

## Introduction

This volume, the second half of “The German-Jewish Press and Jewish History,” whose publication coincides with that of the first, picks up the thread of the four thematic cycles spun in its sister volume – namely, “Identity, Nation, Language in Jewish Periodicals in Europe and Palestine from the Early Nineteenth Century to the Shoah,” “Jewish History and Jewish Memoirs in the German-Jewish Press from the Enlightenment to the Weimar Republic,” “The West in the East, the East in the West: Perceptions and Positions,” and “Concepts of Jewish Culture in the German-Jewish and Yiddish Press” – and adds another three thematic cycles, within which individual contributions are again arranged in chronological order.

In the preface to the first volume the relationship between the German-Jewish press and Jewish history, with the different aspects and approaches it holds out to research, have been outlined in principle; the reader has been introduced to the organizational context and the purpose of this publication as a whole; we have expressed our gratitude to the magnanimous sponsors of the publication and of the seminal conference at Bremen University in summer 2005; and, last not least, the contributions published in that first volume have been presented in their interrelation in terms of content. It is now time to introduce the reader to the thematic priorities and the interrelation between individual contributions of the second and last volume of this publication.

The thematic cycle “Religion and Politics in the European Jewish Press Prior to the Shoah”, the fifth chapter overall, is, as its title indicates, wider in scope than the geographical delimitations suggested by the term “German-Jewish” press in that it analyzes in addition to two Jewish periodicals from Germany and Austria a Hungarian and a Czechoslovak paper before the backdrop of their respective time. The comparison highlights on one hand regional peculiarities that are basically connected to the sociopolitical position and/or the progressive assimilation of the Jewish population of a certain region and makes it clear on the other hand that – regardless of these concerns – the historical Jewish press was also shaped by certain transnational issues.

Both aspects become visible in Eszter Brigitta Gantner’s analysis of *Magyar Zsidó*, an orthodox bilingual periodical published between 1867 and 1870 in German and Hungarian. The periodical has a twofold focus. On one hand it carries on the journalistic discussion that was begun by *Sulamith* in German (1806 ff.) of the struggle between religious tradition and reform as a kind of transnational issue for periodicals, on the other it gives expression – in a manner, incidentally, that strikes one as remarkably modern given its time and circumstances – to the situation of Hungarian Jewry. This was special in several ways, displaying as it did

symptoms of passing through a transitional phase and of lacking a strong unifying tendency.

The position occupied by women in European Jewry in the modern era, particularly within the Jewish community and in the world of journalism is a central concern in Evelyn Adunka's portrait of Clotilde Benedikt, a Viennese Jewish journalist, who in addition to writing for the specifically Jewish press also contributed to a number of periodicals for the general public, such as the daily *Neues Wiener Journal*, which was by no means unique among journalists writing for specifically Jewish periodicals.

In her analysis of the Zionist *Der Schlemiel*, which was published in Berlin from May 1903 onward, Regina Schleicher deals with a Jewish magazine of humor and satire, a truly unusual phenomenon in the German Empire and beyond. Edited by Max Jungmann and welcomed and supported by Theodor Herzl,<sup>2</sup> the magazine took the internal Jewish discussion on anti-Semitism and its rebuttal to a hitherto unknown level by fending off semitophobic clichés and their reception with a mordant irony that was as prone to provoke thoughtfulness as laughter. From a less aggressive point of view, the Viennese *Jüdische Zeitung*, founded in 1907 as a national Jewish weekly, accompanied the Austrian Zionist movement over the relatively long period of fourteen years. After the central organ of the Zionist movement, *Die Welt*, which had been founded by Theodor Herzl, had moved its offices in 1904 from Vienna to Cologne, the *Jüdische Zeitung* served, as Dieter Hecht shows in his article, as the necessary joint platform for the different factions of Austrian Zionism.

The mediating and connective function and intention of the German-Jewish press stands also in the foreground of Daniel Fraenkel's article on the *Neue jüdische Monatshefte* (1916-1920). Founded during World War I as a reaction to war-induced changes in the situation of the Jews by a group of well-known exponents both of the liberal and the Zionist camps in Germany, this remarkable monthly practiced and encouraged the open discussion not only across party lines but also across the East-West dichotomy that carved up German and European Jews into opposing factions. In addition to this, it also explicitly addressed not only Jewish, but also non-Jewish readers. Miroslava Kyselá finally analyzes staff links and the objectives of Jewish children's and youth magazines in interwar Czechoslovakia, the majority of which were Zionist with one orthodox exception.

The next thematic cycle, "Anti-Semitism, Fascism and National Socialism: Reactions and Interpretations, 1880-1943", deals with the diagnosis and rebuttal of the modern, "racially" inspired variant of Jew-hatred in the Jewish press in German, Italian and Hebrew (Palestine). Ever since the age of Restoration in Germany had made the romantic, counter-enlightenment concept of the "Christian national state" fashionable, the German-Jewish press had no choice but to keep on rebuffing anti-Semitic attacks and slurs. The rise of racist anti-Semitism, which sought

---

<sup>2</sup> David A. Brenner's analysis of a fictional series of letters written for the Schlemiel in connection with the Uganda project will be found in the first volume of this work.

to brand ethnic Jewishness as something inherently and irredeemably negative, lent new momentum to these attacks. The beginning of this development can be dated to 1869 and Richard Wagner's essay "Judaism in Music" (in 2<sup>nd</sup> edition), in which the composer loudly and cacophonously presented his version of the theme of "race." Wagner must be considered a precursor and early focal point of the German anti-Semitic movement. Ludwig Philippson showed the absurdity of Wagner's effectively promoted insinuations in his *Allgemeine Zeitung des Judenthums*. However, in his rebuttal he viewed them not as indicative of a movement but as the irrational ramblings of a maverick, a perspective that played down the harshness of reality and continued to do so, as Sonja Weinberg shows in her contribution to this chapter, for several decades to come. She analyzes the position put forward by the *Allgemeine Zeitung des Judenthums*, the most influential German-Jewish paper of the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century, with regard to the violent anti-Jewish attacks in Pomerania and West Prussia and the pogroms in the southern regions of Russia in 1881-1882. Putting the assessments advanced in Philippson's paper into the context of contemporary sources, she demonstrates how the *Allgemeine Zeitung des Judenthums* propagated an appeasing and even euphemistic concept of manifest collective anti-Semitism that remained current until quite recently, when it was deconstructed by research.

In her analysis of the concept of manliness in the *Schild* (1921-1928), the paper of the "Reichsbund Jüdischer Frontsoldaten", Julia Schäfer highlights another strategy for warding off anti-Semitic attacks, namely that of emphasizing historical and cultural characteristics shared by Jews and non-Jews, and focuses on the soldierly ideal of manliness, which was part of the Weimar era's Wilhelminist legacy. Lending its support to this ideal, *Der Schild* was forced to address relevant anti-Jewish clichés propagated by such popular satirical magazines as *Wahrer Jacob* and *Kikeriki*.

Silvia Cresti addresses a repeatedly noted desideratum, namely comparative press research, by examining the positions advanced by Jewish periodicals in Italy and Germany between the 1920s and 1938 with regard to the Jewish population's inclusion in or exclusion from the corresponding majority societies. She reveals the rationale behind the manifest differences in the light of the historically divergent social environment of the Jewish population segments in the countries under investigation before the backdrop of an anti-Semitism and/or fascism that also differed both in quality and line of attack.

Marlen Oehler screens three leading German-Jewish periodicals – *Jüdische Rundschau*, *CV-Zeitung* and *Israelit* – for the extent to which they displayed an awareness of the mounting crisis in the Weimar era's final phase, in particular of the anti-Semitism that was increasingly gaining in virulence at the time. Using quantitative-statistical methodology she concludes that there was indeed a heightened awareness of an impending crisis but that the assessment of its significance and causes differed from case to case.

The *Jüdisches Nachrichtenblatt*, created by Goebbels' fiat after the November Pogrom of 1938 and the concomitant banning of Jewish periodicals, has been

predominantly viewed by research as a product and instrument of Nazi despotism; Clemens Maier focuses on its aspect of Jewish self-assertion. In addition to the ongoing promulgation of regulations and laws that aimed at progressively depriving the Jewish population of their legal status and at their marginalization, the paper also fulfilled, as Clemens Maier has been able to show, communicative tasks and it occasionally conveyed to the knowing reader – as opposed to the outside censor – information and comments on the current situation.

Ilana Nowatzky-Bendet finally studies the reactions to the German war threat in the Jewish Hebrew press published in Palestine between 1933 and 1939. She concludes that the relevant reports and assessments of the time mirror an overlap of an internationally oriented perspective on the one hand with a specifically Palestinian-Jewish one on the other. This is not surprising given the nature of the threat emanating from the National Socialist, anti-Semitic military apparatus, which quickly developed from an initially indirect one to an immediate one.

The final chapter, “Reorientation after the Shoah”, goes beyond the time-span allotted to a history of the many faceted German-Jewish press between the Enlightenment and National Socialism. This history ends in November 1938, as the aforementioned *Jüdisches Nachrichtenblatt* can only be regarded as an isolated, predominantly other-directed coda to mark the end of the former variation-rich interweaving of many voices. Continuing in the traditional vein of plethora of content, zest for debate and the wealth of functions that these media served in the context of Jewish life in Germany until 1933 – or even, if in a considerably reduced manner, until 1938 – was clearly impossible after the Holocaust: their publishers, editors, authors and readers had been murdered or dispersed to the countries where they found refuge.

In this last chapter a total of five articles deal with a new development: the objectives and the functions of Jewish print media in the Federal Republic of Germany, in Austria and in the GDR after 1945. Thomas Pegelow Kaplan starts off this section with a comparison of linguistic concepts for “German” and “Jewish” in the newly re-launched German postwar press. The focus of his attention is on October 1946, a point in time when National Socialist encoding had not yet been entirely neutralized. He compares relevant concepts from the Zionist *Jüdische Rundschau*, which was published in Marburg at the time, with those from the not specifically Jewish, leftist liberal *Frankfurter Rundschau*.

This is followed by Michael John’s subtle description of a range of print media written predominantly in Yiddish for mainly Eastern European survivors of the Holocaust who were penned up in the four DP-camps in the area around Linz after 1945. For the author the function and content of these papers are closely related to the specific situation of these camp inmates who had close ties to the American military authorities and formed a kind of “parallel society” within the Austrian population who kept their distance from them.

Susanne Schönborn then outlines the history of the *Jüdische Allgemeine* that appeared under different names from 1946 to 1999. She addresses the question whether the most representative German-Jewish weekly of the postwar era suc-

ceeded during its existence in faithfully mirroring the state and the development of the Jewish community in Germany and especially whether it can be regarded as having duly recorded the multifaceted discussions among German Jewry and within the German-Jewish communities. She concludes that this was not the case. Being predominantly the mouthpiece of the Central Council of Jews in Germany and in view of the necessity to present a united front in the face of potential anti-Semitic agitation, the paper could not possibly have done full justice to the complex and occasionally divergent situation of the Jews in postwar Germany.

Johannes Schwarz deals with the resonance also outside its Jewish readership of the “phenomenon of a Jewish press in Germany,” to use Jacob Toury’s phrase: he reconstructs the genesis, the run and the – above all, political – significance of the exhibition “Jüdische Presse im 19. Jahrhundert” [The Jewish Press in the 19<sup>th</sup> century], which the International Newspaper Museum in Aachen showed between 1967 and 1971 first in Tel Aviv and Haifa and then in Berkeley, San Francisco, West Berlin, Bonn, Amsterdam, Basel, Zurich and Buenos Aires.

Lothar Mertens winds up the chapter and the volume with his analysis of *Nachrichtenblatt des Verbandes der Jüdischen Gemeinden in der DDR (1949-1989)*, which outlines the situation of a Jewish press under the eyes of a totalitarian state after 1945. A topic that Johannes Schwarz has touched upon by in connection with the exhibition of 1967-1971 emerges here in drastic clarity: the use of Jewish print media for the objectives of the state’s officious politics. Notably in its final phase, which saw increases both in its girth and print-run, the GDR-Jewish *Nachrichtenblatt* hardly served the communication needs or the interests of its Jewish readers any more, of whom only a few were still left in the country in any case; rather it was a commodity designed to be exported to capitalist countries to demonstrate the regime’s religious tolerance and antifascist stance.

This second volume traces in its articles the close connection between the German-Jewish and the European-Jewish press and the modernization and acculturation of Jewry and its internal debates in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Two dominant themes remain present throughout: on one hand this press reacted consistently to anti-Semitism at every single stage during this period, even after the Shoah, on the other the specifically Jewish papers and periodicals ceaselessly documented, annotated and promoted the struggle for the definition and strengthening of a Jewish identity and for the unfolding of Jewish religious and cultural life.