers*, as they referred to themselves, either came to terms with the foreseeable end of their union, or did not believe in the exchange as a viable option. During the postwar decades, KC chapters throughout the world focused their efforts on the chronicling of the fraternities’ history, on debating the ideological motivations that characterized their organizations, and on pleasant reminiscence during local and international get-togethers. Generationally-bounded, the KC was alive for its members but only for them. With no new recruits in the horizon, no future in the most literal sense, KC members spent the remainder of the active years engaging with their past.

Ernst Simon’s inquiry on behalf of the LBI and the unsuccessful attempts at securing the next generation of *KC Brothers* offer two examples of diasporic collectives investigating the possibilities and limitations of a German-Jewish future. In both cases, the global dispersion of German-speaking Jewry constructed the parameters of the initiatives. Ernst Simon traveled from Jerusalem on tour throughout Latin America; his report, while commissioned by the Israeli LBI branch, was also created for distribution to the board of directors of LBI branches in New York and London, where German-Jewish leaders considered the questions underlying Simon’s mission. The children exchange program of the KC sought to leverage the global dispersion of the organization’s members to their advantage, portraying the opportunity for international travel as an incentive to keep the younger generation engaged in their parents’ social community. With transnational conversations and interests a matter of routine, dispersed German-speaking Jewry had grown accustomed to seeing itself as a community that transcends traditional borders.

The examples involving the LBI and the KC depict the workings of two organizations that were founded with the explicit intention of affirming German-Jewish life (albeit in different time periods and under very different circumstances). Both promoted a self-conscious preservation of German-Jewish culture and understood their role in the diaspora under these terms.²⁹⁶ Yet the confrontation with the emergent generational gap was not limited to organizations of this kind alone. The implications that the generational divide between adults and youth posed for the sustainability of German-Jewishness as a living culture and an enduring identity was evident beyond such interest groups. It was present in everyday family environments, experienced and noted by parents and children alike.

²⁹⁵ John H. Elton, “Gedanken ueber das ‘Weiterleben des KC,’” in, American Jewish KC Fraternity, INC. Bulletin, Nr. 5 (September 1961). Kartell-Convent Collection box 2, folder 6, LBI.

²⁹⁶ On the history of the KC fraternities, see Miriam Rürup, *Ehrensache. Jüdische Studentenverbindungen an deutschen Universitäten 1886-1937* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2008). On the history of the LBI, see Guy Miron, *MiKehilat Zikaron LeMerkaz Mechkar: Toldon Machon Leo Baeck BiYerushalayim* (Jerusalem: Leo Baeck Institute, 2005).

The Generational Divide Hits Home

German-Jewish parents strove to guarantee a secure and successful future for their children as they imagined such lives. To this end, they generally supported their children's integration into the new homelands as a necessary foundation of social and economic participation. Indeed, many parents observed the process with pride and happiness, grateful to see their sons and daughters developing into locals rather than strangers in their adoptive countries. But a bittersweet sentiment sometimes accompanied the sense of accomplishment. Especially as the older generation faced struggles with material loss and cultural disorientation, their children's relative comfort or ease in new lands were a mirror in which parents could see distance and change reflected.

Such was the sentiment portrayed by Grete Mahrer in her short story, "The Letter," which portrays intimate, everyday manifestations of the generational divide. Mahrer submitted her story to a writing competition held by the *Mitteilungsblatt*, the most popular German-language press publication in Palestine/Israel, which was circulated by the Central European Immigrant Association [Irgun Olei Merkaz Eiropa, or IOME]. Awarded the third prize in the contest, "The Letter" was printed in December of 1949. It told the story of Edith Grüner, a recent immigrant from Germany and a resident of a small agricultural village, who received a letter from her daughter, Jael. Edith knew the letter was from Jael even before she read it closely, since Jael was the only person who ever wrote to her in Hebrew. Having trouble deciphering the foreign language, Edith wrongfully surmised that Jael would be coming to visit the following day (Sunday). To prepare, she hurried to travel to the nearby city of Nahariya, to fetch her husband who was attending a conference there. Shortly after Edith's departure, Jael arrived to find the house empty with her mother missing and the place clearly looking like it was abandoned in a rush. Jael and the village community began an emergency search, fearing that her mother had been kidnapped by Arab militants. Amidst all the commotion, Edith and Jael's father returned from Nahariya to discover that Edith had misread the letter. Jael did not write that she was planning to visit on Sunday; rather, she wrote that she was scheduled to get married that day.

Mahrer's comedy of errors is filled with moments of clashing culture between the Sabra generation, born or raised in the Jewish settlement in Palestine, and their parents, who represented remnants of an old existence that was to be overcome by the fulfillment of Zionist national ideals. During the search for Edith, Jael's friend Chaja calls one of the village members "a snobby Yekke." Chaja's mother immediately orders her daughter to "shut up," reproachfully declaring that had it not been for them, the *Yekkes*, Palestine would have remained the "same dirty provincial place it was before 1933." Particularly telling is Mahrer's narration of Edith's mighty and ironic struggle reading Jael's letter:

She sat facing the bookcase with the works of Thomas Mann and Hermann Hesse, books by André Gide and Sigmund Freud, books about political economy and history, books about art and music and psychology that seemed to watch in refined silence as she tried, with the help of a dictionary, to read what her child had written her.²⁹⁷

²⁹⁷ Grete Mahrer, "Der Brief," in: *Mitteilungsblatt*, 30 December, 1949, 5. To this point, I was unable to trace biographical information about the author herself and to find more details about her own life experiences as a Jewish refugee from Nazi Germany.

Mahrer intentionally delayed on the image of the cultivated woman struggling to read simple words that her daughter had composed without effort. It was only a slightly exaggerated depiction of how the community represented by Edith came to view itself and its struggles in foreign lands. The editors of the *Mitteilungsblatt* could safely assume that Edith Gr uner's difficulties with her daughter's letter would resonant amongst their readers.

Variations on the theme of Mahrer's story populate the print discourse of the diaspora. Turning to the pages of the *Filantropia*, a German-Jewish publication based in Argentina, one revealing example came from the advertisement section. Ilse Frank, who settled in Olivos, a suburb of Buenos Aires, touched upon the experience with the generational gap in the course of her efforts to market her freelance writing business. In 1969, Frank took out a bilingual ad in *Filantropia*, offering readers her services in authoring uplifting, humorous verses to accompany joyous occasions, to be recited at events or dedicated as a gift. The first paragraph was written in German and read:

Parties and festivities,
Are always much more fun,
When you add frivolity,
With song, or rhyme or pun.
But if you never wrote before,
And fear that it will be a bore,
Worry not, have no dismay,
Ilse Frank is on the way.

A second paragraph written in Spanish served to further highlight Frank's capabilities:

And one thing has been left out
That I will now make clear
The youth, as we all know,
Was actually born right here
Many cannot follow
Our German song and rhyme
They want to laugh in Spanish?
I'll make it worth your time.²⁹⁸

In Frank's advertisement, it is not the absent language skills of the older generation that marked the divide, but the younger generation's distance from their parents' native language. The twenty-year gap between Mahrer's short story from 1949 and the 1969 ad would account for this shift in perspective. By that point, most of the former refugees were relatively conversant in the local languages of their postwar homes. Frank herself demonstrates her command of the Spanish language and she evidently assumed that readers will be able to understand the second verse as well. Yet her ad also indicates that an increasing language proficiency among adults could not eliminate the generational gap entirely, and the casual manner in which Frank addresses this condition suggests that it was understood simply as a fact, not as a loss that should be lamented.

²⁹⁸ Ilse Frank, untitled ad, *Filantropia*, April 1969.

Educators in the diaspora assumed a prominent role in facilitating acclimation. In this capacity, they were charged with striking a balance between the children's immediate environment and the lost world of their parents – a process and a point that was not always simple or clear. Ida Hoffmann and Charlotte Hamburger, who escaped Germany in 1936 and arrived in Brazil, established a children's home for German-Jewish families who had settled in São Paulo. In their educational work there, Hoffmann and Hamburger sought to perform a difficult act of mediation, enabling children's integration into Brazilian society while also retaining certain values and principles from Germany that they hoped to uphold. "What stories should we tell our children?" Charlotte Hamburger recalled wondering at the time. "The wonderful fairy tales of the Grimm Brothers or the folkloristic fantasies of Saci? Which songs should we sing? Hänschen klein, a Portuguese translation, or modnihas and Brazilian melodies?"²⁹⁹

The abstract difficulty of finding room for both cultures translated even into such practical quotidian situations as story time and singing exercises. The background of such dilemmas between German and Brazilian nursery rhymes demanded serious consideration from educators such as Hoffmann and Hamburger given larger political contexts in their place of refuge. During the 1930s, Getúlio Vargas' government set out to forcibly promote assimilation of immigrants and ethnic minorities into Brazilian majority society. This project of defining and policing the Brazilian nation involved the imposition of heavy restrictions on the use of foreign languages in the public sphere. In May 1938, the regime had even banned foreign-language instruction for children under fourteen years of age.³⁰⁰ Vargas' nativist policies towards immigrant communities may have hastened acculturation processes that were already proceeding on their own, but they certainly added a dimension of both urgency and coercion to them.

If Mahrer's short story and the editors' decision to publish it sought to elicit amusement with a slight melancholic touch towards a familiar gap, and Frank's advertisement casually approached the generational divide as an aftereffect of transient life, Edith Kurzweil authored a more somber reflection on the parental loss of status. Her memoir, *Full Circle*, narrates her story of escape from Vienna in 1939, through Belgium, France, Spain and Portugal, until finally arriving to United States in 1940 at the age of sixteen. Kurzweil pays particular attention to the strains that displacement had placed on her relationship with her parents. As an adolescent daughter, Kurzweil had suddenly spent many months in separation from her parents. In this time, she had also become the sole caretaker of her younger brother when the two children fled the reach of the Second World War and ventured across the Atlantic Ocean, until being reunited with their parents in New York. Both Kurzweil and her parents had difficulties rehabilitating their relationship afterwards, and the experience of their forced removal and the loss of their home often stood at the core of their conflicts:

"She eats too much, spends too much money, runs around too much; she doesn't listen; and she doesn't know how to judge people," said my father. "She'll get sick because she doesn't get enough sleep," said my mother. Sometimes she added, "Had we stayed in Vienna, she would have gone to dancing school and met the right kind of boys, from

²⁹⁹ Quoted in Marlen Eckl, "This tear remains forever..." German-Jewish Refugee Children and Youth in Brazil (1933-1945)", in Gigliotti and Tempian, 141.

³⁰⁰ Jeffrey Lesser, *Welcoming the Undesirables: Brazil and the Jewish Question* (Berkeley: Berkeley University Press, 1995), 108-109.

respectable families. Here, we don't know whom she's with, and where they come from."³⁰¹

Though she resented her parents' behavior, in her memoir Kurzweil does not place the fault with them alone. Instead, her textual reckoning shows an effort to shed light on how their shared yet highly individualized experiences of separation and displacement had strained their relationship. "Only sixty years later," she writes, "when reading some of the letters I then wrote to my mother, did I realize that my ability to deal with increasingly difficult circumstances had not matured me. It then didn't cross my mind that writing in French might have an estranging effect on my mother."³⁰² Looking back as an adult, Kurzweil was able to see how linguistic gaps could create interpersonal ones between herself and her mother, imposing a rupture in communication that in turn affected other matters. Her relationship with her father became particularly strenuous. She disdained his constant complaining about New York while romanticizing their life, "*bei uns*" [at home], back in Europe.³⁰³

Again, Kurzweil applied the painful gift of hindsight when she noted that "it didn't occur to me that without his business and status he had lost his moorings and his dashing spirit. Or that much of his bravado was covering up his feelings of inferiority: he was a foreigner who now perceived himself as a nobody."³⁰⁴ Her father's sense of losing his self-worth translated into a dominating attitude, leading to constant clashes with his daughter, for whom "Vienna was dissolving into New York." For a daughter who had experienced exile as a protracted dislocation from childhood and the introduction of new responsibilities and forced independence, this perspective eluded her at that time. In diaspora, she could not return to European childhood, just as her father could not fully resume his particular European adulthood in New York.³⁰⁵

Applying an adult's perspective to gather insight on the relationship between refugee children and their parents appears often in the reflections of those who migrated underage and grew up in a foreign household. George Fischer recalled how as a child, he was embarrassed that his family home in Richmond, Virginia, looked different from all other homes in the area. After arriving in the United States in 1934, he – "like all immigrant children" – wanted to be more American than the Americans. He grew alienated from the world that his parents represented, including their immense art collection. "The fact that we were 'different' and that I wanted to be more like 'them' [Americans] added an extra flavor to the usual parents-child conflict." As an adult, Fischer concluded, he was able to view his parents, their background and their culture in a different light and come to value the immense collection of expressive art that they rescued from Nazi Germany.³⁰⁶

For many parents and young adults across the German-Jewish diaspora, the relief of having escaped Nazism did not offset the difficulties of relinquishing the world that they had known. When they raised children, they tried to expose them to pieces of that world, cherished and missed. Leo Spitzer's father, for example, gifted his son with the book *Beethoven: El Sacrificio de un Niño* [Beethoven: The Sacrifice of a Child], an illustrated biography of the

³⁰¹ Edith Kurzweil, *Full Circle: A Memoir* (New Brunswick: Transaction, 2007), 115.

³⁰² *Ibid.*, 37.

³⁰³ *Ibid.*, 101.

³⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 88.

³⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 121.

³⁰⁶ Georg Heuberger (ed.), *Expressionismus und Exil. Die Sammlung Ludwig und Rosy Fischer Frankfurt am Main* (Frankfurt a. Main: Jüdisches Museum, 1990), 119.

German composer whom he so admired. The book provided the young Spitzer (who was born in 1939 in La Paz) with a tangible link to his father's faraway home and instilled in him the hope that he too might develop prodigious talent in classical music.³⁰⁷ The Spanish-language book was something of a boundary object that simultaneously educated Spitzer about his family's past while embedding him in the present of their temporary refuge space in Bolivia.

Sonja Mühlberger's parents regularly read German fairytales to her while living as refugees in Shanghai. They tried their best to visualize the landscape in which these stories took place. When their daughter was incapable of understanding the meaning of a forest, they explained that it is one tree, and then another tree, and then even more trees together. On one rare occasion when snow fell in the city, her father climbed a ladder to the roof of their house and filled a bowl with the white matter. Young Sonja was instructed to put her hands inside the bowl, so she could feel the snow, "and so the story of Snow White became more tangible."³⁰⁸

From the perspective of their children, both Mühlberger's and Spitzer's parents felt comfortable slipping into the role of cultural mediators, enthusiastically taking it upon themselves to build spaces in their children's lives where the parents' own memories and own history could reside together with the imagination and experience of their child. Hertha Nathorff did not seem to share that ease. The initial years following her family's journey from Berlin to New York were particularly difficult for her. A trained and experienced physician, she had to give up her profession and jump from one odd job to another, trying to sustain her family. One such temporary job brought her together with her son to a children's summer camp along the Hudson River in New York. Nathorff was employed during the summer of 1940 as a nurse and a caretaker, while her son joined the children's activities. Although she enjoyed watching the children play freely in the camp, she felt somewhat alienated from them. In the diary she had kept at the time, Nathorff couldn't help but mention that "they are so self-centered [...] if I will try to tell them that there, in a place that they think is far away, children are starving and freezing because of war and suffering, it will hardly interest them."³⁰⁹ Her communications with the children, she admitted, were as meager as her English skills: "Only I learn from the children, but what do they learn from me? German order, German efficiency?"³¹⁰ With this layered remark, Nathorff was caricaturing how the American staff members at the camp stereotyped her and other children may perceive her. At the same time, however, she was acknowledging the reality of difference and seriously questioning her role in that unfamiliar environment. "Two worlds that met but found no meeting ground," she wrote of her experience with the children in the camp after returning to the city.³¹¹

Nathorff's intensified sense of foreignness in the camp developed through the encounter with a large group of unfamiliar, mostly American, children, not specifically in relations to her own son. The mutual disconnect that she experienced in her communications with them occurred partly as a result of the language gap with the children, but it also reflected her own perceptions of herself as somehow inherently distant from them beyond language or age. Not merely the bearer of different cultural norms into a shared terrain, she felt as if she had come from a

³⁰⁷ Leo Spitzer, *Hotel Bolivia: The Culture of Memory in a Refuge from Nazism* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1998), 76.

³⁰⁸ Sonja Mühlberger, *Geboren in Shanghai als Kind von Emigranten - Leben und Überleben im Ghetto von Hongkew (1939-1947)*, (Berlin: Hentrich und Hentrich, 2006), 32.

³⁰⁹ Hertha Nathorff, *Das Tagebuch der Hertha Nathorff: Berlin - New York. Aufzeichnungen 1933-1945* (Munich: R. Oldenbourg, 1987), 179-180.

³¹⁰ Ibid.

³¹¹ Ibid., 183.

different world than theirs – and that they remained in those different worlds even as they spent a summer together along the Hudson. Partly marveling at, partly resenting the normalcy which they displayed in their games, she knew that in her world, children were subjected to the horrors of a total war. In Nathorff's example, it seems, the generational divide was signified not through her interactions with her child or even the particular children she observed at camp. Rather, it was felt through the confrontation with childhood as a category and an experience in America, which contrasted so starkly with her own life as a refugee.

Parental Hopes and Anxieties

Responses to the generational gap, contingent on individual family lives and particular local contexts, did not assume a unitary character. The gap was at once a broader phenomenon and a site of personal negotiation. Parents reacted differently to the realization that their offspring were bound to be influenced by mentalities and sensibilities that they perceived as foreign. Growing up as a daughter of German-Jewish refugees, Marjorie Perloff, for example, felt that her fondness of American pop culture was a source of great disappointment to her parents. Despite the fact that even as a child she was an extremely avid reader of classic German literature, her interest in what her parents called "Kitsch" was met with disdain and disapproval. When she shared her enthusiasm about American popular films, books and music with her family, "my mother and grandmother gave each other a look, as if to say, 'Poor child, she doesn't yet understand.'"³¹² Young Perloff, on the other hand, secretly hoped that her mother would become more like other mothers, who already knew who Frank Sinatra was.³¹³

While the Perloffs desired a minimal version of assimilation that would exclude as much "foreign" culture as possible, many parents accepted that their children would acclimate into local environments, even when they were not entirely comfortable with the prevailing culture. Hedy Axelrad, for instance, came to terms with the lacking manners and bad etiquette displayed by American children, compared to the European standards to which she was accustomed. Axelrad even accepted that her own daughter, Evi, fell short in this regard. In a 1940 letter to her parents (who were awaiting permits to leave Vienna and join their daughter in New Jersey), she laughed at the suggestion that Evi be allowed to play with well-mannered children only: "[T]here's no such thing here. I've never seen children so naughty before. There are absolutely no consequences, they do as they please and the adults find it entirely natural." Evi, she wrote, was not misbehaving, but "generally does what she wants," while the children of a family friend, Axelrad confided, "are already completely *amerikanisch*." Concluding the matter, Axelrad reassured her parents that this state of affairs was no need to worry. It was something they could not control, and, in gesture of assurance, wrote that "the [Americans] older ones here are nice and good, so it will work out."³¹⁴

Hilde Wiedemann recorded a similar correspondence between her husband and her mother-in-law, who had remained in Germany. Wiedemann, whose family moved between different regions in Brazil, noted that her daughter, Dorothea, was responding particularly well to the frontier-like settlement of Terra Nova. "The primitive lifestyle agreed with our child

³¹² Marjorie Perloff, *The Vienna Paradox. A Memoir* (New York: New Directions, 2004), 185.

³¹³ *Ibid.*, 187.

³¹⁴ Hedy Axelrad to Adolf and Cäcilie Traub, September 9, 1940, Axelrad Family Collection; AR 25003; box 3; folder 1, LBI.

splendidly,” she concluded in her memoir. The sight of her daughter’s happiness and interest in Brazilian life was the most important consideration. “Two months after our arrival [at Terra Nova] my husband wrote to his mother, ‘Dorothe [sic] already knows all the tools by name and wants all sorts of things like a handsaw and an axe for her birthday. On weekdays she runs around in her little blue panties like a dirty little farm boy.’” This prompted a concerned response from the grandmother, who wrote from Germany to inquire whether it is at all safe for the child to run around “in the wild nature.”³¹⁵

Hedy Axelrad and Hilde Wiedemann both framed the behavior of their daughters as shaped by the behavioral standards of their new surroundings. What otherwise may be described as commonplace behavior for very young children was understood by their mothers as the result of foreign influence: in Evi Axelrad’s case, the casual upbringing of American children and their lax discipline; and in Dorothea Wiedemann’s case, the supposedly “wild” and “primitive” environment on the Brazilian rural farm. Witnessing their daughters’ childhood experiences as so fundamentally different than those they had known themselves, the unfamiliarity became an explanatory tool through which everyday behaviors could be deciphered. Childhood and displacement could not be disentangled for parents raising their children in the diaspora. Amused rather than troubled by these developments, the Axelrad and Wiedemann parents personified a generational bridge between Europe and the Diaspora, mediating the children’s experiences for the concerned grandparents who were unable to escape.

Across the German-Jewish diaspora, perpetuating the cultural ideals and behavioral norms that guided Central European Jews before their displacement seemed untenable, especially when it came to youth and the independence and temporal horizons they embodied. The extent to which parents regretted this element of displacement often depended on their own biographies – their lives in Europe, the circumstances surrounding their migration and the conditions that they encountered thereafter. Their individual attitudes towards the host societies, formed through the ground experience in the shadow of their former lives, contributed as well. Consider the cases of Lazar Herrmann and Hans Elias, both of whom had immigrated to the United States and had come to formulate opposing approaches to American influences on their children.

Under the pseudonym Leo Lania, Herrmann published an article on the event of his son entering the US Military service in 1943. When his wife declared that she would like to accompany their son, Fred, to the train station, Herrmann hesitated. He recalled his own service during WWI and the stifling militant masculinity that dominated the atmosphere. Assuming that Fred would be embarrassed, he was surprised to hear his son respond that: “Of course you’re coming!” Observing Fred going through an experience so similar to his own yet so radically different revealed to Herrmann the meaningful gulf between their generations. “So it is for us, European fathers, with our American sons,” he wrote. “In day-to-day life we don’t notice how fast and how fully they are developing away from us. But on that morning I felt it stronger than ever.” Their service did not just take place in different contexts. Herrmann felt that they fought for entirely different values. Thinking back on European critique of American education, Herrmann noted that he himself once believed that American children, too coddled by their mothers, grew to become “soft.” Seeing Fred and his generation, he realized that “the American lad does not become a ‘mother’s boy,’ rather, even in uniform he remains a mother’s son. And that’s the best protection against the rise of militarism in America.” Herrmann cheered the European youth for quickly Americanizing themselves, “not in the sense of using slang [...] but in spirit and soul.” He described how his son had once admonished him when Herrmann brushed

³¹⁵ Quoted in Eckl, 153.

off an argument as “nonsense.” Fred proclaimed that presenting different perspectives in a reasonable manner is a cornerstone of democratic society. Remarking that just two years prior to that conversation Fred had been surrounded by hatred and terror, Herrmann was immensely pleased at his son’s lucid convictions. Fred’s generation, he concluded, was best equipped to defeat Hitler and to serve as a connecting tissue between Europe and the United States.³¹⁶

Hans Elias saw things differently. Elias, a medical researcher who frequently wrote about educational and pedagogical issues, published an article in 1940 titled “Liberalistic Education as the Cause of Fascism.” Using historical examples from Europe in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, as well as from his own life experience in Weimar-era Germany, he described progressive education as a danger. Elias, warned that it did not provide children with the opposition that they require to mature into thoughtful, responsible human beings. The impetus for authoring this article was not the desire to analyze contemporary politics in Fascist European nations, but rather that Elias sensed “that the American youth may come into the same danger,” and hoped “to awaken the attention of American educators and parents.”³¹⁷ American educational norms, in his view, were not promoting sensible values, as Herrmann had believed, but instead were fostering illiberal tendencies, as was the case in Europe.

Several years later, his critical evaluation of American society had not changed. When in 1945 he moved together with his family from Massachusetts to Atlanta, Georgia, Elias and his wife, Anneliese, were disturbed by the rampant racism against African-Americans that they witnessed. They were especially concerned that their two young sons would grow up to internalize the injustice of racial segregation as a normal feature of society. To make sure that their sons would not acclimatize to their surrounding too much in the Jim Crow South, they took them to visit a local African-American school and meet with the principal, who had to decline their invitation to visit them at home for fear of getting lynched if seen in their white neighborhood.³¹⁸ In that particular social surrounding, Hans and Anneliese Elias took deliberate action to foster critical distance in their children – to prevent them from feeling at home.

To the extent that the contrast between Herrmann’s and Elias’ attitudes may portray different worldviews, their convictions were also inseparable from their immediate life experiences. How both fathers came to develop the particular stances discussed above is of lesser importance here. What is significant is the intertwined view of American youth, their children’s integration into American life and their own history of adolescence and young adulthood in Germany. Herrmann was excited about his son’s receptiveness to the democratic ideals of his new country; Elias was fearful of the possibility that his children might absorb prevalent bigotry and violence. One father celebrated American child education as open and nourishing, a contrast to rigid European norms; the other warned that the two systems were dangerously alike in their lack of values and discipline. In common, each father looked back at his previous life in Central Europe, seeking clues from his past in determining what their children could and should learn from their immediate surroundings while building their own futures.

³¹⁶ Leo Lania, “Gedanken eines europäischen Vaters: Mein Sohn Ist in der US Armee,” in: *Aufbau*, June 18, 1943, 4.

³¹⁷ Hans Elias, “Liberalistic Education as the Cause of Fascism,” *School and Society* 51, no. 1324 (1940), 593-8.

³¹⁸ Hans Elias, “Abenteuer in Emigration und Wissenschaft. Ein Beitrag von Aufklärung des Krebsproblems von Hans Elias.” SPE XMS Elias 81.8, SUNY Albany, chapter 7.

One Last Generation?

Members of the German-Jewish diaspora and observers who have studied their history often emphasize the relatively swift and smooth socio-economic integration that these immigrants experienced in their various destinations. The rather easy integration into host societies did not negate the safeguarding of particular cultural codes and their efforts to sustain a living connection to a world that seemed out of reach. As illustrated throughout this project, German-speaking Jews deliberately sought to embed elements of their collective culture in their post-displacement realities. Rather than shedding their foreignness and seeking a deep, total assimilation, they celebrated many of the elements that differentiated them from others in their new home environments. Yet practical realities of life in the diaspora limited what German-Jews could envision: it would have been unworkable to transfer this type of commitment to German-Jewish culture, and this level of engagement with its history, to a generation whose formative experiences occurred in radically different terrains. To a generation of German-speaking Jews who had experienced forced removal as adults, the conjuncture of these constraints and the appearance of a new generation signified a coming transition. They themselves were violently ejected from German society; in their previous homelands, genocide and war had destroyed what was left of their communities; in their new ones, children were attuned to coordinates different than their own. Under these circumstances, if German-Jewry had a future, could it resemble its past in any meaningful way?

One member of the German-Jewish diaspora took up that question directly in July, 1939. Under the title “Confessions of a Former Assimilationist,” Tristan Leander (pseudonym of Herbert Stein) published his contemplations on the German-Jewish future. His essay appeared in the *Jüdische Welt Rundschau*, the paper edited in Jerusalem, printed in Paris and circulated globally across the dispersion of its readership. Leander declared that he, a former “assimilationist” who believed himself to be a devoted adherent of Germanness, could no longer espouse this position. From his current home in Palestine, he no longer felt a connection to the German people. His connection to the German language and culture, however, remained as strong as ever. Fully aware that this attachment puts him at odds with dominant currents in his new national home, Leander surmised that his future children would not be able and would not wish to share this link to the cultural realm of his own youth. “But once in a while, when they are not at home,” he wrote, “I will hide in a corner and secretly read a little Goethe or Karl Kraus.” Leander took the opportunity to address his new neighbors and compatriots in the Jewish settlement of Palestine, who responded to such statements with disdain, “because they never felt themselves to be truly Polish or Russian.” His plea to them was: “Leave us be. It’s only a matter of one last generation.”³¹⁹

Neither a celebration of the emerging Jewish society in Palestine, nor a lamentation for the lost world of assimilated German Jewry, Leander’s essay painted a somber picture of the condition of displacement without pathologizing it. Responding to demands from his compatriots to slough off any markers of allegiance to Germanness, and assuming that the next generation would be oriented towards different cultural coordinates than his own, Leander reluctantly accepted his generation’s fate. Preserving his connection to the German language and culture meant confining significant portions of his self to isolated spheres that most people in his new home would not be able to access or even comprehend.

³¹⁹ Tristan Leander, “Bekenntnisse eines Ex-Assimilanten,” *Jüdische Welt Rundschau*, July 28, 1939, 6.

The proverbial corner where Leander would retreat to reunite with authors that he treasured corresponds with the mysterious room behind closed doors in Manfred George's report. They suggested a private realm where adults gathered to partake in practices that seem to have no other place. The hyperbole was intentional. As demonstrated in this chapter, German-Jewish parents not only felt no need to hide their cultural heritage from their children, some even made explicit efforts to facilitate their children's familiarity with this heritage. Yet Leander was right in diagnosing that the German-Jewish world that he still belonged to could not be shared by the descendants. Almost fifty years after the appearance of Leander's text, Anthony Heilbut, himself an American-born child of German-Jewish refugees, concurred with this generational verdict. Parents like his, Heilbut noted, "carried themselves differently from our peers'," and their children saw them in this contrasting light as well. While he acknowledged that children of German Jews did sometimes "hate their American lives and retreat to the consolations of their parents' culture," Heilbut doubted that these attempts could amount to much more than a performance. "I don't know," he wrote, "how much their succor is some hallowed German-Jewish legacy, and how much the familiar traits of one's own 'soul people.'"³²⁰ In Heilbut's analysis, German-Jewishness might require an authentic heart, a set of attachments that the reproduction of external practices could not quite recreate.

The children of the German-Jewish diaspora may or may not have learned the native language of their parents and cherished their culture. Many of them grew to espouse, with some measure of pride, the identity of second-generation *Yekkes*. Some developed a life-long engagement with German and German-Jewish history and became leading scholars in these fields. At least from the perspective of Heilbut, these *Yekkes*-once-removed were engaged with an intimate negotiation of the meaning and legacy of German-Jewishness, though they could not fully inhabit the identity itself. Certainly, many other descendants did not develop any particular interest or affinity with German-Jewishness whatsoever. Regardless of the depth of the younger generation's attachments and identification, the examples discussed here demonstrate that both adults and children were acutely aware of the gulf that existed between them. Responses to that realization varied, but ultimately, acceptance prevailed.

The emergence of a generational divide in itself was not out of the ordinary. This type of differentiation is, after all, inherent to generations as a category in much of modern history, particularly in instances of mobile populations. In this sense, the existence of a generational gap actually offered German-speaking Jewry a certain kind of normality during an era of unprecedented rupture. Among immigrant communities in particular, significant disparities between adults and the young are commonplace, intensified by the co-existence of two worlds in one reality. The everyday implications of such a divide – in terms of linguistic skills, cultural codes and interpersonal conflicts – were all present across the German-Jewish diaspora, shaping the relationships cultivated between parents and children, adults and youth.

Yet the German-Jewish community experienced a unique and essential dimension in their inter-generational relations that arose from the radical terms of their displacement. Persecution, forced migration and genocide uprooted this population from its native lands and annihilated what had remained there. There was no longer a German-Jewish homeland: the old country was a memory for everyone, even those who returned to a post-Nazi Central Europe. In addition, the collective heritage that had defined the community was called into fundamental question in the aftermath of the Holocaust. German-speaking Jewry had become, in essence, an exclusively and

³²⁰ Anthony Heilbut, "My German-Jewish Legacy and Theirs," in Peck, *The German-Jewish Legacy in American*, 202.

entirely diasporic community, and one that was continuously contested and prodded. In light of these occurrences, the generational divide that distinguished between parents and children raised the very real possibility that this diasporic community was witnessing, in the words of Tristan Leander, the very last generation. To the extent that second-generation members chose to engage with their parents' culture, their first-hand experience with its meaning and practices was markedly different. For this generation, encounters with German-Jewishness were defined not (or not only) by life experience in the lost world of Central Europe. They were primarily constituted by the realities of displacement.

Coda: From Boxes into Vitrines

The archive of the German-Speaking Jewry Heritage Museum in western Galilee houses many boxes. Brown cardboard containers are labeled and numbered, sitting orderly side by side, arranged to be easily retrieved and returned on the event of a visit from an interested researcher, or in preparation for an exhibition. In one of these cardboard boxes, another type of box is stored: An original top hat box from the Carl Stark company for silk and felt hats. Along the visible marks of wear and tear, the old package bears the company's addresses of Neue Königstrasse 73 and Lansberger Strasse 64 in Berlin, as well as an awe-commanding logo comprised of a large crown resembling that of Kaiser Wilhelm II, the last Prussian monarch. Preserved inside the box is a black top hat that, while somewhat musty with age, still appears presentable. Originally owned by Nathan Neumann (1846-1926), the hat was brought to Palestine by his son, Bruno Neumann, who left Germany in 1934 along with his wife, Hannah, and their daughter, Rita. It was Rita's son who finally donated the hat in its original packaging to the museum.



Figure 1. The Neumann family's top hat box from the Carl Stark company.

Why the Neumann family had included this personal belonging among the objects that they carried into displacement is difficult to determine. Bruno Neumann perhaps wanted to keep a physical remnant of his father, the original owner; or he may have used it often himself and expected to continue doing so in his new place of residence. The Neumanns may have cherished

this symbol of middle-class respectability as part of their cultural identity. In describing the hat, the grandson and donor of the object stated that “[t]he household was a cultured German-Jewish household. My grandmother’s brother – Benno Balan – was one of the founders of the Israeli Philharmonic Orchestra. The top hat was used for special occasions,” implying that for descendants, the hat was perceived as emblematic both of the family’s achievements and its habitus.³²¹ Yet it is not inconceivable that the hat was taken for no particular reason at all other than that it had belonged to the Neumanns, and that they were forced to leave their homeland and wanted to take their personal belongings with them.

Other questions about the hat remain unanswered as well: Was it ever used after its removal, and on what occasion? Where was it stored all these years, between its arrival to the shores of Haifa in 1934 and its delivery to the museum in the early 2000s? Did it move between homes, packed and unpacked time and time again? Did the third and fourth generation know of its existence all along, or did they discover it in an attic? Other than its provenance and its terminus, the hat can tell very little about the life of its intergenerational owners. But placed within the historical context of the displacement of Jews from Central Europe, it all of a sudden acquires the ability to exemplify this history.

In past decades, cultural institutions seeking to document and chronicle the story of German-Jewish displacement and annihilation have turned to objects as mediators. The German-Speaking Jewry Heritage Museum, home to the Neumann top hat, even created an entire exhibition consisting of household possessions that were brought by Central Europeans to Palestine in the 1930s-40s and remained for generations in their family homes in Israel. Launched in 2016 under the title “Heirlooms Speak,” the exhibition featured a variety of personal belongings that were loaned to the museum following a call published by the curators and organizers.³²² Families of former German-speaking refugees responded by sharing their objects and their stories with the museum. These included children’s toys, Judaica objects, kitchen items, work tools, furniture, cultural artifacts and others, assembled together by the curators under the notion that the “common denominator of all of the heirlooms is their emotional importance to their owners, who found themselves fleeing from their old homeland.”³²³

³²¹ Note by Amos Madzini in Nathan Neumann Collection, G.F. 0439, German-Speaking Jewry Heritage Museum in Tefen, Israel.

³²² The English title “Heirlooms Speak” is the official translation that appeared at the exhibition itself. The original Hebrew title, “Chafatzim Megalim,” literally translates to “objects reveal.”

³²³ Introduction poster for the exhibition “Objects Reveal” at the German-Speaking Jewry Heritage Museum.



Figure 2. Employees at the German-Speaking Jewry Heritage Museum extracting a gramophone and record collection from a grocery store cardboard box in preparation for the exhibition. Heinz and Liselotte Gottschalk brought these items from Berlin in late 1933.³²⁴

Visitors to the exhibition could view, amongst other items, a porcelain cup owned by the Wolf family from Vienna, originally a part of a Meissner Porzellan set that had served the family since the late eighteenth century. According to family lore, the Holy Roman Emperor, Kaiser Franz Joseph II himself, once drank from this set during a visit to the family home. Or Hannah Löwenthal Hirsch's dentistry kit, which continued to serve her professionally in the practice that she established in Tel Aviv. Or the table brush and shovel used for cleaning crumbs after meals at the home of the Still-Zwickler family from Darmstadt, who arrived in Palestine in 1939. Or the piece of linen embroidered by Hannah Schnuck during arts and crafts class in her school in Mönchengladbach, on which she had sown: "Always diligent!" ["Immer fleissig!"] along with her initials. Hanging on the museum walls, or from behind glass vitrines, these items convey a distilled version of the German-Jewish story as it is understood and transmitted by members of this community and their descendants: that of a hard-working, cultivated, orderly and respectable people whose lives were upended by hatred and violence.

Some of the displayed objects were linked to unique events, for example, an artistically ornamented silver Passover plate that had traveled from Vienna in 1940. Most items, however, were objects of everyday use. The curators even staged some of them to accentuate how they were embedded into their owners' daily lives. They placed plastic flowers in Ernst and Hilde Markowicz's porcelain vase, and placed it next to a 1931 photo from Germany depicting Hilde Markowicz and her infant son, Stefan-Menachem, with the vase placed right beside them. The curators also placed a copy of a document from Fritz Ebels' archive in his typewriter, which was put on display. Ebels' typewriter had accompanied him from the time he escaped from Berlin in 1940, all throughout his wartime years in Manchuria, and until the final step on his journey as a

³²⁴ Taken from the preview video of the exhibition "Heirlooms Speak," which can be accessed here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=va51SW0Zt7k>

displaced person. He may very well have used it to type the original document, in which he detailed that final travel itinerary from China via India and Yemen to Israel in 1949.

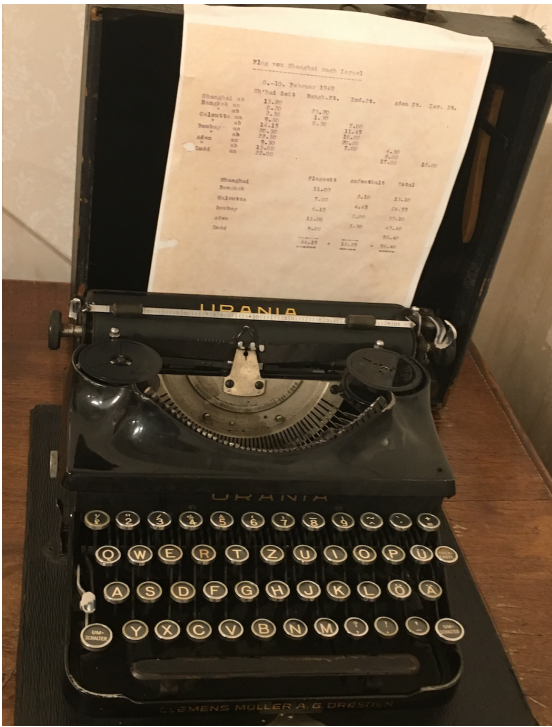


Figure 3. Fritz Ebels' typewriter.



Figure 4. The Markowicz family orcelain vase, in photo and on display.

If the display sought to help visitors imagine these objects in their contemporary everyday context, the curators also explicitly stated that they “have since become obsolete and can be viewed today only in museums.”³²⁵ Outdated and old-fashioned, these objects are nevertheless not inaccessible to contemporary audiences. An old typewriter, old doll, old chair – in their materiality, these things appear both familiar and unfamiliar. They can be understood but are no longer used. While exhibiting these objects to the public was meant to convey the living history of a population and its culture, their functional obsolescence raises questions about the temporality of their meanings, and the place of their owners in the societies that put such items on display. The objects were chosen because they were present during cataclysmic moments in people’s lives. In the absence of their original owners, objects shift in their significance.

4,000 kilometers away from western Galilee, visitors to the Jewish Museum Berlin can also view displaced possessions from the German-Jewish past, either displayed in vitrines or stored in archival boxes. Both in permanent and special exhibitions, the museum relies greatly on the presentation of personal belongings that had been taken by German-Jewish refugees into their displacement. At the Jewish Museum Berlin too, as in all institutions dedicated to the history of German-speaking Jewry, objects bear the marker of time. The museum’s chief archivist, Aubrey Pomeranz, in collaboration with Jeffrey Wallen, who regularly introduces

³²⁵ Ibid.

students to the museum’s collection, noted the importance of tracing the “biographies” of the objects that are housed there. Personal belongings, they argue, can convey much more about the histories they were a part of when “the temporal dimensions in the life of the object” are taken into consideration.³²⁶ Different stations and different contexts in an object’s life cycle – from its manufacturing, through its day-to-day usage, its removal and displacement, the passing from one generation to another and, finally, to the objects’ arrival at a museum or an archive – reflect fundamental events in the history of German-speaking Jewry.



Figure 5. Fork owned by the Jacobsohn family, who escaped to the US in 1939. Today it is a part of the Jewish Museum Berlin Collection in Germany.



Figure 6. A fork taken by Ludwig Wertheim as a refugee from Germany to France. Today it is a part of the US Holocaust Memorial Museum collection in Washington, DC.



Figure 7. Forks and knives originally used in Gitl Berger's kosher restaurant in Berlin. Here on display at the German-Speaking Jewry Heritage Museum in Israel.

Today, the objects of the German-Jewish diaspora remain scattered. Dispersed in different corners of the world, treasured or forgotten in the homes of descendants, sold in antique stores and flea markets, preserved in archives or placed for museal display. Whatever the setting, the multilayered functions that they once held have narrowed. No longer objects of the everyday,

³²⁶ Aubrey Pomeranz and Jeffrey Wallen, “Circuitous Journeys. The Migration of Objects and the Trusteeship of Memory,” in Leora Auslander and Tara Zahra (eds.), *Objects of War: The Material Culture of Conflict and Displacement* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2019), 250.

these personal belongings have now become objects of symbolism or remembrance whose principal usage is to serve as a link to the past. Speaking of a bowl that his family brought from Germany, Richard Buxbaum explained that this bowl was, as a matter of fact, still used in his home today. In a video shown as part of the exhibition “Memory Objects: Judaica Collections and Global Migrations” at the Magnes Center for Jewish Art and Life in 2019, Buxbaum intimated that the bowl performs a far greater service than its intended function: “I didn’t want this object to be forgotten. It serves as our banana bowl in the kitchen. And I look at it every day, and every day it’s a memory.”³²⁷ This bowl, a wedding gift that his parents received in 1930, was carried in a hat box and brought to the United States in the spring of 1938. Buxbaum, who was eight years old at the time, can still recall that it had to be handled very carefully when the family made the journey from their home village to Bremerhaven, where they had sailed from. To the extent that this object remains a part of daily life, it is so that it can project its historical meaning into the everyday.

Most of the possessions of the German-Jewish diaspora are no longer in regular use. Bestowed by collective memory culture with the power of narration, these objects serve as storytellers, tasked with representing and recounting the history of Jewish life in Central Europe before 1933, the violence of Nazi genocidal persecution and the global displacement of a population turned refugees. Between person and object, Aleida Assman observed, exists an invisible link in that they are both mutually constitutive of each other. The link is made visible only when it is suddenly cut, when people lose something with which they have grown together.³²⁸ The objects of remembrance spread across the German-Jewish diaspora were not lost to their owners but have nevertheless come to encapsulate a loss. Wherever they find themselves located, in Los Angeles, Jerusalem, London, Johannesburg, Buenos Aires or back in the cities they were once shipped out of; whether hanging on museum walls, stored in an archive box; hiding in basements or treasured by descendants, these possessions now possess a historical layer that was only beginning to form when they were packed into suitcases and containers in preparation for an extraordinary journey. Many of these objects have outlived the people who once owned them. The physical link between individuals and their belongings is continuously severed by time. Nowadays, they remain embedded in the historical events that had bestowed so much meaning unto them by the power of our gaze. We look at them and to them to learn, as Monroe Price has put it, “the fact that another world had existed.”³²⁹

³²⁷ “What We Carry With Us,” produced by Francesco Spagnolo of the Magnes Center for Jewish Life and Art and Sam Ball of Citizen Film. The video can also be seen at <https://youtu.be/M2dx5F6n-Ns>

³²⁸ Aleida Assman, “Das Gedächtnis der Dinge,” in Alexandra Reinighaus (ed.), *Recollecting. Raub und Restitution*, exhibition catalog (Vienna: Passagen Verlag 2009), 149.

³²⁹ Monroe Price, *Objects of Remembrance. A Memoir of American Opportunities and Viennese Dreams* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2009), 154.

Works Cited

Published Sources

Newspapers, Journals, Published Bulletins

Allotria

AJR Information

Aufbau

Asociación Democrática de Refugiados Hebreos. Mitteilung

Filantropia

Hilfsverein Deutschsprechender Juden Buenos Aires Mitteilungsblatt

Jüdische Welt Rundschau

Jüdische Wochenschau/ La Semana Israelita

Mitteilungsblatt

Neue Welt/ New World

Picture Post

Memoirs and Autobiographical Texts

Bendix, Reinhard. *From Berlin to Berkeley: German-Jewish Identities*. New Brunswick (N.J.); London: Transaction, 1990.

Benz, Wolfgang, ed. *Das Tagebuch der Hertha Nathorff: Berlin - New York. Aufzeichnungen 1933 bis 1945*. Frankfurt a. Main: Fischer, 2015.
<https://www.degruyter.com/isbn/9783486703269>.

Ephraim, Frank. *Escape to Manila: From Nazi Tyranny to Japanese Terror*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2003.

Kurzweil, Edith. *Full Circle: A Memoir*. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, 2007.

Laqueur, Thomas. "Memories in German." *London Review of Books*, December 4, 2003.

Lewenz, Lisa, and Ella Lewenz. *A Letter without Words*, 1998.

Meyer, Andreas. *Zikhronot*. Tefen: Self-published, 2007.

Mühlberger, Sonja, and Hentrich & Hentrich. *Geboren in Shanghai als Kind von Emigranten. Leben und Überleben im Ghetto von Hongkew (1939-1947)*. Berlin: Hentrich und Hentrich, 2006.

Peck, Abraham J., ed. *The German-Jewish Legacy in America, 1938-1988: From Bildung to the Bill of Rights*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1989.

Perloff, Marjorie. *The Vienna Paradox: A Memoir*. New York: New Directions Publishing, 2004.

Price, Monroe E. *Objects of Remembrance: A Memoir of Viennese Dreams and American Opportunities*. Budapest: Central European University Press, 2010.

Schwarz-Gardos, Alice. *Paradies mit Schönheitsfehlern: So Lebt Man in Israel*. Freiburg: Verlag Herder, 1982.

Shiloni, Yisrael. *Efshari U'vilti Efshari. Zikhronot*. Tefen: Hamuze'on Hapatu'ach, 1998.

Tobias, Sigmund. *Strange Haven: A Jewish Childhood in Wartime Shanghai*. Urbana (Ill.);

Chicago (Ill.): University of Illinois Press, 1999.

Miscellaneous Published Sources

- “Bundesgesetz Zur Entschädigung Für Opfer Der Nationalsozialistischen Verfolgung,” 1953
<https://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/beg/BJNR013870953.html>.
- Cohn, Heinz, and Erich Gottfeld. *Auswanderungsvorschriften für Juden in Deutschland*. Berlin: Jüdischer Buchverlag, 1938.
- Elias, Hans. “Liberalistic Education as the Cause of Fascism.” *School and Society* 51, no. 1324 (1940): 593–98.
- George, Manfred. *Das Wunder Israel: Eindrücke von einer Reise durch den jungen jüdischen Staat*. New York, N.Y.: Aufbau, 1950.
- German Jewish Aid Committee, ed. *While You Are in England; Helpful Information and Guidance for Every Refugee*. London, 1938.
- Hilfsverein der Juden in Deutschland, ed. “Jüdische Auswanderung: Korrespondenzblatt für Auswanderungs- und Siedlungswesen,” January 1939.
- Kohler, Kaufmann. “The Three Elements of American Judaism.” *The Menorah* 5, no. 5 (November 1888): 314–22.
- Kommission zur Erforschung der Geschichte der Frankfurter Juden, ed. *Dokumente zur Geschichte der Frankfurter Juden, 1933-1945*. Frankfurt a. Main: W. Kramer, 1963.
- Mosse, George L, Irene Runge, and Uwe Stelbrink. *George Mosse, “Ich bleibe Emigrant”:* *Gespräche mit George L. Mosse*. Berlin: Dietz, 1991.
- Olden, Rudolf, and Ika Olden. “*In tiefem Dunkel liegt Deutschland*”: *Von Hitler Vertrieben; ein Jahr deutsche Emigration*. Edited by Charmain Brinson and Marian Malet. Berlin: Metropol, 1994.
- Reichsvereinigung der Juden in Deutschland, ed. “Jüdische Auswanderung nach Australien und anderen Gebieten des Englischen Imperiums.” Jüdischer Kulturbund in Deutschland, 1939.
- Walk, Joseph, ed. *Das Sonderrecht für die Juden im NS-Staat eine Sammlung der gesetzlichen Maßnahmen und Richtlinien - Inhalt und Bedeutung*. Heidelberg: Müller, 2013.

Secondary Literature

- Altman, Sig. *The Comic Image of the Jew: Explorations of a Pop Culture Phenomenon*. Rutherford: Fairleigh Dickinson Univ. Pr, 1971.
- Amkraut, Brian. *Between Home and Homeland: Youth Aliyah from Nazi Germany*, 2018.
- Anderl, Gabriele. “Die ‚Zentralstellen Für Jüdische Auswanderung‘ in Wien, Berlin Und Prag: Ein Vergleich.” *Tel Aviver Jahrbuch Für Deutsche Geschichte* 23 (1994): 275–99.
- Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. New York: Verso, 2006.
- Angress, Werner T. *Between Fear and Hope: Jewish Youth in the Third Reich*. Translated by Christine Granger. New York: Columbia University Press, 1988.
- Arendt, Hannah. “The Jew as Pariah: A Hidden Tradition.” *Jewish Social Studies* 6, no. 2 (1944): 99–122.
- Arnbom, Marie-Theres. *War’n Sie schon mal in mich verliebt?: Filmstars, Operettenlieblinge*

- und Kabarettgrößen in Wien und Berlin*. Vienna: Böhlau, 2006.
- Aschheim, Steven. *Brothers and Strangers: The East European Jew in German and German Jewish Consciousness, 1800-1923*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1982.
- Aschheim, Steven E. *Beyond the Border: The German-Jewish Legacy Abroad*. Princeton University Press, 2007.
- Auslander, Leora. "Beyond Words." *The American Historical Review* 110, no. 4 (October 2005): 1015–45. <https://doi.org/10.1086/ahr.110.4.1015>.
- . "'Jewish Taste?' Jews and the Aesthetics of Everyday Life in Paris and Berlin, 1920–1942." In *Histories of Leisure*, edited by Rudy Koshar, 299–318. Oxford: Berg, 2002.
- . *Taste and Power: Furnishing Modern France*. Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 2006.
- Auslander, Leora, and Tara Zahra, eds. *Objects of War: The Material Culture of Conflict and Displacement*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2019. <https://doi.org/10.7591/cornell/9781501720079.001.0001>.
- Baader, Benjamin Maria, Sharon Gillerman, and Paul Frederick Lerner, eds. *Jewish Masculinities German Jews, Gender, and History*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2012. <http://site.ebrary.com/id/10569637>.
- Banken, Ralf. *Edelmetallmangel und Großraubwirtschaft: Die Entwicklung des deutschen Edelmetallsektors im "Dritten Reich" 1933-1945*. Akademie, 2009.
- Bannasch, Bettina, and Michael Rupp, eds. *Rückkehrerzählungen: Über die (Un-)Möglichkeit nach 1945 als Jude in Deutschland zu Leben*. Göttingen: V&R, 2018.
- Barkai, Avraham. *From Boycott to Annihilation: The Economic Struggle of German Jews, 1933-1943*. Translated by William Templer. Hanover: University Press of New England for Brandeis University, 1989.
- . "German Interests in the Haavara-Transfer Agreement, 1933–1939." *The Leo Baeck Institute Year Book* 35, no. 1 (January 1990): 245–66. <https://doi.org/10.1093/leobaeck/35.1.245>.
- Bauer, Yehuda. *Jews for Sale? Nazi-Jewish Negotiations, 1933-1945*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994.
- Bauer-Hack, Susanne. *Die jüdische Wochenzeitung Aufbau und die Wiedergutmachung*. Düsseldorf: Droste, 1994.
- Baumel-Schwartz, Judith Tydor. *Never Look Back The Jewish Refugee Children in Great Britain, 1938-1945*. West Lafayette: Purdue University Press, 2014.
- Bayerdörfer, Hans-Peter. "Jewish Cabaret Artists before 1933." In *Jews and the Making of Modern German Theatre*, edited by Jeanette R Malkin and Freddie Rokem, 132–50. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2010.
- Bechtel, Delphine. "Cultural Transfers between 'Ostjuden' and 'Westjuden': German-Jewish Intellectuals and Yiddish Culture 1897–1930." *The Leo Baeck Institute Year Book* 42, no. 1 (January 1997): 67–83. <https://doi.org/10.1093/leobaeck/42.1.67>.
- Bei, Gao. *Shanghai Sanctuary: Chinese and Japanese Policy toward European Jewish Refugees during World War II*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2013.
- Berghahn, Marion. *Continental Britons: German-Jewish Refugees from Nazi Germany*. New York: Berghahn Books, 2007.
- Bering, Dietz. *The Stigma of Names: Antisemitism in German Daily Life, 1812-1933*. Translated by Neville Plaice. Cambridge; Oxford: Polity Press; Blackwell, 1992.
- Berrol, Selma. "Germans Versus Russians: An Update." *American Jewish History* 73, no. 2

- (December 1983): 142–56.
- Bihler, Lori Gemeiner. *Cities of Refuge: German Jews in London and New York 1935-1945*. Albany: SUNY Press, 2019.
- Borneman, John, and Jeffrey M Peck, eds. *Sojourners: The Return of German Jews and the Question of Identity*. Lincoln: Univ. of Nebraska Press, 1995.
- Breitman, Richard, and Alan M Kraut. *American Refugee Policy and European Jewry, 1933-1945*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987.
- Brenner, David A. “‘Making Jargon Respectable’ Leo Winz, Ost Und West and the Reception of Yiddish Theatre in Pre-Hitler Germany.” *The Leo Baeck Institute Year Book* 42, no. 1 (January 1997): 49–66. <https://doi.org/10.1093/leobaeck/42.1.49>.
- Brenner, Michael, ed. *Geschichte der Juden in Deutschland von 1945 bis zur Gegenwart Politik, Kultur und Gesellschaft*. Berlin: ZpB, 2012.
- . *The Renaissance of Jewish Culture in Weimar Germany*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996.
- Brenner, Michael, Stefi Jersch-Wenzel, and Michael A Meyer. *German-Jewish History in Modern Times*. Vol. II. New York: Columbia University Press, 1998.
- Brenner, Michael, and Derek J Penslar, eds. *In Search of Jewish Community: Jewish Identities in Germany and Austria, 1918-1933*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999. <http://public.eblib.com/choice/publicfullrecord.aspx?p=4766643>.
- Brenner, Michael, and Gideon Reuveni, eds. *Emancipation through Muscles: Jews and Sports in Europe*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2006.
- Burgess, Greg. *The League of Nations and the Refugees from Nazi Germany James G. McDonald and Hitler's Victims*. New York: Bloomsbury, 2016.
- Buxbaum, Richard M. “From Paris to London: The Legal History of European Reparation Claims: 1946-1953.” *Berkeley Journal of International Law* 31, no. 2 (2013): 323–47.
- Caestecker, Frank, and Bob Moore, eds. *Refugees from Nazi Germany and the Liberal European States*. New York: Berghahn, 2014.
- Carlebach, Julius, Gerhard Hirschfeld, Aubrey Newman, Peter Pulzer, and Arnold Paucker, eds. *Second Chance: Two Centuries of German-Speaking Jews in the United Kingdom*. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1991.
- Cesarani, David. “The Transformation of Communal Authority in Anglo-Jewry, 1914-1940.” In *The Making of Modern Anglo-Jewry*, edited by David Cesarani, 115–40. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990.
- Chase, Jefferson S. *Inciting Laughter: The Development of “Jewish Humor” in 19th Century German Culture*. Boston: De Gruyter, 2000. <http://public.ebookcentral.proquest.com/choice/publicfullrecord.aspx?p=3044730>.
- Cohen, Deborah. *Household Gods: The British and Their Possessions*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006.
- Csikszentmihalyi, Mihaly, and Eugene Halton. *The Meaning of Things: Domestic Symbols and the Self*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981.
- Dean, Martin. *Robbing the Jews: The Confiscation of Jewish Property in the Holocaust, 1933-1945*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008.
- Diner, Dan. *Rituelle Distanz: Israels deutsche Frage*. Munich: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 2015.
- Diner, Dan, and Gotthart Wunberg, eds. *Restitution and Memory: Historical Remembrance and Material Restoration in Europe*. New York: Berghahn, 2007.
- Dudley, Sandra H. *Materialising Exile: Material Culture and Embodied Experience among*

- Karenni Refugees in Thailand*. New York: Berghahn Books, 2010.
<http://www.myilibrary.com?id=262717>.
- Dümling, Albrecht. *The Vanished Musicians: Jewish Refugees in Australia*. Translated by Diana K Weekes. New York: Peter Lang, 2016.
- Dwork, Deborah, and R. J. van Pelt. *Flight from the Reich: Refugee Jews, 1933-1946*. New York: W. W. Norton, 2009.
- Eastmond, Marita. "Stories as Lived Experience: Narratives in Forced Migration Research." *Journal of Refugee Studies* 20, no. 2 (June 2007): 248–64.
<https://doi.org/10.1093/jrs/fem007>.
- Eber, Irene. *Wartime Shanghai and the Jewish Refugees from Central Europe: Survival, Co-Existence, and Identity in a Multi-Ethnic City*. Boston: De Gruyter, 2012.
- Efron, John M. "From Łódź to Tel Aviv: The Yiddish Political Satire of Shimen Dzigan and Yisroel Shumacher." *Jewish Quarterly Review* 102, no. 1 (February 23, 2012): 50–79.
<https://doi.org/10.1353/jqr.2012.0010>.
- Efron, John M. *German Jewry and the Allure of the Sephardic*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016.
- Fine, David J. *Jewish Integration in the German Army in the First World War*. Boston: De Gruyter, 2012.
- Finkin, Jordan. "Jewish Jokes, Yiddish Storytelling, and Sholem Aleichem: A Discursive Approach." *Jewish Social Studies* 16, no. 1 (Fall 2009): 85–110.
- Fogg, Shannon. "Displaced Persons, Displaced Possessions: The Effects of Spoliation and Restitution on Daily Life in Paris." In *War, Exile, Justice and Everyday Life, 1936-1946*, edited by Sandra Ott, 359–76. Reno: University of Nevada Press, 2011.
- Franz, Margit, ed. *Going East - Going South: Österreichisches Exil in Asien und Afrika*. Graz: Clio, 2014.
- Frei, Norbert, José Brunner, and Constantin Goschler, eds. *Die Praxis der Wiedergutmachung: Geschichte, Erfahrung und Wirkung in Deutschland und Israel*. Bonn: Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, 2010.
- Freud, Sigmund. "Humour." In *Sigmund Freud Collected Papers*, edited by James Strachey, translated by Joan Riviere, V:2150221. London: The Hogarth Press, 1950.
- Friedländer, Saul. *Nazi Germany and the Jews. Volume I, Volume I.* New York: Harper Perennial, 1998.
- Gay, Peter. *Reading Freud: Explorations and Entertainments*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990.
- Gay, Ruth. "Danke Schön, Herr Doktor: German Jews in Palestine." *The American Scholar* 58, no. 4 (Fall 1989): 567–77.
- Gelber, Yoav. *Moledet Hadasha: Aliyat Yehudei Merkaz Eirova u'Klitatam, 1933-1948*. Jerusalem: Yad Ben Zvi and Makhon Leo Baeck, 1990.
- Geller, Jay Howard. *Jews in Post-Holocaust Germany: 1945-1953*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005.
- Geller, Jay Howard, and Leslie Morris, eds. *Three-Way Street: Jews, Germans, and the Transnational*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2016.
- Gemünden, Gerd. *Continental Strangers: German Exile Cinema 1933-1951*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2014.
- Gillerman, Sharon. *Germans into Jews: Remaking the Jewish Social Body in the Weimar Republic*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009.

- Gleizer Salzman, Daniela. *Unwelcome Exiles: Mexico and the Jewish Refugees from Nazism, 1933-1945*. Leiden: Brill, 2014.
- Goschler, Constantin. *Schuld und Schulden: die Politik der Wiedergutmachung für NS-Verfolgte seit 1945*. Göttingen: Wallstein, 2005.
<http://catalog.hathitrust.org/api/volumes/oclc/60374949.html>.
- Grady, Tim. *The German-Jewish Soldiers of the First World War in History and Memory*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2011.
- Grenville, Anthony. *Jewish Refugees from Germany and Austria in Britain, 1933-1970: Their Image in AJR Information*. Portland: Vallentine Mitchell, 2010.
- Gruner, Wolf, and Jörg Osterloh, eds. *The Greater German Reich and the Jews: Nazi Persecution Policies in the Annexed Territories 1935-1945*. Translated by Bernard Haise. New York: Berghahn Books, 2015.
- Guderian, Dieter. *Fritz Löwenthal. Die Geschichte eines jüdischen Kaufmannes im Dritten Reich: Demütigung, Verfolgung und Vertreibung*. Ochtendung: Cardamina Verlag S. Breuel, 2006. http://books.google.com/books?id=XwI_AQAAIAAJ.
- Hacohen, Malachi Haim. *Jacob & Esau: Jewish European History between Nation and Empire*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2019.
- Halbwachs, Maurice. *On Collective Memory*. Translated by Lewis A Coser. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992.
- Herbert, Ulrich. *Hitler's Foreign Workers: Enforced Foreign Labor in Germany under the Third Reich*. Translated by William Templar. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997.
- Hockerts, Hans Günter. "Wiedergutmachung in Deutschland. Eine Historische Bilanz 1945-2000." *Vierteljahrshefte Für Zeitgeschichte* 49, no. 2 (2001): 167–214.
- Hockerts, Hans Günter, and Christiane Kuller, eds. *Nach der Verfolgung: Wiedergutmachung nationalsozialistischen Unrechts in Deutschland?* Göttingen: Wallstein, 2003.
- Hoskins, Janet. "Agency, Biography and Objects." In *Handbook of Material Culture*, edited by Chris Tilley, Webb Keane, Susanne Kuechler, Mike Rowlands, and Patricia Spyer, 74–84. London: Sage, 2006.
- Hotam, Yotam, and Moshe Zimmermann, eds. *Beyn Ha-Moladot. Hayekkim Bi-Mkhozoteyhem*. Jerusalem: Zalman Shazar Center and Koebner Center, 2006.
- Jüdisches Museum Berlin, ed. *Heimat und Exil Emigration der deutschen Juden nach 1933*. Frankfurt am Main: Jüdischer Verl. im Suhrkamp Verl., 2006.
- Jünger, David. *Jahre der Ungewissheit: Emigrationspläne deutscher Juden 1933–1938*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2016.
- Kaplan, Marion A. *Between Dignity and Despair: Jewish Life in Nazi Germany*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1999.
- . *Dominican Haven: The Jewish Refugee Settlement in Sosúa, 1940-1945*. New York: Museum of Jewish Heritage, 2008.
<http://books.google.com/books?id=7nJ7AAAAMAAJ>.
- . *The Making of the Jewish Middle Class: Women, Family, and Identity in Imperial Germany*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1991.
- Kauders, Anthony. *Unmögliche Heimat: Eine deutsch-jüdische Geschichte der Bundesrepublik*. Munich: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 2007.
<http://books.google.com/books?id=AaJtAAAAMAAJ>.
- Kessel, Martina, and Patrick Merziger, eds. *The Politics of Humour: Laughter, Inclusion, and Exclusion in the Twentieth Century*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012.

- Kieffer, Fritz. *Judenverfolgung in Deutschland - eine innere Angelegenheit?: internationale Reaktionen auf die Flüchtlingsproblematik 1933-1939*. Stuttgart: Steiner, 2002.
- Kopytoff, Igor. "The Cultural Biography of Things: Commoditization as Process." In *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*, edited by Arjun Appadurai, 64–91. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986.
- Körte, Mona. "Bracelet, Hand Towel, Pocket Watch: Objects of the Last Moment in Memory and Narration." *Shofar* 23, no. 1 (Fall 2004): 109–20.
- Kotowski, Elke-Vera. *Aufbau: Sprachrohr, Heimat, Mythos: Geschichte einer deutsch-jüdischen Zeitung aus New York 1934 bis heute*. Berlin: Hentrich und Hentrich, 2011.
- , ed. *Das Kulturerbe deutschsprachiger Juden: Eine Spurensuche in den Ursprungs-, Transit- und Emigrationsländern*. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2017.
- Krauss, Marita. "Jewish Remigration: An Overview of an Emerging Discipline." *The Leo Baeck Institute Year Book* 49, no. 1 (January 2004): 107–20.
<https://doi.org/10.1093/leobaeck/49.1.107>.
- Kreppel, Klaus. *Nahariyya und die deutsche Einwanderung nach Eretz Israel: die Geschichte seiner Einwohner von 1935 bis 1941*. Tefen: The Open Museum, 2010.
- Krohn, Claus-Dieter, and Patrik von Zur Mühlen, eds. *Rückkehr und Aufbau nach 1945: Deutsche Remigranten im öffentlichen Leben Nachkriegsdeutschlands*. Marburg: Metropolis, 1997.
- LaCapra, Dominick. *History in Transit: Experience, Identity, Critical Theory*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004.
- Lamprecht, Gerald. "Geteilte Erinnerung? Der Bund jüdischer Frontsoldaten." In *Zonen der Begrenzung: Aspekte kultureller und räumlicher Grenzen in der Moderne*, edited by Gerald Lamprecht, Ursula Mindler, and Heidrun Zettelbauer. Bielefeld: Transcript, 2012.
<http://nbn-resolving.de/urn:nbn:de:101:1-201511286485>.
- Laqueur, Walter. *Generation Exodus: The Fate of Young Jewish Refugees from Nazi Germany*. London: I.B. Tauris, 2004. <http://qut.eblib.com.au/patron/FullRecord.aspx?p=676874>.
- Lavsky, Hagit. *The Creation of the German-Jewish Diaspora: Interwar German-Jewish Immigration to Palestine, the USA, and England*. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2017.
<http://www.vlebooks.com/vleweb/product/openreader?id=none&isbn=9783110501650>.
- Lavy, George. *Germany and Israel: Moral Debt and National Interest*. Portland: Frank Cass, 1996.
- Lebovic, Nizan. "German Jewish Judges and the Permanent State of Catastrophe." In *Catastrophe: A History and Theory of an Operative Concept*, edited by Nizan Lebovic and Andreas Killen, 93–111. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2014.
- Lerner, Paul. *The Consuming Temple: Jews, Department Stores, and the Consumer Revolution in Germany, 1880-1940*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2015.
<https://doi.org/10.7591/cornell/9780801452864.001.0001>.
- Levine, Rhonda F. *Class, Networks, and Identity: Replanting Jewish Lives from Nazi Germany to Rural New York*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2001.
- Lillteicher, Jürgen. *Raub, Recht und Restitution: die Rückerstattung jüdischen Eigentums in der frühen Bundesrepublik*. Göttingen: Wallstein, 2007.
- Loitfellner, Sabine. "Die Rolle der 'Verwaltungsstelle für jüdisches Umzugsgut der Geheimen Staatspolizei' (Vegusta) im NS-Kunstraub." In *NS-Kunstraub in Österreich und die Folgen*, edited by Gabriele Anderl and Alexandra Caruso, 110–20. Innsbruck: Studienverlag, 2005.

- London, Louise. *Whitehall and the Jews, 1933-1948: British Immigration Policy, Jewish Refugees and the Holocaust*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003.
- Lowenstein, Steven M. *Frankfurt on the Hudson: The German-Jewish Community of Washington Heights, 1933-1983, Its Structure and Culture*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1989.
- Lüdtke, Alf. *Alltagsgeschichte: zur Rekonstruktion historischer Erfahrungen und Lebensweisen*. Frankfurt a. Main: Campus, 2000.
- Meinl, Susanne, and Jutta Zwilling. *Legalisierter Raub: Die Ausplünderung der Juden im Nationalsozialismus durch die Reichsfinanzverwaltung in Hessen*. Frankfurt a. Main: Campus, 2005.
- Miller, Daniel, ed. *Home Possessions: Material Culture Behind Closed Doors*. New York: Berg, 2001. <http://site.ebrary.com/id/10231680>.
- Moser, Jonny, and Christa Mehany-Mitternutzner. *Demographie der jüdischen Bevölkerung Österreichs: 1938-1945*. Vienna: Dokumentationsarchiv des Österreichischen Widerstandes, 1999.
- Nachum, Iris. "Reconstructing Life after the Holocaust: The Lastenausgleichsgesetz and the Jewish Struggle for Compensation." *The Leo Baeck Institute Year Book* 58, no. 1 (January 2013): 53–67. <https://doi.org/10.1093/leobaek/ybt007>.
- Offner, Arnold A. *American Appeasement: United States Foreign Policy and Germany, 1933-38*. Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1969.
- Oring, Elliott. "The People of the Joke: On the Conceptualization of a Jewish Humor." *Western Folklore* 42, no. 4 (October 1983): 261–71. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1499501>.
- Otte, Marline. *Jewish Identities in German Popular Entertainment, 1890-1933*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006. <http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&scope=site&db=nlebk&AN=529346>.
- Oz-Salzberger, Fania, and Eli Salzberger. "The Secret German Sources of the Israel Supreme Court." *Israel Studies* 3, no. 2 (November 2007): 159–92.
- Penlar, Derek Jonathan. *Jews and the Military: A History*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013.
- Pross, Christian. *Paying for the Past: The Struggle over Reparations for Surviving Victims of the Nazi Terror*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998.
- Pulzer, Peter G. J. *Jews and the German State: The Political History of a Minority, 1848-1933*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2003.
- Rauchensteiner, Manfred. *The First World War and the End of the Habsburg Monarchy, 1914-1948*. Translated by Alex J Kay and Anna Güttel-Bellert. Vienna: Böhlau, 2014.
- Reinharz, Jehuda. *Fatherland or Promised Land: The Dilemma of the German Jew, 1893-1914*. Ann Arbor: Univ. of Michigan Press, 1975.
- Reinharz, Jehuda, and Walter Schatzberg, eds. *The Jewish Response to German Culture: From the Enlightenment to the Second World War*. Hanover: University Press of New England, 1985.
- Reininghaus, Alexandra, ed. *Recollecting: Raub und Restitution*. Vienna: Passagen, 2009.
- Reinprecht, Christoph. *Zurückgekehrt: Identität und Bruch in der Biographie österreichischer Juden*. Vienna: Braumüller, 1992.
- Robertson, Ritchie. *The "Jewish Question" in German Literature, 1749-1939: Emancipation and Its Discontents*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1999.
- Rockaway, Robert. "Ethnic Conflict in an Urban Environment: The German and Russian Jew in

- Detroit, 1881–1914.” *American Jewish Historical Quarterly* 60, no. 2 (1970): 133–50.
- Rozenblit, Marsha L. *Reconstructing a National Identity: The Jews of Habsburg Austria in World War I*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2004.
<http://www.myilibrary.com?id=84496>.
- Rürup, Miriam. *Ehrensache: Jüdische Studentenverbindungen an deutschen Universitäten 1886-1937*. Göttingen: Wallstein, 2008.
- Sammartino, Annemarie. *The Impossible Border: Germany and the East, 1914-1922*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2010.
- Saß, Anne-Christin. “Reconstructing Jewishness, Deconstructing the Past. Reading Berlin’s Scheunenviertel over the Course of the Twentieth Century.” In *Space and Spatiality in Modern German-Jewish History*, edited by Simone Lässig and Miriam Rürup, 197–212. New York: Berghahn, 2017.
- Schenderlein, Anne Clara. “‘Germany on Their Minds’?: German Jewish Refugees in the United States and Relationships to Germany, 1938-1988,” 2014.
- Schirp, Kerstin E. *Die Wochenzeitung “Semanario Israelita”: Sprachrohr der deutsch-jüdischen Emigranten in Argentinien*. Münster: Lit, 2001.
- Schmidt-Lauber, Brigitta. *Gemütlichkeit: Eine kulturwissenschaftliche Annäherung*. Frankfurt a. Main: Campus, 2003.
- Schorsch, Ismar. “The Myth of Sephardic Supremacy.” *The Leo Baeck Institute Year Book* 34, no. 1 (January 1989): 47–66. <https://doi.org/10.1093/leobaeck/34.1.47>.
- Schreckenberger, Helga, ed. *Networks of Refugees from Nazi Germany: Continuities, Reorientations, and Collaborations in Exile*. Leiden: Brill Rodopi, 2016.
<http://booksandjournals.brillonline.com/content/books/9789004322738>.
- Sharett, Yaakov. *The Reparations Controversy The Jewish State and German Money in the Shadow of the Holocaust 1951-1952*. Boston: De Gruyter, 2011.
<http://www.oopen.org/download/?type=document&docid=1001729>.
- Sherman, Ari J. *Island Refuge: Britain and Refugees from the Third Reich 1933-1939*. Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1973.
- Shifman, Limor, and Elihu Katz. “‘Just Call Me Adonai’: A Case Study of Ethnic Humor and Immigrant Assimilation.” *American Sociological Review* 70, no. 5 (October 2005): 843–59.
- Siegemund, Anja, ed. *Deutsche und zentraleuropäische Juden in Palästina und Israel: Kulturtransfers, Lebenswelten, Identitäten. Beispiele aus Haifa*. Berlin: Neofelis, 2016.
- Sinn, Andrea. *Public Voices: Jüdische Politik und Presse in der frühen Bundesrepublik*. Göttingen, Niedersachs: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2013.
- Spitzer, Leo. *Hotel Bolivia: The Culture of Memory in a Refuge from Nazism*. New York: Hill and Wang, 1999.
- Steege, Paul, Andrew Stuart Bergerson, Maureen Healy, and Pamela E. Swett. “The History of Everyday Life: A Second Chapter.” *The Journal of Modern History* 80, no. 2 (June 2008): 358–78. <https://doi.org/10.1086/588855>.
- Strauss, Herbert A. “Jewish Emigration From Germany: Nazi Policies and Jewish Responses (I).” *The Leo Baeck Institute Year Book* 25, no. 1 (January 1980): 313–61.
<https://doi.org/10.1093/leobaeck/25.1.313>.
- Susemihl, Geneviève. *“And It Became My Home.” Die Assimilation Und Integration Der Deutsch-Jüdischen Hitlerflüchtlinge in New York Und Toronto*. Münster: Lit, 2003.
- Svašek, Maruška, ed. *Moving Subjects, Moving Objects: Transnationalism, Cultural Production*

- and Emotions*. New York: Berghahn Books, 2012. <http://site.ebrary.com/id/10578593>.
- Taylor, John Russell. *Strangers in Paradise: The Hollywood Émigrés, 1933-1950*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1983.
- Timm, Angelika. *Jewish Claims Against East Germany: Moral Obligations and Pragmatic Policy*. Budapest: Central European University Press, 1998.
- Traska, Georg, and Christoph Lind. *Hermann Leopoldi: The Life of a Viennese Piano Humorist: Biography*. Translated by Dennis McCort. Riverside: Ariadne, 2013.
- Vagts, Detlev, and Peter Murray. "Litigating the Nazi Labor Claims: The Path Not Taken." *Harvard International Law Journal* 43 (2002): 503–30.
- Volkov, Shulamit. *Ben Yihud Li-temi 'ah: Yehudey Germanyah, 1780-1918*. Translated by Orit Friedland. Tel Aviv: Ha-Universitah Ha-Petu'ah, 2003.
- Weber, Max. "Bureaucracy." In *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, edited by Hans H Gerth and C. Wright Mills, 196–294. New York: Oxford University Press, 1958.
- Weinstein, Valerie. "Anti-Semitism or Jewish 'Camp'? Ernst Lubitsch's Schuhpalast Pinkus (1916) and Meyer Aus Berlin (1918)." *German Life and Letters* 59, no. 1 (2006): 101–21. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.0016-8777.2005.00337.x>.
- Wenzel, Rüdiger. *Die grosse Verschiebung?: das Ringen um den Lastenausgleich im Nachkriegsdeutschland von den ersten Vorarbeiten bis zur Verabschiedung des Gesetzes 1952*. Stuttgart: Steiner, 2008.
- Wertheimer, Jack. *Unwelcome Strangers: East European Jews in Imperial Germany*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1987.
- Widmann, Horst. *Exil und Bildungshilfe: Die deutschsprachige akademische Emigration in die Türkei nach 1933*. Bern; Frankfurt a. Main: Herbert Lang; Peter Lang, 1973.
- Williams, Bill. "Jews and Other Foreigners": *Manchester and the Rescue of the Victims of European Fascism, 1933-40*. Oxford: Manchester University Press, 2014.
- . "Jews and Other Foreigners": *Manchester and the Rescue of the Victims of European Fascism, 1933-1940*. New York: Manchester University Press, 2011. <http://site.ebrary.com/id/10627252>.
- Winstel, Tobias. *Verhandelte Gerechtigkeit: Rückerstattung und Entschädigung für jüdische NS-Opfer in Bayern und Westdeutschland*. Munich: R. Oldenbourg, 2006.
- Wisse, Ruth R. *No Joke: Making Jewish Humor*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015.
- Zweig, Ronald W. *German Reparations and the Jewish World: A History of the Claims Conference*. Boulder: Westview Press, 1987.
- Zwicker, Lisa Fetheringill. *Dueling Students: Conflict, Masculinity, and Politics in German Universities, 1890-1914*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2011.