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Disasters and Social Advancement

Jews and Non-Jews in Eastern Europe

Since emancipation, the history of Europe's Jews has been written in two
ways: as the advance from the periphery towards the centre of society
and as a series of disasters. This applies to Eastern Europe in particular.
At the start of the 19th century, over 80 per cent of Ashkenazi Jews lived
there. Their emancipation led to a break with tradition, emigration, accul-
turation, and multiple concepts of identity. Antisemitism and pogroms
were their constant companion. Nationalist forces in East Central Europe
saw the Jewish population as a disruptive element in their efforts to build
nation-states. Dynamism and opportunities for advancement made Sovi-
et Moscow a "new Jerusalem" for urban Jews. The break with civilisation
that was the Holocaust hit the Jews of Eastern Europe particularly hard.
Today only about 4 per cent of the world's Jews live in this area.

The history of European Jewry since Emancipation at the end of the 18th century has
been written two ways: as a sequence of disasters culminating in the Holocaust and as
an unprecedented advancement of a despised minority to the heights of society. Con-
sequently, the 20th century has been declared in a most ambiguous way the "Jewish
century".[1]
This simultaneity of disasters and social advancement can only be plausibly described
in the dimensions of the interaction, transfer, repulsion or attraction between increas-
ingly differentiated milieus and their surroundings. This also applies if one takes a
bird's-eye view, the approach chosen here, to describe and to analyse the history of
Jews and non-Jews in Eastern Europe.
In the last two centuries, a transformation of Judaism has taken place. This was cap-
tured in concepts such as emancipation, modernisation, acculturation, assimilation,
and nationalisation. In the 19th century, emancipation could mean escape, voluntary
or forced, from Jewish tradition just as well as its reconstruction and the reshaping of

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[= OSTEUROPA 12/2005]; "Alte Vorurteile und neue Chancen. Die Juden in den russischen
Streitkräften 1900 bis 1926", OSTEUROPA 12/2003, pp. 1,793–1,809; "Nationalsozialistisches
Regime und Stalin-System. Ein riskanter Vergleich", OSTEUROPA 6/2000, pp. 709–720.
[1] Léon Poliakov, *Geschichte des Antisemitismus*, 1–8 (Worms 1977–1988); Yuri Slezkine,
The Jewish Century (Princeton 2004).

Jewish identity.[2] The direction these movements took was not predetermined. As a rule, they were tied to migration, first urbanisation, then metropolitanisation, and not least of all "emigration", mostly westwards, even as far as America.[3] France, Great Britain, and Germany as well as Romania, Hungary, and Congress Poland (a semi-autonomous administrative entity made up of Russia's westernmost provinces) all proved willing to accept migrants from the eastern lands of the Pale of Settlement, the provinces to which Russia's Jews were largely confined.

At the start of the 19th century, 80–85 per cent of Ashkenazi Jews still lived in Central and Eastern Europe; by the start of the 20th century, the number was merely 50 per cent. Ten per cent lived in Western Europe and over 25 per cent had already migrated to the United States. Starting in 1916–1917, in the middle of the First World War, a new wave of migration – initially more or less forced – also got underway into the Russian interior, which had for the most part previously been off limits to Jews.

Almost all of the Jews of East Central Europe were annihilated in the Holocaust. Today, only some 4 per cent of the world's Jews still live there. In addition, since the mid-1980s, approximately 500,000 Soviet citizens, most of them Jews, have immigrated to the United States, while another million has left for Israel. The vast majority of the world's Jewish population – 12 million of 14 million people – is concentrated in the United States, Israel, or Western Europe.

The East-West Divide in Emancipation during the 19th Century

Well into the 18th century, Ashkenazi Jewry between Strasbourg and Minsk was made up of a diaspora community "mediated by religion and text".[4] In the course of the 19th century, this community fell apart due to the rise of national movements and the creation of nation-states as well as the various new definitions of the Jewish diaspora throughout Europe.

Through emancipation, acculturation, and even assimilation, Jews in the late 18th century began to orient themselves towards the political culture of the states and empires in which they lived. In the west, they tended to be influenced by republican and liberal ideals; in the east, by the second half of the 19th century, the tendency was more to nationalist Zionism or revolutionary Socialism. Despite occasional setbacks, such as the Dreyfus Affair in France (1894), the integration of the Jews in Western Europe took place earlier and proceeded more smoothly than in Central Europe, where there were periodic anti-Jewish disturbances.

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[2] Trude Maurer, "Plädoyer für eine vergleichende Erforschung der jüdischen Geschichte Deutschlands und Osteuropas", *Geschichte und Gesellschaft*, 2 (2001), pp. 303–321; Christoph Schmidt, "Zur Typologie jüdischer Integration in West und Ost", *Geschichte in Wissenschaft und Unterricht*, 3 (2003), pp. 140–153.

[3] Lloyd P. Gartner, "The Great Jewish Migration – Its East European Background", *Tel Aviver Jahrbuch für deutsche Geschichte,* 27 (1998), pp. 107–133; Christoph Schmidt, "Zur Neubewertung der jüdischen Emigration aus Osteuropa in die USA vor dem Ersten Weltkrieg", *Zeitschrift für Ostmitteleuropa-Forschung*, 1 (2005), pp. 128–137.

[4] Dan Diner: „Geschichte der Juden. Paradigma einer europäischen Historie", in Gerald Strouzh et al., eds., *Annäherungen an eine europäische Geschichtsschreibung* (Vienna 2003), pp. 85–103, p. 85.

Starting in 1880, pogroms repeatedly broke out in Eastern Europe. Jews in the Russian Empire and in Romania were subject to legal discrimination. A stubborn popular Judeophobia and antisemitic press campaigns fed rumours of Jewish ritual murders, which continued to circulate in Central and Eastern Europe at the start of the 20th century – in some places even after the Second World War. Occasionally, alleged cases of ritual murder went to court, for example, in Tiszaeszlár, Hungary (1882–1883), Polná, Moravia, (1899–1900), and in Kiev (1911–1913). On such occasions, one could see whether obscurant or enlightened views dominated among the general public.[5]

The intensity of the Judeophobia in Europe is all but impossible to measure, for the scale of the violence against Jews is not in and of itself a reliable indicator. Both before and after 1914, outbreaks of violence seemed to be contingent primarily upon the presence and authority of the state order. In the Russian Empire and Romania, where state institutions were weak, pogroms occurred more often than in countries with a strong sense of state order, such as in the Habsburg Empire or the German Empire, where violence was limited to disturbances, as was frequently the case in Prague.[6]

The attention given such excesses should not eclipse the fact that in the first half of the 19th century Jews were granted equal rights almost everywhere in Central Europe, even in Congress Poland. The Russian Empire seemed to follow this development with some reluctance. Concepts of "enlightenment", "improvement", and "productivisation" of the Jews were pursued by Berlin and Vienna as well as – *more moscovitico* – by St. Petersburg.[7]

In 1827, the military recruitment of Jews was introduced in Russia. Jewish colonies were established in rural areas. Jewish proponents of the Enlightenment took part in reforming the religious schools (*heder*). State-monitored rabbinical seminaries were established. This was accompanied by the displacement of the Jews from village communities and a revocation of their right to sell alcoholic beverages. Ultimately, in the course of the first half of the 19th century, the Jews were evacuated from the borderlands of the Russian Empire so as to stop smuggling, which was considered a Jewish trade. All of these measures were implemented in Congress Poland more radically and more swiftly than in the other parts of Russia.

If one takes official equal rights as the criterion of Jewish advancement, then this was largely concluded in Western Europe during or shortly after the Napoleonic era. In Central Europe, including Congress Poland, this was achieved in the 1860s. Only the

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[5] Andrew Handler, *Blood Label at Tiszaeszlar* (Boulder 1980); Albert Lindemann, *The Jew Accused: Three Antisemitic Affairs (Dreyfus, Beilis, Frank)* (Cambridge, MA, 1991); Hillel J. Kieval, *Languages of Community. Jewish Experience in the Czech Lands* (Berkeley 2000), pp. 199–209; Johannes T. Gross, *Ritualmordbeschuldigungen im Kaiserreich (1871–1914)* (Berlin 2002).

[6] Christoph Stölzl, *Kafkas böses Böhmen. Zur Sozialgeschichte eines Prager Juden* (Munich 1975); Kieval, *Languages of Community*, pp. 166–167, 184–197, and 210; Stefan Rohrbacher, *Gewalt und Biedermeier: Antijüdische Ausschreitungen in Vormärz und Revolution (1815–1848/49)* (Frankfurt/Main 1993); Michael I. Aronson, *Troubled Waters: The Origins of the 1881 Anti-Jewish Pogroms in Russia* (Pittsburgh 1990); John Klier, Shlomo Lambroza, eds., *Pogroms. Anti-Jewish Violence in Modern Russian History* (Cambridge 1992).

[7] These catchwords influenced policy guidelines from the Jewish Enlightenment to the advent of modern Zionism. "Enlightenment" consisted of liberation from Jewish tradition. "Improvement" stood for overcoming bad habits associated with commerce and usury and obtaining professional qualification. "Productivisation" entailed moving Jews from the allegedly unproductive fields of wholesale and retail trade into agriculture and handcrafts.

Russian Revolution of 1917 produced a general equality of all citizens, including the Jews, throughout the former realm of the Tsar. Whereas a man of Jewish origin, such as Benjamin Disraeli, could become prime minister of England in the 1860s, it was not until after the First World War that Jews occupied high office in Central and Eastern Europe. Such different personalities as Walther Rathenau and Leon Trotsky are perhaps the most famous examples. However, the east-west divide in business and commerce as well as academia and science was bound to have been less clear.

In Russia, the establishment of the Pale of Settlement from Courland (today a part of Latvia) to Ukraine at the outset of the 19th century ran counter to European trends as well as the principle of "convergence". This restriction on the freedom of movement aimed to keep the Jews out of the Russian interior. After the Crimean War (1853–1856), the barriers between the interior and the western parts of the empire became more permeable for craftsmen, skilled workers, and educated persons.[8]

This was accompanied by Jewish youth's euphoric turn towards Russian culture, which was experienced as "illumination" and liberation. Vis-à-vis modern Russian culture, also in its oppositional and revolutionary manifestations, Jewish rituals and Jewish rabbinical teachings appeared provincial and hopelessly old-fashioned. No other non-Russian ethnic group so eagerly embraced Russian culture as Jewish pupils and students, who hungered for education. Quite ironically, this took place in Polish cities and in regions where the majority of the population in the countryside was what we today call Ukrainian, Belarusian, or Lithuanian.[9]

However, with the onset of Russification in the western provinces in the 1880s, no other group was rebuffed like the Jews – educated and uneducated alike. This was seen in the pogroms in the first half of 1880s and the "provisional rules" in 1882. These actions and subsequent decrees, such as the introduction of numerus clausus for Jews at institutions of higher learning in 1887, conveyed a dramatic shift in official policy. Where there had previously been a successive dismantling of class barriers for the Jews, discriminatory measures were now being introduced, which struck the very segment of the Jewish population that was especially mobile, ambitious, and willing to integrate.[10] The new regulations may well have corresponded to antisemitic currents and demands as they existed in other European countries, but nowhere was discrimination enforced by law and so little undertaken against pogroms and other excesses as in the tsarist empire.

This stood in sharp contrast to developments in the Habsburg monarchy. Especially in Hungary, Jews – often ennobled ones – working as bankers, entrepreneurs, estate

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[8]   Matthias Rest, *Die russische Judengesetzgebung von der ersten Teilung bis zum "Polozhenie dlia evreev" (1804)* (Wiesbaden 1975); Michael Stanislawski, *Tsar Nicolas and the Jews. The Transformation of Jewish Society in Russia, 1825–1855* (Philadelphia 1983); John Doyle Klier, *Russia Gathers her Jews. The Origins of the Jewish Question in Russia 1772–1825* (DeKalb 1986); Verena Dohrn, *Jüdische Eliten im Russischen Reich. Aufklärung und Integration im 19. Jahrhundert* (Cologne and Weimar 2008).

[9]   Leonid Grossman, ed., *Die Beichte eines Juden an Dostojewski* (Munich 1927); Benjamin Nathan, *Beyond the Pale. The Jewish Encounter with Late Imperial Russia* (Berkeley et al. 2002).

[10] Heinz-Dietrich Löwe, *Antisemitismus als reaktionäre Utopie* (Hamburg 1978); Jonathan Frankel, *Prophecy and Politics. Socialism, Nationalism and the Russian Jews 1862–1917* (London, New York 1981); John Doyle Klier, *Imperial Russia's Jewish Question 1855–1881* (Cambridge 1995).

managers, or tenant farmers made up a constitutive part of the elite alongside the aristocracy, the military, and the upper echelons of the bureaucracy. Unlike in Cisleithania (the Austrian part of Austria-Hungary), this coalition of elites managed to hold its own until 1918 and to defend itself against democratisation.[11] A partly plebeian, partly bourgeoisie antisemitism – as existed among the Czechs, German Austrians, and Poles – simply found no comparable level of broad support in Hungary before 1918. This was to change dramatically after 1918.

Poland, the western part of the Russian Empire, and Romania were different from Western Europe inasmuch as these lands, even after 1900, were home to a mass of impoverished Jews, a part of whom was also still living pretty much according to tradition.[12] It was only the differing pace of development in Western, Central, and Eastern Europe that eventually created the distinction between a "western Jewry" and an "eastern Jewry". Jews and non-Jews from the west often associate this term with a sometimes romanticised, sometimes detested world of poverty, tradition, and "fanaticism", but also a pious and unspoiled essence, whose loss could be bemoaned in the west.[13]

Well into the middle of the 19th century, the slow social transformation of the relatively densely settled Jews of Eastern Europe led to continuous confrontations between milieus that clung to Hasidic and orthodox traditions and the proponents of the Enlightenment, who sought to attain their goals with the help of state authorities. The confrontations over assimilation, territorialism, cultural autonomy, Zionism, or confessionalisation (Jews as Russians or Poles of the "Mosaic faith"), which ensued after the middle of the 19th century, show that no agreement could be found on what it exactly meant to be Jewish. Should Jewishness be conserved, transformed, or overcome through assimilation? Among rather conservative Jews, tradition had become "traditionalistic", while religion was increasingly understood as folklore or as a culture to be preserved in fragments.

It was initially the economically successful Jews – some of whom had come from the west – who were most enthusiastic about the Enlightenment and sought to reform Jewish values and rituals. By the second generation, they fully embraced the secular educational opportunities of the respective national high cultures. Often, they converted.[14] These were the groups – in Warsaw, Budapest, Lemberg, and St. Petersburg – that financed the construction of imposing synagogues in which organs were built, cantors appointed, and sermons delivered. At first, services in such synagogues were

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[11] Wolfdieter Bihl, "Das Judentum Ungarns. 1780–1914", in *Studia Judaica Austriaca III: Studien zum ungarischen Judentum* (Eisenstadt 1976), pp. 17–39; William O. McCagg, *Jewish Nobles and Geniuses in Modern Hungary* (Boulder 1986); Rolf Fischer, *Entwicklungsstufen des Antisemitismus in Ungarn 1867–1939* (Munich 1989).

[12] Lucy Dawidowicz, ed., *The Golden Tradition* (New York 1967); Mark Zborowski and Elizabeth Herzog, *Life is with the People. The Jewish Little Town of Eastern Europe* (New York 1953).

[13] Sander L. Gilman, *Jüdischer Selbsthaß. Antisemitismus und die verborgene Sprache der Juden* (Frankfurt am Main 1993), pp. 190–210; Trude Maurer, "Die Wahrnehmung der Ostjuden in Deutschland 1910–1933", in *LBI Information. Nachrichten aus den Leo-Baeck-Instituten in Jerusalem, London, New York und den Arbeitsgemeinschaften des LBI in Deutschland*, 7 (1997), pp. 308–326. See in addition the contribution by Stephen Aschheim in this volume. pp. 61–74.

[14] Verena Dohrn, "Jüdische Aufklärung und staatliche Akkulturationspolitik im Zarenreich. Zur Historiographie des Transformationsprocesses von der Haskala zum prosvescenie. Ein Forschungsbericht", *Judaica. Beiträge zum Verstehen des Judentums*, 60 (2004), pp. 53–70.

often held in German, the language of the Jewish Enlightenment, later mostly in the respective national languages or in Hebrew.[15] Perhaps the most enduring struggle raged in Hungary between the Neologe (reform) movement and orthodox Jews. There, no later than the 1850s, a minority of Jews had risen to form a new liberal cartel of elites, whereas a large part of the community remained orthodox.[16] In Warsaw, the central synagogue was called the "German shul", a term that captured the elitist and "alien" stamp on the community that worshiped there.

In the Russian Empire, Jewish youth studied at domestic universities or went abroad, mainly to the German Empire, where they soon encountered forms of modern anti-semitism.[17] Since the 1860s, radical opposition movements had begun to emerge from among university students as a whole – not just Jewish ones. Like many young Russians and Ukrainians, several generations of young Jews experienced the break with their culture of origin as something elemental; sometimes, it was also the result of a conscious act. They distanced themselves from traditional forms of religious practice and despised the existing regime, which they held responsible for all of society's shortcomings.

While state offices remained closed to Jews, educated milieus, including the radical counter-culture, appeared to be comparatively open. They found themselves still in a precarious phase of formation, in which Jews and non-Jews were involved in the same way. At this point, they were competing with the old elites and thus found themselves in latent or open opposition to the regime. Therefore, from the viewpoint of leading Petersburg circles, opposition, terror and Jews were almost identical.

Social-statistical data show that the percentage of Jews in the revolutionary movements and the leading bodies of revolutionary parties was indeed high, that did not make them Jewish organisations. The norms of the radical intelligentsia and revolutionary counter-culture – asceticism, moral rigor, belief in dogma, and militancy to the point of readiness for violence – were characteristic of Jews as well as non-Jews.[18] The young Jewish revolutionaries, however, were not representative of Russia's Jewish middle-class. Only the General Jewish Labour Union, better known as the Bund, had been able to gain a mass following of plebeian supporters since the 1890s. With that, parts of the Jewish lower classes were also mobilised and thus entered the world of modern politics.[19]

As bankers, businessmen, wholesalers, and retailers, Jews were at the same time leading representatives of capitalism, especially in the western parts of the Russian Empire. From time immemorial, the Jews had served as intermediaries between the aristocracy and the world of the peasants and built up extensive trade networks. As in the doomed Polish "nobles' commonwealth", the Jews had formed an ethno-religious commercial "class" or strata of intermediaries in the western parts of the Russian Empire – as well as in Congress Poland, Galicia, Romania, and in part Hungary.

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[15] Alexander Guterman, "The Origins of the Great Synagogue", in Tlomackie Street, W. Bartoszewski, A. Polonsky, eds., *The Jews in Warsaw* (Oxford 1991), pp. 181–211.

[16] Walter Pietsch, *Zwischen Reform und Orthodoxie. Der Eintritt des ungarischen Judentums in die moderne Welt* (Berlin 1999).

[17] Peter Hartmut Rüdiger, ed., *Schnorrer, Verschwörer. Bombenwerfer? Studenten aus dem russischen Reich an deutschen Hochschulen vor dem Ersten Weltkrieg* (Frankfurt/Main 2001).

[18] Anna Geifman, *Thou shalt kill. Revolutionary Terrorism in Russia, 1894–1917* (Princeton 1993); Erich Haberer, *Jews and Revolution in Nineteenth Century Russia* (Cambridge 1995).

[19] Henry J. Tobias, *The Jewish Bund in Russia from its Origins to 1905* (Stanford 1972).

Jews and Antisemitism in the New States of East Central Europe

In the First and Second World Wars, the areas of dense Jewish settlement in Poland and the former Pale of Settlement as well as Bukovina became a giant battlefield for German (including Austro-Hungarian) and Russian or Soviet offensives and retreats, which inflicted enormous destruction on the region's inhabitants, towns, and villages. The Russian Revolution and in the Polish-Russian War of 1920, effectively a continuation of the First World War, with their numerous pogroms against the Jewish inhabitants resulted in a below-average growth in the Jewish population in the eastern half of the new Polish Republic and in the western parts of the Soviet Union.[20]

German occupation policy in the First World War was harsh and exploitive. Some among the occupation authorities held racist, antisemitic prejudices.[21] From this point of view, the First World War seems like a dress rehearsal for the Second World War, but in comparison with Russian policy in the western border lands of the tsarist empire after 1914, German occupation seemed amicable to the Jews. Official policy defined Judaism as a confession and thus supported the development of community life and the role of the rabbi. In turn, Russian nationalists and Polish National Democrats, who mistrusted the Jews as representatives of "Germanism", made reference to this policy in anti-Jewish propaganda. They saw only unreliability and treason in the Jews' position between armies, nationalities, and political parties.[22]

The sometimes violent expressions of Judeophobia in Eastern Europe after the war arose from many sources. Nowhere was it so clearly influenced by ideological and racist concepts as in Germany. The Judeophobia of Catholic circles, including the clergy, resented the Jews as the alleged representatives of moral decay and materialism, by which they understood as a rule Liberalism, Socialism, or even Communism. For them, Jews stood to a certain extent for all of the evils of modernity.[23] In many points, their prejudices overlapped with those of nationalist circles, which cultivated the stereotypes of *żydokomuna*, or "Judeo-Communism", and "folksfront", an alleged popular front of Socialist and Communist parties. As in Germany, the Jews were considered agents of Bolshevism.[24] The prominence of Communist and Bolshevik

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[20] Jurij Larin, *Evrei i antisemitizm v SSSR* (Leningrad 1929), pp. 55–56; Werner Beneke, *Die Ostgebiete der zweiten polnischen Republik* (Cologne 1999), pp. 27–40.

[21] Steven E. Aschheim, "Eastern Jews, German Jews and Germany's Ostpolitik in the First World War", *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book,* 28 (1983), pp. 351–365; Trude Maurer, "Medizinalpolizei und Antisemitismus. Die deutsche Politik der Grenzsperre gegen Ostjuden im Ersten Weltkrieg", *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Europas*, 33 (1985), pp. 205–230.

[22] Konrad Zielinski, *Stosunki polsko-żydowskie na ziemiach Królestwa Polskiego w czasie pierwszej wojny światowej* (Lublin 2005).

[23] Ronald Modras, *The Catholic Church and Antisemitism. Poland 1933–1939* (Chur and Berlin 1993); Ute Caumans, *Die polnischen Jesuiten, der Przeglad Powszechny und der polnische Katholiszismus in der zweiten Republik. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der katholischen Presse Polens zwischen den Weltkriegen (1918–1939)* (Dortmund 1996); Viktoria Pollmann, *Untermieter im christlichen Haus. Die Kirche und die jüdische Frage in Poland anhand der Bistumspresse der Metropolis Krakau 1926–1939* (Wiesbaden 2001).

[24] George L. Mosse, Bela Vargo, eds., *Jews and Non-Jews in Eastern Europe* (Jerusalem 1974); Ezra Mendelsohn, *Jews in East Central Europe Between the World Wars* (Bloomington 1983); Mariana Hausleitner, Monika Katz, eds., *Juden und Antisemitismus im östlichen Europa* (Wiesbaden 1995); Jörg Hoensch u.a., eds., *Judenemanzipation – Antisemitismus – Verfolgung in Deutschland, Österreich-Ungarn, den böhmischen Ländern und in der Slowakei* (Essen 1999).

activists of Jewish origin seemed to lend this catchword a certain amount of credibility in various areas of unrest, from Petrograd to Poland, from Budapest to Munich.

In Hungary, as in Germany, defeat in the First World War and revolution opened the door to a violent hatred of Jews. In the course of the "White Terror" of the counter-revolution in 1919 in Hungary, excesses occurred against Jews in general as the alleged sympathizers of Bela Kun, the leader of the short lived Hungarian Soviet Republic. Persons of Jewish, largely bourgeois origin had in fact dominated the Communist leadership.[25] But, as in Russia, they were hardly representative of all the Jews, since the large majority belonged to the middle class and were for that very reason seldom inclined to revolution. Moreover, among Hungary's bourgeois Jews and Jewish bankers, there were more than a few who helped co-finance Miklós Horthy's counter-revolution against Kun.[26]

If, before 1918, the Jews had been welcome in the Kingdom of Hungary as the people who, due to their often demonstrative assimilation, secured the Magyar majority against the Romanians, Germans, and Slovaks, after 1919, they were seen as scapegoats and irksome competitors. In 1920, numerus clausus was formally introduced at institutes of higher learning. The result was a considerable *brain drain*.

In Poland, the National Democrats had considered the Jews a disturbing factor in the process of nation-building even before 1914, because Jews dominated in the promising mid-field of retail and wholesale trade. After the First World War, Poland was considered "overpopulated". This "problem" was to be resolved by the emigration of the Jews and the promotion of the Poles into their positions. "Overpopulation" was also a theme of German "research on the east" (*Ostforschung*), which went along with the antisemitic turn contained within this demographic analysis.[27]

Like the majority of the urban and rural population, the Jewish minorities in the new or expanded states of East Central Europe suffered from the lack of jobs, limits on emigration (which the United States had imposed at the start of the 1920s), the disruption of trade relations, the new shape of national markets, domestic political crises, and ultimately the global economic crisis. In addition, there was also the nationalisation or state control of numerous economic sectors, which usually entailed the displacement of Jews. For ambitious Jews, there were various kinds of informal discrimination such as "Jewish benches" at universities and similar forms of harassment.[28]

However, even if the Jews of Poland, Hungary, and Romania were under a great deal of pressure by the end of the 1930s, many of the remaining pluralistic societies of East Central Europe provided them with a variety of cultural, even political opportunities that had an effect on everyday life. The density of Jewish settlement in certain

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[25] Patai calls them "ex-Jews". Raphael Patai, *The Jews of Hungary* (Detroit 1980), p. 464.

[26] McCagg, *Jewish Nobles*, pp. 16 and 41.

[27] Patai, *The Jews*, pp. 358–364; Götz Aly, *"Endlösung". Völkerverschiebung und der Mord an den europäischen Juden* (Frankfurt am Main 1995); Jan M. Piskorski, "Deutsche Ostforschung und polnische Westforschung", *Berliner Jahrbuch für Osteuropäische Geschichte*, 1/1996, pp. 379–389.

[28] L. Motzkin, *La campagne antisémite en Pologne* (Paris 1932); Jacob Letschinsky, *Der wirtschaftliche Zusammenbruch der Juden in Deutschland und Polen* (Geneva and Paris 1936); William W. Hagen, "Before the 'Final Solution': Toward a Comparative Analysis of Political Anti-Semitism in Interwar Germany and Poland", *The Journal of Modern History*, 68 (1996), pp. 351–381.

quarters of large cities or in small market towns also often led to antisemitic, but largely unsystematic state measures, which only indirectly affected Jews.[29]

Communist "Jerusalem"? Jews as Victims and Perpetrators

The cultural and political life of the Jews in post-revolutionary Russia cannot easily be reduced to a common denominator. From the First World War to the Polish-Russian War of 1920, many of the Jews in the western territories suffered a series of reprisals and pogroms. Another part of the Jews in these territories and in the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic experienced an unprecedented social advancement in the years that followed. In party work, administration, education, and culture, persons of Jewish origin were "overproportionately" represented in Russia and the western Soviet republics. Better educated Jews profited from the expansion of government agencies and sometimes assumed posts abandoned by members of the former propertied and educated strata. To some extent, urban Jews acted as a sort of ersatz-intelligentsia in the 1920s and 1930s.[30] For many Jews, Moscow became the "new Jerusalem". The Soviet Union also enjoyed great popularity among eastern Jewish emigrants in the United States.[31]

For contemporaries, the strong presence of Jews (alongside Poles and Latvians) first in the Cheka (*Chrezvychainaia Komissiia*) and then in the GPU (*Gosudarstvennoe Politicheskoe Upravlenie*), the party's coercive apparatus, was conspicuous and scandalous. Especially in Ukraine, in some respects a centre of counter-revolution within the revolution, Jews must have dominated in the Cheka and GPU. They represented the city and the "proletarian" Russian centre, which, with slogans of class struggle and a great deal of violence, had extracted from Ukraine's rural population all that could be extracted during the Civil War.[32]

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[29] Aleksander Hertz, *żydzi w kulturze polskiej* (Paris 1961); Israel Gutman et al., eds., *The Jews Between the Two World Wars* (Hannover and London 1989); Klaus Peter Friedrich, "Juden und jüdisch-polnische Beziehungen in der Zweiten Polnischen Republik (1918–1939)", *Zeitschrift für Ostmitteleuropa-Forschung*, 4 (1997), pp. 535–560; Gertrud Pickhan, "Übersetzung, Interkulturalität, Kontakte. Themen der osteuropäisch-jüdischen Geschichte", Osteuropa 3/2008, pp. 117–124.

[30] Arthur Ruppin, *Die soziale Struktur der Juden*, 1–2 (Berlin 1930–1932); Dietrich Beyrau, "Aus der Subalternität in die Sphären der Macht. Die Juden im Zarenreich und in Sowjetrussland (1860–1930)", in Jörg Baberowski, ed., *Krieg, Revolution und Gewalt im 20. Jahrhundert* (Göttingen 2006), pp. 60–93, 82–83; Oleg V. Budnickij, *Rossiiskie evrei mezhdu krasnymi i belymi (1917–1920)* (Moscow 2006), pp. 140–150.

[31] Gabriele Freitag, *Nächstes Jahr in Moskau! Die Zuwanderung von Juden in die sowjetische Metropole 1917–1932* (Gottingen 2004); Tony Michels, *A Fire in their Hearts. Yiddish Socialists in New York* (Cambridge, MA, and London 2005).

[32] Iu. Shapoval et al., eds., *ChK-GPU-NKVD v Ukraine. Osoby, fakty, dokumenty* (Kiev 1997).

The Myth of the Political Commissar

The political commissar in the command staffs of the Red Army was to become an emblematic figure of "Judeo-Bolshevism". Introduced by the Bolsheviks as a controlling authority within the military, the commissars and their subordinates among the troops, the "political leaders" (*politruki*), had the task of overseeing non-Bolshevik or even anti-Bolshevik officers, disciplining unwilling soldiers, and "enlightening" the disgruntled population close to the front, i.e., agitating and motivating the peasants, or simply forcing them, to make deliveries and to provide aid. Ultimately, they were to set in motion the "class struggle" in the countryside.

Among contemporaries, the figures of the political commissar and the political leader evoked completely different associations and almost mythical notions. There was the elitist self-portrait of the political commissar as the "soul" of the Workers' and Peasants' Red Army, the educator of the "unconscious" proletarian masses. The flip side was reflected in the popular stigmatising equation of Jews and Communists: "Beat the Jews, chase away the commissars, save the revolution!"[33] A new order of above and below took the place of the old hierarchy of master and servant: "The Jews were already annoying beforehand. Now, they want to sit on our backs."[34]

The counter-revolutionary myth of the identity between Jews and Bolsheviks seemed to find confirmation in the many Jewish actors, starting with Trotsky and hardly ending with Bela Kun or Rozaliia Zemliachka. After the Bolshevik conquest of the Crimea, Kun and Zemliachka had to answer for a massacre of "white" officers and refugees that turned the Crimea into an "all-Russian mass grave".[35]

The mythical demonisation of the (Jewish) political commissars ultimately fed into the "Commissar Order", which was issued by the High Command of the German Armed Forces on 6 June 1941. This order stipulated that in the coming war with the Soviet Union political commissars were not to be treated as prisoners of war, but to be shot.[36]

Soviet Options: Phase-Out or Transformation

The share of persons of Jewish origin among the commissars or political leaders cannot be determined with any certainty. The scant statistical data on national origin available generally suggest a picture similar to that of other occupational groups located within or affiliated with the party, the coercive apparatus, and the councils: The share of Jews was above average for the general population, perhaps above average for the urban population as well. This may be true especially for Ukraine and Belarus.

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[33] Mark von Hagen, *Soldiers in the Proletarian Dictatorship* (Ithaca and London 1990), p. 82; Slezkine, *The Jewish Century*, pp. 175–201.

[34] S.A. Pavliuchenkov, *Voennyi kommunizm v Rossii. Vlast' i massy* (Moscow 1997), p. 256.

[35] Ibid. pp. 220–225; Vladimir Buldakov, *Krasnaia smuta. Priroda i posledstviia revoliutsionnogo nasiliia* (Moscow 1997), p. 242.

[36] The office of the political commissar as reintroduced in 1937 had little to do with the generation that had imposed a political straitjacket on the Red Army during the Civil War, see Felix Römer, *Der Kommissarbefehl. "Sind sofort mit der Waffe zu erledigen". Die Wehrmacht und NS-Verbrechen an der Ostfront 1941/42* (Paderborn 2008).

Jews were more strongly represented in the leadership than among the rank and file, with whom the population and the members of the Red Army had to deal with as a rule. In the spirit of revolutionary internationalism, the questionnaires filled out during the Civil War and the 1920s inquired about class origin rather than nationality. As Trotsky put it, due to the antisemitism of the revolution's enemies and the plebeian hatred of Jews within the party, Jewish origin was not a taboo, but was instead – aside from the occasional anti-antisemitism campaigns – a non-topic.[37] Given the hostile environment, the party, with its soon to be standardised norms and code of conduct, became "fortress" and "home" for the social climbers of all nationalities, including Jews. Other ties lost their significance, for example, ethnic origin.

In their missionary zeal, their belief in the "enlightenment" and education of the peasants and soldiers, their devotedness to doctrine, and their political absolutism, one can glimpse a kind of mental transfer of notions of the sacred. However, this was true for non-Jewish groups as well. Socialism as a vision and revolution as a struggle had taken on a absorbent function similar to that of nationalism among the middle classes of West and Central Europe.

> The strongest movement of the eastern Jewish youth ... is called Socialism, revolution. It negates the nationhood of the Jews, leads away from it, consciously and defiantly so; it leads astray from each special existence to the common form of Russian man.[38]

Seen within this context, the Soviet Union created an eastern variation of assimilation, that of the ex-Jew or the non-Jewish Jew. Revolution – instead of baptism, as in the 19th century – was the ticket to European culture.[39]

Leninist and Stalinist nationality theory had originally defined the Jews as a "caste", which would disappear during the transition to Socialism. But after 1920, Bolshevik policy picked up on the tradition of the Bund, which had seen the Jewish proletariat as the core of a secular Jewish nationality and had sought to make their little respected "jargon", Yiddish, the national language of the Jews. Jewish culture in the Soviet Union had to orient itself strictly along the lines of secularism and cut all of its ties to religion and the Hebrew language, which was central to Judaism as a faith as well as the Zionist movement.[40]

In the Soviet Union, those Jews who succeeded in achieving prominence were those who found their "home" in the party or in Russian culture, those who did not know what to do with their Jewishness and were reminded of their Jewish origin only by others, if at all. Trotsky is the most prominent example.

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[37] V.P. Danilov, "Trotskii zashchishchaetsia", *Voprosy Istorii KPSS*, 5 (1990), pp. 32–43; Matthias Vetter, *Antisemiten und Bolschewiki. Zum Verhältnis von Sowjetsystem und Judenfeindschaft 1917–1939* (Berlin 1995), pp. 171–212.

[38] Arnold Zweig, *Das ostjüdische Antlitz. Zu fünfzig Steinzeichnungen von Hermann Struck* (Berlin 1920), pp. 74–75.

[39] Isaac Deutscher, *Die ungelöste Judenfrage. Zur Dialektik von Antisemitismus und Zionismus* (Berlin 1977), p. 31.

[40] Gennady Estraikh, *Soviet Yiddish. Language Planning and Linguistic Development* (Oxford 1999); Anna Shternshis, *Soviet and Kosher. Jewish Popular Culture in the Soviet Union, 1923–1939* (Bloomington 2006).

The fact that Jews in major cities and industrial areas were interested in sending their children to Russian schools confirms the irresistible pressure towards acculturation and participation in the Russian "lead culture", even in those places where Bolsheviks of Jewish origin attempted to make Yiddish the national language of the Jews and to establish a Yiddish-influenced national culture. The trend towards acculturation proved to be irresistible, perhaps unavoidable, even in those places, such as Poland, where there existed a special consciousness among the Jews that was more distinctly influenced by ethnicity and confession than in the Soviet Union.[41]

As an urban population group that been previously discriminated against, a sizeable part of the Jewish population proved comparatively receptive to the offers Soviet policies extended them: By distancing themselves from Jewish tradition, by reducing national content to folklore (or submitting to a change of national identity), by being receptive to Soviet internationalism, and not least of all, by using opportunities for social advancement and education available to them, they anticipated the behaviour patterns that would be practiced by other urban population groups and scattered nationalities after the Second World War.

In the Soviet Union of the 1920s, there was also an aspect of Jewish existence that was hardly any different from the one in Poland, Romania, or Lithuania. Because Jews were traditionally active in commercial sectors, "anti-capitalist" policy during the Civil War and anti-commercial ideas and practices within the party during the phase of the New Economic Policy (NEP) had an impact on a considerable part of Jewish merchants, businessmen, and craftsmen. Many were able to save themselves in cooperatives; but independent craftsmen, merchants, and businessmen were considered "capitalists" and a part of the "bourgeoisie", no matter how unimportant their "capital" might have been. They were accordingly subjected to discrimination and harassed.[42]

In the western Soviet republics, the Jews thus represented the largest part of the formally disadvantaged groups, the *lishentsy* (the disfranchised), as well as the unemployed. On the other hand, in the big cities, the "NEP-men" (*nepmany*) with their nouveau-riche and fortune-hunting airs were irritatingly visible. They were the object of envy, hate, and public stigmatisation. That a large part of the NEP-men were Jews in turn served to confirm traditional prejudices. The rather alien term *nepman* even had a Jewish connotation to it. The rhetoric of the class struggle and the propaganda of the anti-religious campaigns were capable of conveying anti-Jewish prejudices – even if unintentionally.[43] That such inclinations were not limited only to the "backward" bourgeois and petit-bourgeois milieus, as Bolshevik theory would like to have one believe, is seen in the massive anti-Jewish, quite conventional reservations against Trotsky as a potential party leader after Lenin's death.[44]

On the eve of the Holocaust, there was a growing share of persons of Jewish origin in Eastern Europe, especially in the Russian Federation, without any communal, religious, or even folkloric connection to Judaism. Whether one should describe them as

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[41] Miriam Eisenstein, *Jewish Schools in Poland, 1919–1939* (New York 1950).

[42] Alan M. Ball, *Russia's Last Capitalists: The Nepmen, 1921–1929* (Berkeley 1987), pp. 28–41, 68–80.

[43] Ball, *Russia's Last Capitalists*, pp. 99–108; Robert Weinberg, "Demonizing Judaism in the Soviet Union During the 1920s", *Slavic Review*, 67, 1 (2006), pp. 120–153.

[44] L. Koseleva, N. Teptsov, eds., *Smert' Lenina i narodnaia molva v spetsdoneseniiakh OGUP*, *Neizvestnaia Rossiia. XX vek*, 4 (Moscow 1993), pp. 9–24.

Jews is a question of perspective. In his famous work from 1945, Sartre was inclined to define being a Jew as a label and a prejudice of the antisemites: "Far from experience producing his idea of the Jew, it was the latter which explained his experience. If the Jew did not exist, the anti-Semite would invent him."[45] Sartre's view was largely determined by the fact that Jews in France, and in Germany until 1933, were so acculturated, even assimilated that – as Stanisław Lec wrote – it required the "divining nose" of the antisemite to detect one.[46]

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, a sometimes strange, morally and politically charged debate arose concerning the Jews' share of guilt in Communist crimes. Such a debate adheres to a worldview defined exclusively by ethnicity and normally fails to grasp the complexity of processes, if it is not outright antisemitic.[47]

The Holocaust and the Non-Jewish Population in Eastern Europe

A description of the course of the Holocaust and the conduct of the Jews, the actions of the perpetrators, and the reactions of the bystanders in Eastern Europe cannot be provided here.[48] Therefore, the following remarks will be limited to the factors that influenced the behaviour of the region's various population groups in response to the mass murder of the Jews.

Although the situation in the space between the Baltic and the Black Seas varied sharply after 1938–1939, some general principles and characteristics can be recognised that are valid for each individual area, even if with varying degrees of emphasis. Although Judeophobia existed in the countries of East Central Europe, the systematic disfranchisement and murder of the Jews was brought to the region by the Germans. However, the prewar situation, distribution and intensity of enmity towards the Jews, and the presence of Jews among local elites (as in Hungary) played a certain role in how National-Socialist policies were implemented. The status of a region or country within the German sphere of influence after 1938–1939 was also important: an ally (e.g. Romania and Hungary); an administrative unit under German control with rudimentary indigenous administrations (e.g. Protectorate Bohemia and Moravia or the Baltic general commissariats within Reich Commissariat Ostland); or an occupied area with native administration only at the community level (e.g. the General Gov-

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[45] Jean-Paul Sartre, *Anti-Semite and Jew*, George J. Becker, trans. (New York 1965), p. 13.

[46] Stanislav Lec, "Auch die Antisemiten erkennt man an ihren Nasen. Den witternden". *Neue Unfrisierte Gedanken* (Munich 1964), p. 64.

[47] Sonja Margolina, *Das Ende der Lügen. Russland und die Juden im 20. Jahrhundert* (Berlin 1992); Johannes Rogalla von Biberstein, *"Jüdischer Boschewismus". Mythos und Realität* (Dresden 2002); the contributions by David Shneer, Aleksander Etkind and Jurij Slezkine, *Ab Imperio*, 1 (2005), pp. 157–189.

[48] For a rough orientation, see Wolfgang Benz, ed., *Dimension des Völkermords. Die Zahl der jüdischen Opfer des Nationalsozialismus* (Munich 1991); Dieter Pohl, "Nationalsozialistischer Judenmord als Problem von osteuropäischer Geschichte und Osteuropa-Geschichtsschreibung", *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas*, 40 (1992), pp. 95–119; On the history of the murder of the Jews: Raoul Hilberg, *Die Vernichtung der europäischen Juden*, 1–3 (Berlin 1982); Ulrich Herbert, Karin Orth, Christopher Dieckmann, eds., *Die nationalsozialistischen Konzentrationslager. Entwicklung und Struktur*, 1–2 (Gottingen 1998); Christian Gerlach, *Kalkulierte Morde. Die deutsche Wirtschafts- und Vernichtungspolitik in Weißrußland 1941 bis 1944* (Hamburg 1999), Ch. 7.

ernment, i.e. those parts of western Poland not annexed into the Reich plus, as of August 1, 1941, Eastern Galicia, and Reich Commissariat Ukraine).[49]

With the German invasion of the Soviet Union in 1941, "spontaneous" anti-Jewish excesses took place in those areas occupied by the Soviets in 1939 and 1940, from Vilnius to L'viv. Under the impact of Soviet coercion, stereotypes of Jewish collaboration with the Soviets had become entrenched, which in turn prepared the way for violence. To what extent the German side encouraged these excesses, in particular with help from exile groups, remains disputed to this day.[50]

Here, unlike in Germany, Austria, and the Protectorate Bohemia and Moravia, the disfranchisement, mass murder, and ghettoisation of the Jews were carried out in public. Only the industrialised murder took place in the secluded extermination camps set up in Poland. In Eastern Poland, Lithuania, Belarus, and Ukraine, there was hardly a community that was not the site of a mass shooting and a mass grave. That is to say, in nearly every locality in these lands, the local non-Jewish population witnessed the mass shootings.

The role of the indigenous auxiliaries working with the *Einsatzgruppen* and various regular police formations in the killing operations seems to have been largely determined by the extent to which these local accomplices saw themselves as champions of the national cause. The idea and practice of ethnic cleansing and the use of "surgical operations" as demographic policy directed at certain population groups did not become part of the political repertoire only in the wake of Hitler and Stalin's Treaty of Non-Aggression in August 1939. New – and certainly also intimidating – were the dimensions and the systematic brutality of these kinds of "measures" under National-Socialist occupation. Faced with hunger and constant danger, most collaborators, even those in the German armed forces, must have been thinking primarily of survival.

By contrast, for political activists from Latvia to the Ukraine, their involvement was aimed at creating an armed starting point for future national confrontations over territory and influence. In the event that Germany should go into decline or withdraw, or the Soviets should advance, this starting point was to serve as a guarantee for the establishment of state independence.[51] The depiction of deployment under German occupation as part of the "national" struggle against regional rivals, the Red Army, or even the German Armed Forces has led to a situation in which participation in the disfranchisement and murder of Jews has been "forgotten". This is especially true of the actions of Lithuanian, Latvian, and Ukrainian formations.[52]

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[49] Czeslaw Madajczyk, "Die Besatzungssyteme der Achsenmächte", *Studia Historiae Oeconimicae*, 14 (1979), pp. 105–122.

[50] Bogdan Musial, *"Konterrevolutionäre Elemente sind zu erschießen!" Die Brutalisierung des deutsch-sowjetischen Krieges im Sommer 1941* (Berlin and Munich 2000); Jan T. Gross, *Nachbarn. Der Mord an den Juden von Jedwabne* (Munich 2001).

[51] Christian Dieckmann et al., eds., "Formen der Kollaboration im östlichen Europa 1939–1945", *Beiträge zur Geschichte des Nationalsozialismus*, 19 (2000).

[52] Beiträge von Martin Dean, Bernhard Chiari, sowie Abschnitt III in Bernhard Chiari, ed., *Die polnische Heimatarmee. Geschichte und Mythos der Armia Krajowa seit dem Zweiten Weltkrieg* (Munich 2003); Alfred J. Rieber, "Civil Wars in the Soviet Union", *Kritika*, 4, 1 (2003), pp. 129–162; Karel C. Berkhoff, *Harvest of Despair. Life and Death in Ukraine under Nazi Rule* (Cambridge, MA, and London 2004), pp. 287–299; Björn Felder, "'Mit Lettland leben – Mit Lettland sterben.' Der SS-Jagdverband Ost – Unternehmen 'Wildkatze' und die Vorbereitungen von antisowjetischen Partisanen in Lettland (1944–1945)", *Zeitschrift für*

The native population was largely passive vis-à-vis the systematic annihilation of the Jews. This had many causes, which cannot be reduced primarily or even exclusively to anti-Jewish attitudes before the war or the effect of National-Socialist propaganda. An overwhelming part of the urban population in the General Government – and this was even more the case in the Soviet territories – saw itself exposed to exploitation, deportation, and starvation. Even if the population had wanted to help, the resources would not have sufficed. That systematic assistance for Jews emerged only in the *General Government* was no coincidence. It was possible to organise civilian and military underground structures there. This "underground state" in turn enabled Jews to receive a modest amount of assistance from outside the ghettos.[53] In some cases, the Catholic Church helped as well. After the final German surrender at Stalingrad in February 1943 at the latest, the rural population was exposed to exploitation and deportation as well. In some areas, such as Eastern Poland or Belarus, the occupiers and the partisans carried out constant reprisals.

The National-Socialist policy of exploiting the Polish and eastern Slavic populations as forced labourers was a source of constant danger; individual survival stood in the foreground. Demonstrations of solidarity in the daily struggle for survival or all manifestation of political and military self-assertion apparently took place according to ethnic or denominational criteria. "International" solidarity, as officially propagandised by the Soviet Union, does not seem to have had much effect here.
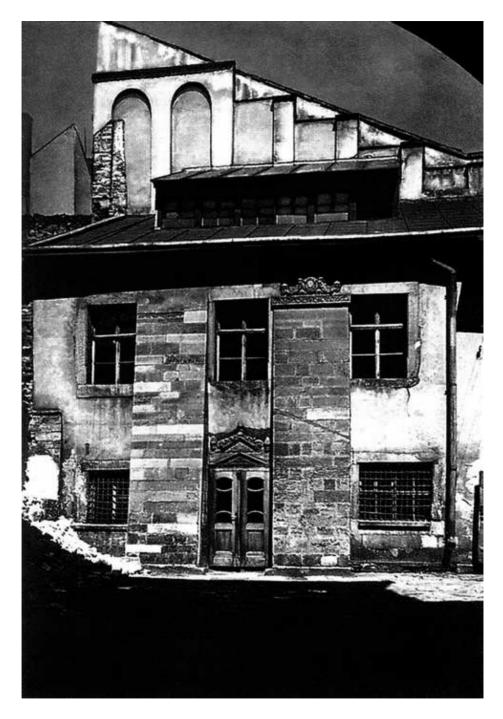
German reprisal measures, exploitation, despotism, chaos, and inefficiency not only provoked an unrestricted competition for scant resources in the towns and villages. They demoralised and criminalised wide segments of the population (as well as the occupiers). Black market activity, bribery, and corruption saved many a Jewish life, but they also put Jews in danger, because denunciation and betrayal were a part of the general demoralisation.[54]

The annihilation of the Jews of Poland, the Baltic countries, and the Soviet territories had essentially come to an end by early 1944, by which point resistance and partisan movements had become a major local factor. Throughout the occupation, the Soviet government demanded that the inhabitants of the ghettos and camp inmates show the same unconditionally aggressive commitment as the population in general and the partisans and party members in particular. Since the Jews could hardly comply, open Jewish resistance in the camps and ghettos on occupied Soviet territory as in Warsaw became heroic last stands. For the great majority of Jews, there was nothing else but the vain hope that the Red Army would advance in time. By contrast, nationalist partisan groups were largely disinterested in the fate of the Jews. Sometimes they hunted down the Jews in hiding.

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Ostmitteleuropa-Forschung, 1 (2005), pp. 98–127; Björn Felder, *Lettland im Zweiten Weltkrieg. Zwischen sowjetischen und nationalsozialistischen Besatzern* (Paderborn 2008) (forthcoming); Klaus Richter, "Der Holocaust in der litauischen Historiographie seit 1991", *Zeitschrift für Ostmitteleuropa-Forschung*, 3 (2007), pp. 389–416.

[53] David Engel, *The Shadow of Auschwitz. The Polish Government in Exile and the Jews 1937–1942* (Chapel Hill 1982); Klaus-Peter Friedrich, *Der nationalsozialistische Judenmord und das polnisch-jüdische Verhältnis im Diskurs der polnischen Untergrundpresse (1942–1944)* (Marburg 2006).

[54] Bernhard Chiari, *Alltag hinter der Front. Besatzung, Kollaboration und Widerstand in Weißrußland 1941–1944* (Dusseldorf 1998); Jan T. Gross, *Polish Society Under German Occupation. The Generalgouvernement 1939–1944* (Princeton 1979), pp. 145–182.

The Golden Rose Synagogue in Lemberg (Lwów, L'viv)

A significant factor for post war Judeophobia throughout Eastern Europe was a condition that Jan T. Gross has characterised as the "opportunistic complicity" of the defeated population with the occupier.[55] Despite all of the expropriations and raids carried out by the occupiers against the non-Jews, a considerable part of the population benefited from the disfranchisement and murder of the Jews. Goods of all kinds were acquired on the cheap; abandoned property, apartments, and houses were – despite prohibitions – appropriated and used. There was a brisk trade in "Jewish things". A "lumpen bourgeoisie" emerged, as Isaac Deutscher called it in 1946: "The death certificates of the murdered Jews were their only valid trade licenses."[56] The occasional cases of anti-Jewish unrest and excesses, or even the murder of Jews, in the Soviet Union and in the people's democracies after 1944–1945 were in most cases probably conflicts between returnees and new "residents" over the restitution of Jewish property.

The End of Soviet Internationalism

The postwar societies of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union were so preoccupied with themselves, reconstruction, and the emerging Cold War political re-alignment that the special dimension of the Holocaust was probably understood only by the small circles of Jewish survivors and returnees. Otherwise, the tendency was to downplay and marginalize the Shoah within the context of the overall barbaric occupation. This was true not just for Eastern Europe.[57]

In Soviet reporting, the special fate of Jews had been subjected to "white-washing" since 1943; from that point on, all talk was about the mass murder of "peaceful Soviet citizens". This formulation continued to be used right up until the end of the Soviet Union.[58] The particular engagement of Soviet Jews in the Red Army, propaganda departments, or the Soviet Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee (JAC) was praised abroad and in Jewish circles, but in broader Soviet society, it was rather marginalised. By the anti-cosmopolitan campaign of 1948–1949 with its antisemitic subtext at the latest, Jews were excluded from Soviet ruling bodies. The banning of the meticulously prepared *Black Book* on the murder of Jews under National-Socialist occupation, the dissolution of the JAC, and the murder of many of its prominent activists ensured the marginalisation of the Holocaust. Until the end of the Soviet Union, it remained an official non-topic.[59]

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[55] Jan T. Gross, *Fear. Anti-Semitism in Poland after Auschwitz. An Essay in Historical Interpretation* (New York 2007), p. 249.

[56] Isaac Deutscher, *Der nichtjüdische Jude. Essays* (Berlin 1977), p. 33; Bernhard Chiari, "Die Kriegsgesellschaft in Weißrußland im Zweiten Weltkrieg (1939–1944)", in Dietrich Beyrau, Rainer Lindner, eds., *Handbuch der Geschichte Weißrußlands* (Göttingen 2001), pp. 408–425, here p. 423.

[57] Tom Segev, *Die siebte Million. Der Holocaust und Israels Politik der Erinnerung* (Reinbek bei Hamburg 1995); Rolf Steininger, ed., *Der Umgang mit dem Holocaust. Europa – USA – Israel* (Wien et al. 1994); Peter Novick, *The Holocaust in American Life* (Boston and New York 1999).

[58] Arkadii Zeltser, "The History of the Jews in the Soviet Union in Documents from the State Archive of the Russian Federation", *Jews in Eastern Europe,* 21 (1993), pp. 88–93.

[59] Arno Lustiger, *Stalin und die Juden* (Berlin 1998); G.V. Kostyrchenko, *Tainaia politika Stalina. Vlast' i antisemitizm* (Moscow 2001); Il'ia Al'tman, "Shoah Gedenken verboten. Der weite Weg vom Sowjettabu bis zur Erinnerung", OSTEUROPA 4–6/ 2005, pp. 149–164.

Symptomatic of this is the treatment of Babi Yar in Kiev. There, on 29–30 September 1941 almost 34,000 Jews were murdered, alleged in reprisal operation for a series of explosions in the Ukrainian capital. In the years that followed, until the evacuation of Kiev in October 1943, Babi Yar served as the execution site for tens of thousands of Roma (Gypsies), prisoners of war, patients from psychiatric clinics, and other civilians. It is estimated that 100,000–150,000 persons were killed at Babi Yar. After the war, Soviet officials initially planned to build a sport and recreation area at the site. Jewish and non-Jewish intellectuals protested this. Individual writers made the mass murder operation a literary topic. Under pressure from intellectuals, officials finally brought themselves to build a melodramatic, heroizing memorial to the murdered "peaceful Soviet citizens". Only after 1991 was a clear attribution of the victims added to make clear what this memorial site is really all about.[60]

Postwar Soviet society obviously had numerous motives for marginalising the mass murder of the Jews. The motives are not explained solely by the open and latent anti-semitism among the population and within the party. During the war itself, absolute priority was given to the struggle against the "German-Fascist invaders". A special role for the Jews in this "community in arms" was not foreseen. Ideally, the Jews – like all other Soviet citizens, especially party members – had to fight the enemy to the last drop of blood, whether on the front, in the countryside, or in the ghettos and camps. After the war, only combat action was recognised, not suffering or surviving as camp inmates or forced labourers. This was of course also true for millions of non-Jewish prisoners of war and forced labourers. In the Bolshevik ethos, martyrdom had only to function as propaganda for mobilising the population against the enemy. "Compassion" in a Christian or humanist sense was not important; sacrifice had no value in and of itself if it did not serve the struggle.

In East Germany, Poland, and Hungary, the situation was not as rigid as in the Soviet Union. Thus, surviving Jews were recognised as victims of Fascism in the German Democratic Republic. However, those who fought Fascism ranked higher – also when it came to material compensation.[61]

Another aspect should be noted in the Soviet case: Given the sheer number of victims among the Soviet civilian population during the war – approximately 10 million to 11 million persons, including the Jews – the number of Jews killed on Soviet territory – estimated to be between 1.1 million (without territory annexed in 1939–1940) to 2.5 million (with the annexed territories) – appears in the eyes of some to be somewhat relativised.

After Stalin's death, the struggle against "cosmopolitism" (and the Jews) was suspended. Jews, however, were still kept away from the corridors of power and positions of influence. The treatment of the Jewish and non-Jewish victims of German occupation continued to be depicted in the black-and-white narrative of the "re-

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[60] Richard Sheldon, "The Transformation of Babi Yar", in Terry L. Thompson, Richard Sheldon, eds., *Soviet Society and Culture. Essays in Honor of Vera Dunham* (Boulder and London 1988), pp. 124–161; Frank Grüner, "Die Tragödie von Babij Jar im sowjetischen Gedächtnis. Künstlerische Erinnerung versus offizielles Schweigen", in Frank Grüner, Urs Heftrich, Heinz-Dietrich Löwe, eds. *"Zerstörer des Schweigens". Formen künstlerischer Erinnerung an die nationalsozialistischen Rassen- und Vernichtungspolitik in Osteuropa* (Cologne and Weimar 2006), pp. 57–96.

[61] Olaf Groschler, "Der Umgang mit dem Holocaust in der DDR", in Rolf Steininger, ed., *Der Umgang mit dem Holocaust*, pp. 233–245.

sistance of the entire people". In this version of history, there were only heroes and traitors. A more differentiated picture was portrayed only in literature. But when Vasilii Grossman, a former leading member of the JAC, once again sought to take up the Holocaust as a topic at the start of the 1960s, and even took the liberty of comparing the Stalinist system with that of the National Socialists, his manuscript – *Life and Fate* – was confiscated.[62]

Grossman is an example of the transformation of a non-Jewish Jew into a writer, who, after the experiences of the "Great Patriotic War", the Holocaust, and the anti-cosmopolitan campaign, was haunted by his being Jewish. The extent to which the Holocaust and the Second World War, the founding of Israel, the anti-cosmopolitan campaign, and the Six-Day War in 1967 with all of its domestic implications ultimately buried the Soviet-internationalist assimilation project and created a new and special Jewish consciousness is a matter of dispute.[63] Reactions to the anti-cosmopolitan campaign and later to the anti-Zionist campaign point to a pluralisation of Jewish identity. In many cases, Jewish identity probably functioned in Sartre's sense of an antisemitic construct, just as the campaigns and experiences of everyday antisemitism also served to motivate Jews to stress the peculiarity of being Jewish – right up to a commitment to Zionism.[64]

The End of Jewish Communism in the People's Democracies

The export of the Soviet system to the countries of East Central Europe influenced attitudes towards the Holocaust and the returning or surviving Jews in the sense that their marginalisation, which was made official in 1947–1948, was promoted by arguments similar to those used in the Soviet Union. Nonetheless, there were variations. Almost everywhere, those Communists returning from the Soviet Union or already in-country – analogous to recently established Soviet patriotism – linked their accession to power with the adaptation of programmes and goals from bourgeois-national, even nationalist resistance movements or prewar and wartime rightwing parties. This meant, in varying degrees of radicalism, the re-establishment of the prewar statehoods – but this time as ethnically homogenous nation-states. With the exception of Romania, this programme was directed primarily against the German minority and the German population of the former territories of the German Reich.[65] However, it also affected other minorities such as the Hungarians in Slovakia as well as the Poles, Belarusians, and Ukrainians on both sides of the Poland's new eastern border.

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[62] Dietrich Beyrau, "Totaler Krieg. Begriff and Erfahrung am sowjetischen Beispiel", in Beyrau, Hochgeschwender, Langewiesche, eds., *Formen des Krieges. Von der Antike bis zur Gegenwart* (Paderborn 2007), pp. 327–353.

[63] Frank Grüner, *Patrioten und Kosmopoliten. Juden und Sowjetstaat 1941 bis 1963* (Cologne and Weimar 2008).

[64] Daniela Bland-Spitz, *Die Juden und die jüdische Opposition in der Sowjet-Union* (Diessenhofen 1980); Ludmilla Alexeyeva, *Soviet Dissent. Contemporary Movements for National, Religious and Human Rights* (Middletown 1985), pp. 175–198.

[65] Detlef Brandes, Edita Ivanickova, Jiri Pesek, eds., *Erzwungene Trennung. Vertreibung und Aussiedlung in und aus der Tschechoslowakei 1938–1947 im Vergleich zu Polen, Ungarn, Jugoslawien* (Essen 1999); Ulf Brunnhauer, Michael G. Esch, Holm Sundhaussen, eds., *Definitionsmacht Utopie. Vergeltung. Ethnische Säuberungen im östlichen Europa des 20. Jahrhunderts* (Munster 2006).

The acquisition of nationalist programmes also meant that the Communist rulers – more implicitly than explicitly – welcomed the consequences of the Holocaust. Now, nothing stood in the way of the homogenous "people's democratic" nation-state.[66] Moreover, ownerless German and Jewish assets made available a handsome amount for the Socialist project of reconstruction.

In the Soviet Union, the term Fascism was used to define the specific dimension of National Socialism as an extreme expression of imperialism and capitalism. Such a definition made it possible, when opportune, to differentiate between good and evil, fascist and non-fascist Germans. In Eastern Europe, more than in the Soviet Union, National Socialism was seen as an expression of a specifically German anomaly and the climax of a centuries-long conflict between the Germans and their eastern neighbours. There, "Fascism" served more as red flag in order to link domestic rivals with National Socialism and to discredit them, even to criminalize them.[67] Through this pattern of perception, the Holocaust was likewise marginalised – at best instrumentalised whenever it was considered necessary to mobilise the population against West German revanchism and revisionism.

Due to each ethnic group's separate wartime experiences, there was, even after the war, little solidarity between the victims and the resistance fighters. Poles who had hidden Jews had to ask them not to talk about it after liberation. Such pleas point to the intensity of anti-Jewish sentiment within the Polish population. From Lithuania to Hungary, the nationalist, oft antisemitic general public, including the Catholic clergy, saw the strong presence of Jews in the party, the security apparatus, and the media as confirmation of ingrained stereotypes of "Judeo-Bolshevism" and Jews as Soviet agents. The Communist parties and their leaderships – unlike the Soviet Communist party in the 1920s and 1930s – failed to take action against the rampant Judeophobia. To the contrary, they even occasionally toyed with the existing stereotypes.

One cannot help but suspect that Stalin, while keeping Jews far from any positions of power in Moscow, systematically put them in leading positions in the satellite countries. The more disliked they were in Warsaw, Budapest, or Bucharest, the greater their dependency on Moscow. But this was true for Jewish and non-Jewish returnees from the Soviet Union.

What has already been said about Soviet-Jewish Communists in the 1920s and 1930s also holds for their comrades in arms in East Central Europe from the 1920s to the 1950s: The party was "home" and "family"; ethnic origin did not matter. Likewise, these Jewish activists were not representative of the Jewish population of their countries,[68] not even of those Jews who had survived the Holocaust in the Soviet Union as refugees. Despite occasional efforts in postwar Poland – for example, allowing a degree of Jewish territorial autonomy in Lower Silesia and creating a Jewish centre in

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[66] Helga Schutz, ed., *Bevölkerungstransfer und Systemwandel. Ostmitteleuropäische Grenzen nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg* (Berlin 1998); Robert B. Pynsent, ed., *The Phoney Peace. Power and Culture in Eastern Europe, 1945–1949* (London 2000).

[67] Klaus-Peter Friedrich, "Die Legitimierung 'Volkspolens' durch den polnischen Opferstatus. Zur kommunistischen Machtübernahme in Polen am Ende des Zweiten Weltkrieges", *Zeitschrift für Ostmitteleuropa-Forschung*, 1 (2003), pp. 1–51; idem, "Die Anfänge der volkspolnischen Presse 1944–1945: Ihr (jüdisches) Personal, ihre Organisation, ihre Themen und Tabus", *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas*, 2 (2006), pp. 207–228.

[68] Jeffery S. Kopstein, "Who Voted Communist? Reconsidering the Social Basis of Radicalism in Interwar Poland", *Slavic Review,* 52, 1 (2003), pp. 87–107; Gross, Fear, pp. 220–221 and 226–238.

the Jewish Historical Institute – Judeophobia in Polish society was so strong that the majority of Jews fled the country. After the Kielce pogrom of 4 July 1946, which resulted in 41 deaths, and the murder of about 1,500 Jews in 155 places by October 1947, Poland's Jewish population went into sharp decline due to emigration – from 220,000–240,000 in the summer of 1946 to 80,000 in 1951 and 30,000 in 1960.[69]

One would think that with the emigration of largest part of the Jews, there would no longer be a "Jewish problem" in the countries of East Central Europe. However, in the show trials in Budapest, with the climax being the case against László Rajk (1949), and in Prague, with the climax there being the case against Rudolf Slánský (1952), the model of Soviet anti-Zionism and anti-cosmopolitanism, i.e., a hardly concealed antisemitism, was transferred to the satellite countries.[70]

After the "Polish thaw" and the Hungarian Revolution in 1956, there were very few Jews left in the security services. Instead, a new-old Judeophobia surfaced within the Polish security forces. This was tied to the rise of a certain veterans' organisation, the Society of Fighters for Freedom and Democracy (*Związek Bojowników o Wolność i Demokrację*), and its leader, Mieczysław Moczar. Using antisemitic and nationalist slogans, Moczar attempted to displace the first secretary of the Polish ruling party, Władysław Gomułka, in 1968.

Poland's 1968 antisemitic campaign, which forced 13,000–15,000 persons of Jewish origin to emigrate, was – unlike in the 1940s – a symptom of an inner-party power struggle and indirectly an after-affect of a nationalism still coloured by war and occupation. Israel's Six-Day War, the student unrest in March 1968, and developments in Czechoslovakia provided the backdrop. As in the Soviet Union, Israel's victory over the Arab neighbours was accompanied by anti-Zionist campaigns, which again revealed obvious signs of Judeophobia within Poland. Gomułka suspected his country's Jews of acting as a "fifth column" for Israel.

The campaign obviously met with great interest and an overwhelmingly positive resonance within the party. The population seems to have acted in a wait-and-see manner; at any rate, there were no "spontaneous" excesses; given the small number of Jews in Poland, there would have been no target. For the intelligentsia, this campaign seems to have discredited the regime for good.[71] In many respects, 1968 marked the end of the symbiosis between a minority of Jews and Communism that had begun towards the end of the 19th century.

Beyond structures of powers, however, the reality of the Jewish presence in Poland was completely different. Just as Babi Yar had gained symbolic importance for the terror of the German occupation in general and the murder of the Jews in particular within the Soviet Union, the same can be said about the site of the former camp complex Auschwitz within Poland. Up until the early 1990s, a majority of Poles saw in

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[69] Jeff Schatz, *The Generation. The Rise and Fall of the Jewish Communists of Poland* (Berkeley 1991), pp. 20–21.

[70] George Hermann Hodos, *Schauprozesse. Stalinistische Säuberungen in Osteuropa 1948–1954* (Berlin 2001).

[71] Beate Kosmala, *Die Vertreibung der Juden aus Polen 1968. Antisemitismus und politisches Kalkül* (Berlin 2000); Dariusz Stola, "Fighting Against the Shadows: The Antizionist Campaign", in Robert Blobaum, ed., *Antisemitism and Its Opponents in Modern Poland* (Ithaca 2005), pp. 284–300; Christian Dahlmann, "Die antisemitische Kampagne in Polen 1968", *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas*, 56 (2008) (forthcoming).

Auschwitz a place of primarily Polish suffering.[72] This view caused a sensation in 1998, when crosses were erected on the grounds of the camp to commemorate the estimated 70,000–100,000 Poles ("Catholics") who died there.[73]

However, the marginalisation of the Holocaust in Poland followed different criteria than in the Soviet Union. In the latter, it was the "resistance of the entire people" that determined the narrative of the Second World War and the marginalisation of not only Jewish victims. In Poland, the master narrative of the war also concentrated on the nation's resistance, but suffering and martyrdom as a symbol of Polish history since the 18th century partitions had a value in and of itself in the Catholic tradition. The self-sacrifice of the Franciscan Maksymilian Kolbe in Auschwitz, who has since been canonised, can be more convincingly represented as heroic resistance. Even if the mass murder of the Jews has never been denied or concealed in Poland, as in the Soviet Union, even at Auschwitz, the suffering of the Poles and Catholics stood front and centre in commemoration policy from the start.[74]

Since the events of 1989–1991, the "Jewish problem", which has always been one for non-Jews, has become a comparatively prominent historical topic within the tenets of European "political correctness". In the post-Soviet countries, this topic has now faded into the background given the mass emigration of Jews, ethnic conflicts, and other problems. That a considerable part of the post-Soviet "oligarchs" represents a new take on the non-Jewish Jew has hardly been a public issue, despite all the controversy surrounding them and despite their political taming by Vladimir Putin.

Translated by Richard Mann, Berlin

The Great Synagogue in Berdychiv (Berdichev) in the early 20th century

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[72] Antony Polonsky, ed., *"My Brothers's Keeper?" Recent Polish Debates on the Holocaust* (London 1990); Richard C. Lukas, *The Forgotten Holocaust. The Poles under German Occupation 1939–1944* (New York 1990); see also the debate over Jedwabne between Bogdan Musial and Frank Golczewski, *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas,* 50 (2002), pp. 384–411 and 412–437. As an example for Hungary in the postwar period see Ivan Bibo, *Zur Judenfrage. Am Beispiel Ungarns nach 1944* (Frankfurt am Main 1980).

[73] Klaus-Peter Friedrich, "Über den Widerstandsmythos im besetzten Polen in der Historiographie", *Zeitschrift für Sozialgeschichte des 20. und 21. Jahrhunderts,* 1 (1998), pp. 10–60; Janine P. Holc, "Jewish and Catholic Views on Auschwitz Contested", in Blobaum, ed., *Antisemitismus*, pp. 301–325.

[74] Jonathan Huener, *Auschwitz, Poland, and the Politics of Commemoration, 1949–1979* (Athens, OH, 2003).