

# Preserving the Legacy of German Jewry

A History of the Leo Baeck Institute  
1955–2005

Edited by  
CHRISTHARD HOFFMANN

*Schriftenreihe  
wissenschaftlicher Abhandlungen  
des Leo Baeck Instituts*

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**Mohr Siebeck**

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## Foreword

On May 25, 1955, sixteen men, among them some of the foremost German-Jewish intellectuals who had survived the Holocaust, came together in Jerusalem. Using German as their common language, they addressed the task of setting forth a program for a newly envisaged Leo Baeck Institute. Among those present was the philosopher Martin Buber, who was, along with Gershom Scholem, perhaps the best known among them. Buber chose to present his own personal vision to the group. "For me," he began, "it is humanly important that what remains of German Jewry gather itself around a spiritual task that will lend it vitality. German Jewry was one of the most remarkable phenomena in Jewish history." Collectively, it was at least as notable as the Jewish communities of ancient Alexandria and medieval Cordova. According to Buber, now that German Jewry had reached the end of its historical journey, the survivors possessed an obligation to determine how the German-Jewish "symbiosis" came into being, how it functioned, and what remained of it after crisis and catastrophe.

When many years earlier, in 1818, Leopold Zunz, the first important practitioner of the scholarly study of Judaism, which became known internationally as *Wissenschaft des Judentums*, set forth his purpose, he wrote that in their striving towards mastery of German language and culture, the German Jews were carrying post-biblical Hebrew literature to its grave. Scholarly study had therefore appeared to demand an accounting from that which had reached the end of its course. Similarly, five generations later, the founders of the Leo Baeck Institute sought an accounting, this time for that very German-Jewish subculture which was just beginning to sprout in Zunz's youth. But they were not content with merely drawing up a balance sheet. They sought to transmit the inheritance to future generations. German Jewry, according to Buber, could not continue as a living entity, but a spiritual continuity, formulated as a task, was possible. That task was to present a sober and persuasive account of German Jewry as it had been in fact, without apologetics, the negative side as well as the positive. The results of such research would reach future generations that had not been a part of the German-Jewish experience themselves.

The founders chose to concentrate their historical efforts on a period of about a hundred and fifty years from the Jewish enlightenment and the beginnings of Jewish emancipation down to the year 1933. This period was

marked by the creation and growth of the German-Jewish modernity that had shaped them as Germans and as Jews. The earlier medieval period was both distant and different, at a remove from their own cultural and religious identity. The more recent years, which Buber designated a time of crisis and catastrophe, aroused painful memories. The history of Nazi persecution could be studied by others. The only early interest in those final years lay in the maintenance of Jewish life in the severest of circumstances. Perhaps also some of the founders continued to believe that Nazism had been atypical, an unanticipated turn to barbarism.

Still, they had chosen to name the institute after Rabbi Leo Baeck, not so much because Baeck was an important religious thinker and scholar, but because he had been the chosen representative of German Jewry during precisely those dark years. Perhaps it was because Baeck had embodied the best of the German-Jewish tradition and brought it to bear on the work he performed in an excruciatingly difficult position that he had become an iconic figure across the widest spectrum. He had been a Liberal with high regard for tradition, a non-Zionist who supported the work of building Jewish settlements in the land of Israel, a symbol of unity within German Jewry.

During succeeding years, the Leo Baeck Institute that these men created produced the extraordinary work that is chronicled on the pages of this volume. In the course of half a century its branches in Jerusalem, London, and New York, as well as its scholarly working group and its support group in Germany, have succeeded in presenting a more detailed and in-depth image of German Jewry than the German Jews themselves had been able to achieve before the Holocaust. Not that German Jewry had been unaware of its own history. In 1870 Heinrich Graetz had devoted more than two-thirds of the last volume of his magisterial *History of the Jews* to the Jews of Germany, and not long afterwards the first periodical devoted specifically to German-Jewish history, the *Zeitschrift für die Geschichte der Juden in Deutschland*, began to appear. *Germania Judaica*, a town-by-town history of the German Jews, had commenced publication in 1917. But it was not until the Nazi era that German Jewry looked back intensively and critically upon its own past. In 1934 Rabbi Joachim Prinz published the immensely popular volume *Wir Juden*, which severely called into question the German-Jewish identity shaped in the nineteenth century, and a year later Ismar Elbogen produced the first full-scale scholarly history of German Jewry.

The newly founded Baeck Institute sought to attach itself to the research whose beginnings had been made in Germany. But in 1955 there were few historians who worked in the area of Jewish history and almost none of academic standing whose principal field was the history of the German Jews. The only outstanding exceptions were Selma Stern-Täubler and Hans Liebeschütz. Thus the early writings published by the Leo Baeck Institute were primarily the work of authors who devoted their leisure time to investigating

one or another chapter of German-Jewish history that they found of special interest or in which they had themselves played a role. Only gradually did the Leo Baeck Institute emerge from the dominance of this older generation and pass into the hands of younger, historically trained scholars, both Jewish and gentile.

It was decided in 1955 that the Leo Baeck Institute would be an international scholarly institution with “working centers” in those countries to which the German-Jewish diaspora had principally been scattered. All three of the centers, apart from their scholarly work, instituted programs of public lectures, which drew audiences composed largely of German-Jewish emigrants eager to commemorate their heritage. Through the years, these “remnants” of German Jewry remained active among the private supporters of the institute as well as among the consumers of its programs and publications. However, increasingly, the branches of the institute reoriented themselves toward a different community, the emerging and rapidly increasing body of academic scholars in the field. It was principally for them that the holdings of the Leo Baeck archives in New York were maintained, modernized and expanded, and that a branch of the archives was established within the Jewish Museum in Berlin. It was with the intent of helping to train younger scholars that the LBI’s scholarly working group in Germany agreed to plan colloquia for graduate students working in the field. Conferences, whether held in Israel, Europe or the United States, were often organized in academic locales and intended especially for seasoned and younger scholars, who sometimes came from adjacent fields. Most of the book-length publications, which in German, English and Hebrew have in fifty years reached well over a hundred, have been intended especially for scholars, though some have found entry to a broader readership. The *Year Book*, which has appeared annually without fail since the first volume in 1956, has likewise increasingly addressed itself to the international community of scholars. The German-language *Bulletin*, which appeared from 1957 to 1990, was somewhat more commemorative in nature, but also mainly contained scholarly articles. A more popular approach has been apparent over recent years in the *Jüdischer Almanach*, which began to appear in 1996, and in the changing exhibits presented within the larger public space of the New York LBI’s domicile inside the Center for Jewish History, where it has been brought into closer contact with organizations devoted to studying American, East European, and Sephardic Jewish history.

The shift from commemoration to scholarly analysis has also manifested itself in an expansion of the institute’s purview. Once the goal of preserving and enhancing existing memory began to fade along with the generation of the founders, the study of pre-Enlightenment and Emancipation Jewry no longer seemed irrelevant. On the contrary, the early modern and even the medieval period were now recognized to be not only intrinsically of great interest, but also important for understanding the roots of German-Jewish



modernity. Likewise, the Nazi period came into broader view. It too, after all, was a part of the story. But what of the survivors who had remained in Germany or returned there? And what of the new German Jews who had no roots whatever in pre-war Germany? Was theirs a new and entirely different history, beyond the purview of an institute dedicated to maintaining the memory of a very different historical experience, perhaps even a different mentality? Only most recently has the institute begun to interest itself in this new population, which is still in the initial process of emerging and merging together as a German-Jewish community and culture.

With the approach of its jubilee, the Leo Baeck Institute began to look toward a summing up of its work. It commissioned the four-volume *German-Jewish History in Modern Times*, intended to draw together in synthetic form the research of nearly half a century, most of which had appeared under various auspices of the LBI, into a readable historical account of German Jewry beginning with its medieval origins, but concentrating on the years of its modernity. This work by multiple authors and appearing in three languages represented the state of the field in the early 1990s, the voices of its contributors blended into a coherent narrative. The present volume, this history of the LBI itself, is likewise a drawing together, a venture in self-understanding by an institution whose purpose gradually shifted from the retrospective self-understanding of German Jewry to the more contextualized and distanced understanding that is the task of scholars.

However, neither the four-volume history, with its recent additional volume on the history of German-Jewish daily life, nor this history of the LBI, represent a final accounting in the sense of Zunz and of Buber. It is characteristic of the discipline of historiography that it offers no final answers. New archival sources, some of them brought into public view in inventory volumes published in recent years by the institute, contain as yet unevaluated information. Not only do certain specific issues remain in dispute, but within the changing panoramic view of German-Jewish history, figures that dominated the foreground in earlier accounts become less prominent in the view of later scholars as other personalities – and other issues – are recognized to be of greater short-term or long-term consequence. Moreover, since the writing of history is an art no less than a product of research, the goal of a more evocative as well as a more fully persuasive account remains always before us.

Indeed, there is much still to be done. Among the literally hundreds of scholars now active in the field of Jewish history, many of them at the start of their careers, each will have some projects in mind that require new or further research and writing. Let me mention only a few that are of personal interest. Individuals are both creators of history and its product. German-Jewish history produced a variety of extraordinary personages who are deserving of more extensive biographical treatment than they have received.

Even more desirable would be comparative biographies that bring into the foreground differences resulting from environment and personality. Much remains to be done in the area of religion among German Jews, once again preferably in comparison with belief and practice among Christians. Beyond religion, attention is just beginning to be given to German-Jewish mores: such subjects as changing attitudes to sexuality, social behavior and social taboos.

How did these changes manifest themselves, one would like to know, in the very different contexts of Wilhelminian, Weimar, and Nazi Germany? More work also needs to be done on generational continuity and rebellion in varying historical circumstances. Studies comparing the modernization of Jews in Germany with that of Jews in other lands have only recently begun to appear and leave much yet to be accomplished. Finally, the question of the paradigmatic character of German-Jewish modernization for Jews in other lands has become a much disputed issue. The influences, parallels, variations and clear-cut differences need to be understood more clearly.

Historiography is a dialectical process of analysis and synthesis, of dissection and reshaping. The contributions contained in this volume, taken together, represent a first collective attempt to shape a detailed image of an institution that has reached a significant anniversary, but not an end-point, in its career. It does not contain personal recollections by its Jewish and gentile authors. They were not themselves part of the German-Jewish experience nor were they shapers of the institute of which they write. Their assessments are therefore free of the limited perspectives and perhaps prejudices that almost necessarily characterize the insider. But that is not to say that they lack sympathy for their subjects. Their goal is a balanced and maximally objective account.

Fifty years ago the founders of the Leo Baeck Institute looked back upon their own history as German Jews with both dismay and pride. The establishment of the institute was a necessity of their souls. Over the course of half a century their creation has progressed from personal recollection and reflection, to scholarly assessment, to the creation of a broad historical canvas that remains far from complete. The Book of Leviticus declares that every fiftieth year is to be a jubilee, a time of release from previous obligations opening the way for the acceptance of new ones. It serves as a sacred milestone between the past and future. The Leo Baeck Institute, too, stands at a significant milestone in its own history. The present volume elaborates upon the obligations it has undertaken and sought to fulfill during the last fifty years. For the Leo Baeck Institute this book is a work of collective self-reflection that points towards future possibilities.

Michael A. Meyer  
International President, Leo Baeck Institute



## Contents

Foreword by MICHAEL A. MEYER . . . . .	V
List of Abbreviations . . . . .	XIII
CHRISTHARD HOFFMANN	
Introduction . . . . .	1
CHRISTHARD HOFFMANN	
The Founding of the Leo Baeck Institute, 1945–1955 . . . . .	15
RUTH NATTERMANN	
Diversity within Unity: The Community of Founders . . . . .	59
GUY MIRON	
From Memorial Community to Research Center: The Leo Baeck Institute in Jerusalem . . . . .	101
MITCHELL B. HART	
“Here it is, to an Astounding Degree, Saved”: The Leo Baeck Institute in New York, 1956–2000 . . . . .	135
NILS ROEMER	
The Making of a New Discipline: The London LBI and the Writing of the German-Jewish Past . . . . .	173
STEFANIE SCHÜLER-SPRINGORUM	
The “German Question”: The Leo Baeck Institute in Germany . . . . .	201
AUBREY POMERANCE	
Coordination, Confrontation and Cooperation: The International Board of the Leo Baeck Institute . . . . .	237

MIRIAM GEBHARDT

The Lost World of German Jewry:  
Collecting, Preserving and Reading Memories . . . . . 263

CHRISTHARD HOFFMANN

An International Forum for German-Jewish Studies:  
The *Year Book* of the Leo Baeck Institute . . . . . 281

CHRISTIAN WIESE

A Master Narrative? The *Gesamtgeschichte* of German Jewry  
in Historical Context . . . . . 315

TILL VAN RAHDEN

Treason, Fate or Blessing? Narratives of Assimilation  
in the Historiography of German-Speaking Jewry since the 1950s . . . 349

JÜRGEN MATTHÄUS

Between Fragmented Memory and “Real History”:  
The LBI’s Perception of Jewish Self-Defense against  
Nazi Antisemitism, 1955–1970 . . . . . 375

ANDREAS KILCHER

The Grandeur and Collapse of the German-Jewish Symbiosis:  
Hans Tramer and Jewish Literary Studies at the Leo Baeck Institute . . 409

ROBERT LIBERLES

Looking Forward: A Global Research Community  
as the Cornerstone of the LBI Program . . . . . 435

Publications of the Leo Baeck Institute, 1955–2004 . . . . . 443

Sources of Illustrations . . . . . 463

List of Contributors . . . . . 464

Index of Names . . . . . 467

## List of Abbreviations

AHA	American Historical Association
AJHS	American Jewish Historical Society
AJR	Association of Jewish Refugees in Great Britain
AmFed	American Federation of Jews from Central Europe
BHDE	Biographisches Handbuch der deutschsprachigen Emigration nach 1933
Coll.	Collection
Council	Council of Jews from Germany
C.V.	Centralverein deutscher Staatsbürger jüdischen Glaubens
CZA	Central Zionist Archives
DFG	Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft
FZH	Forschungsstelle für Zeitgeschichte in Hamburg
HJ	Historia Judaica
HOGOIA	Hitachduth Olej Germania we-Austria
HUC	Hebrew Union College
IGdJ	Institut für die Geschichte der deutschen Juden (Hamburg)
IOME	Irgun Olej Merkaz Europa
JCR	Jewish Cultural Reconstruction
JHSE	Jewish Historical Society of England
JIR	Jewish Institute of Religion
JMB	Jüdisches Museum Berlin
JNUL	Jewish National and University Library, Jerusalem
JRSO	Jewish Restitution Successor Organization
JTC	Jewish Trust Corporation
JTS	Jewish Theological Seminary
K.C.	Kartellkonvent
LBI	Leo Baeck Institute
LSE	London School of Economics
MB	Mitteilungsblatt des IOME
MF	Microfilm
OHC	Oral History Collection of the Research Foundation of Jewish Immigration, New York

OR	Office Records
SPSL	Society for the Protection of Science and Learning
UB	Universitätsbibliothek
WAG	Wissenschaftliche Arbeitsgemeinschaft des Leo Baeck Instituts
WLA	Wiener Library Archives
WLB	Wiener Library Bulletin
YIVO	Yidisher visnshaftlekher institute – Institute for Yiddish/Jewish research (New York)
ZfA	Zentrum für Antisemitismusforschung, Technical University Berlin
ZVD	Zionistische Vereinigung für Deutschland

# Introduction

Christhard Hoffmann

## I

### *Preserving the Cultural Legacy*

In May 1955 the Leo Baeck Institute was founded in Jerusalem. The institute's history is that of Jews driven from Germany after 1933 who, dispersed throughout various countries, together took on a task: the preservation for future generations of the memory of the violently destroyed world of German-speaking Jewry. It is the history of a surviving Central European Jewish remainder that formed itself into a commemorative community for the sake of showing the contemporary world what German Judaism *actually* was, for the sake of countering the antisemitic defamation of the Nazis – but also prejudices held by some Jews regarding *German* Jewry. Historians have long been familiar with the phenomenon of groups of forcibly expelled persons trying to preserve their history and cultural identity; in post-medieval Europe, the expulsion of Spanish and Portuguese Jews at the end of the fifteenth century and of The Huguenots in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries are only the most prominent examples. In both these cases, despite external integration into their host countries, the exiled community preserved a sense of connection with its lands of origin – with its history, language and culture – for a time-span extending to centuries.<sup>1</sup> We thus find Sephardic Jews who had to leave Morocco for Israel, France or Canada in the 1950s because of the political circumstances taking along keys to houses in Seville, Granada or Lisbon that had to be abandoned by their forefathers 450 years earlier.<sup>2</sup> Although we may doubt that the keys were really authentic, they nevertheless

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<sup>1</sup> See, for example, Elie Kedourie (ed.), *Spain and the Jews: The Sephardi Experience 1492 and After*, London 1992; Joseph Abraham Levi (ed.), *Survival and Adaptation: The Portuguese Jewish Diaspora in Europe, Africa and the New World*, New York 2002; Robin D. Gwynn, *Huguenot Heritage: The History and Contribution of the Huguenots in Britain*, London and New York 1988; Bertrand van Ruymbeke and Randy J. Sparks (eds.), *Memory and Identity: the Huguenots in France and the Atlantic Diaspora*, Columbia, SC 2003.

<sup>2</sup> David G. Roskies, *Against the Apocalypse: Responses to Catastrophe in Modern Jewish Culture*, Cambridge, MA and London 1984, p. 1.



symbolize, together with the language, music and religious customs of the Sephardim, a clearly identifiable cultural heritage preserved until the present.

What was the cultural inheritance of the German Jews who managed to escape the Nazis? Other than was the case with those exiled on religious grounds in the early modern period, the German-speaking Jewish exiles did not really constitute a unified group; religious, political and general cultural differences had emerged since the eighteenth century, in the course of three or four generations of modernization and acculturation. With a majority having become part of the urban middle class, they revealed few if any particularities of language or everyday custom within their wider Christian or secular surroundings. Hence at the start of the twentieth century, the German Jews revealed far fewer distinct cultural traditions and identifying traits (for example linguistic, or those involving religious practice) than most Jews from Eastern Europe. What the German Jews did have in common, what can be understood as their heritage, was less distinct, more pieced together, less palpable than the Yiddish language and literature or traditional Jewish garb and mores. It involved, to a considerable extent, an awareness of participating in a special historical epoch: that of the encounter – often termed, controversially, a “symbiosis” – between German and Jewish culture, an encounter that was aligned with great past periods of cultural exchange in Jewish history: Hellenistic Alexandria or Moorish Spain. This German-Jewish epoch was viewed as a paradigm of the emergence of modern Judaism in general: of the development of new – enlightened – forms of Jewish religious doctrine and practice, Jewish education and scholarship, organizational communal life and political activity, and so forth. If German Jewry’s defining quality was tied to its role as origin and paradigm of Jewish modernism, then it more or less necessarily followed that its heritage was not static and homogeneous but dynamic and pluralistic. Its hallmark was continuous change and ever more diversity, expressed in a broad spectrum of self-identities and ideological directions.

As is well known, the epoch of German-Jewish “symbiosis” ended with the wider Jewish catastrophe of the Holocaust, an event manifest in untold individual cases of ostracism and flight, pillage and plunder, abuse and murder. The Holocaust was a caesura so traumatic that many of its German-Jewish survivors could hardly cherish an untroubled identification with the greatness of the German-Jewish past. Traditional certainties were now held up to critical consideration – the subject of historical scrutiny and research. Memory consequently now meant reflection as well as mourning, but seldom nostalgia. In contrast to the Moroccan Sephardim, the surviving German Jews had no keys to their houses in Berlin, Prague or Vienna as signs of their cultural heritage. For them, German-Jewish history had ended together with the possibility of any return. As the consensus had it, this history could thus only be explored as completed history; as such it could be transmitted to later generations.

In this manner, the heritage of the German Jews was basically identical with their history – with all the refractions and contradictions appearing in the 150 years between Moses Mendelssohn’s death and Hitler’s accession to power. It consisted of emancipation and integration, cultural encounter and growing proximity, Jewish self-assertion and self-renewal, on the one hand; and ostracism, antisemitism, persecution, on the other hand. Within the LBI, the interpretation of developments within modern German Jewry – hence one’s own history – was a matter of intense controversy. There was nevertheless agreement that productive answers could only be found through historical research – and that preserving one’s own history within the post-war European, Israeli and American collective memories was thus an urgent task. The monument that the institute’s founders wished to construct for German Jewry could not be made of stone, and it could not be reduced to a religious community’s doctrine or a social group’s cultural practice. The visible form it had to take was that of a long-term historical project coming to terms with the transmutations and complexities of German-Jewish life.

### *Transforming Memory into History*

The history of the LBI reveals a gradual shift in identity from a cultural institute representing German-Jewish emigrants and their memory of the German-Jewish past to an institute devoted to international research, supporting the work of historians of various backgrounds. The personalities steering the institute frequently had had leading positions within the German-Jewish community before their flight from Germany; they could now transmit their special experiences and insights into memoirs forming part of the LBI’s archival collection. Through their critical engagement with a past they had themselves experienced – an engagement manifest in both the memoirs themselves and the founders’ own historical work – many representatives of the older generation already contributed to historical research in an essential way. From the beginning – and here the important historicist dimension of *Wissenschaft des Judentums* is readily apparent – the LBI’s goal was to reveal German Jewry’s past in an historically rigorous manner. In this respect, the commemorative labor of institute members was itself subject to methodological criticism at an early point in the LBI’s history. For the founders, the institute’s *raison d’être* thus lay in the creation of a comprehensive work – a *Gesamtgeschichte* – transcending subjective memories and partisan standpoints and laying claim to scientific authority. In their turn, these plans would serve to bind diverging identities, ideologies and interpretations together into a common project, such differences being mitigated by the claim to scholarly objectivity and neutrality.

The tension between the certainties of personal memory and the ideal of historiographical objectivity would stamp the LBI for a long period, and

would do so in a highly productive manner; once formulated, the claim to scholarly rigor eased the institute's transformation into a research center, ensuring its survival and increasing influence into the present. Starting in the 1960s and intensifying in the 1970s, a further evolution in the direction of professionalized scholarship meant a dramatic expansion of the circle of LBI researchers: alongside a second and third generation of historians with a German-Jewish background, Jews not from Germany, non-Jewish Germans, and Americans now joined the institute. In recent years, the circle has expanded again and been rejuvenated, as seen for instance in the doctoral seminars of the LBI's *Wissenschaftliche Arbeitsgemeinschaft* in Germany, with their many Eastern European participants, and the declining average age of the *Year Book's* authors. For the great majority of present-day researchers, the relationship to German-Jewish history does not involve personal affiliation but professional interest, mediated, to be sure, by ethical considerations and personal concern, as is always the case with good historical writing. In any event, direct contact with those who were part of German Jewry before its destruction is increasingly difficult, with their numbers steadily dwindling. In this context, the LBI's collection of books and archives serves as a kind of guarantor of the German-Jewish legacy – and a primary source for its unfolding historical study.

#### *Uses of the German-Jewish Past*

It is well known that modern historiography is not limited to the methodologically supported reconstruction of the past, but also requires a process of choice and accentuation; this process takes place in relation to both the present and an anticipated future. One of the fascinating aspects of the LBI's history is its mirroring of the various interpretations and receptions of the German-Jewish past, along with their development, over the past half century. Did characteristic differences emerge in the historical accounts linked to Jerusalem, New York and London (along with Berlin)? Did a "house interpretation" or distinct historical model crystallize at the institute? What academic trends, political factors and fundamental ideological convictions have stamped its basic sense of the past over the years?

These questions have no summary answer. It is clear that at the beginning the institute had to locate its self-understanding in the face of two historical models that were both mutually opposed and related through one-sidedness. On the one hand, there was the model of *inevitable decline* or *inevitable catastrophe*, approaching German Jewry's violent destruction as the necessary, indeed predictable result of German antisemitism, and viewing Germany's Jewish community as gradually eroded through conformity with the wider environment. According to this model, which dominated in various shadings – Zionist, Eastern European, Orthodox – in the first few decades after 1945,

German-Jewish history offers a lesson in the illusions and dangers of assimilation. On the other hand, there was the model of *German-Jewish success* and *productive cultural symbiosis* abruptly and unexpectedly terminated – as with an accident – through Hitler's advent to power. Although this may well have represented the personal viewpoint of more than a few German-Jewish emigrants, hardly any were willing to support and defend it publicly after 1945; rather, the model was frequently referred to in negative terms. In setting its own position off from both these extremes, the LBI created a basis for an enterprise taking in Zionist and non-Zionist standpoints and offering space for new, differentiated approaches. In this regard, that modern German-Jewish history is now considered as a subject in its own right and not simply as part of the Holocaust's pre-history is one of the institute's essential accomplishments. The maintenance of a middle position avoiding methodological and interpretive extremes has remained a distinguishing feature of work done under its auspices: this the case even after the controversies were not so much between Zionists and non-Zionists or non-academic witnesses to the events and professional historians but, for instance, between social or economic historians and academics working within cultural studies.

### *Organizing an International Research Enterprise*

The LBI's history is also interesting from the perspective of the organization of research: as an example of an interdisciplinary, internationally structured, publicly and privately funded research institute that has achieved a high degree of scholarly productivity with relatively modest administrative expenditure. Since the LBI does not have a permanent scholarly staff, it has to recruit the appropriate researchers for each individual project; and each is dependant on support from private and public foundations, granted in competition with other applicants. Such a constellation requires special flexibility and productivity – qualities through which the institute has gained its strong reputation.

In organizing the LBI, the institute's founders orientated themselves around the model of civic voluntarism that had been exercised within the German-language *Wissenschaft des Judentums*. As distinct from scholarly institutions (universities, academies, and so forth) controlled by various state offices, the Jewish institutions for education and research in Germany (for instance the three rabbinic seminaries or the *Akademie für die Wissenschaft des Judentums*) were independent, depending on a system of private patronage. Jews active in German industry and economics and representatives of German Jewry's *Bildungsbürgertum* worked closely together on the boards of these institutions. In line with an old European Jewish tradition, Jewish scholarship was viewed as a task of the community – not as something to be left in the hands of the specialists alone. This tradition of honorary bourgeois

engagement and cooperation in questions of research planning and organization was carried on by the LBI.

The institute's division into three independently functioning yet cooperating branches was itself an embodiment of constructive diversity. The claims to leadership staked by the Jerusalem branch at the start soon succumbed to the reality of three branches with equal status. Hence the capacity for synthesis and compromise revealed in the institute's work also had structural grounding: within the LBI's shared space "other voices" would always be acknowledged, the certainties of one's own vantage-point held up for scrutiny and discussion. Through its publications and, especially, its conferences, the LBI became a venue for productive mediation between initially separated realms: witnesses and historians; various academic disciplines with their distinct methods and perspectives; Jewish and German historiography; various academic milieux and interpretive traditions in the USA, Israel, England and Germany; Jewish and non-Jewish historians; non-Jewish Germans, German Jews, non-German Jews; religious and secularly oriented Jews; older and younger researchers. It would appear that precisely the complexity of method and viewpoint manifest at the LBI is what has made its work so influential over the long term: the institute was internationally organized at a time when, broadly speaking, the historiography being written in different countries still had distinct national boundaries; it can thus be considered an out-riider in the process of historical internationalization.

## II

Research on the history of the Leo Baeck Institute only began rather recently, and then only intermittently. The relevant documents are scattered among the New York, Jerusalem and London branches and various other archives and literary estates, as well as the personal papers and correspondence of individuals still active at the institute.<sup>3</sup> When the LBI was founded in Jerusalem in May 1955, there was a general expectation that its purpose would be realized in around five to eight years, the institute thus not surviving the generation of its founders. In harmony with this expectation, institute members concentrated entirely on the work at hand: collecting documents, initiating research projects, filling in the history of German Jewry from the Enlightenment to the Nazi accession to power. At the time, no one could have known

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<sup>3</sup> The most relevant archives for the history of the LBI are the *LBI Archives New York*; the office files at the LBI London and Jerusalem, and the collections of the *American Federation of Jews from Central Europe* and the *Research Foundation of Jewish Immigration* in the archives of the *Zentrum für Antisemitismusforschung*, Technical University Berlin.

that the LBI's history would itself be of historical interest. It is thus probably no coincidence that no photograph exists from the institute's founding conference in Jerusalem; mythical accounts of the LBI's early history, including that of its "actual founding" in Martin Buber's house in 1954,<sup>4</sup> continue to circulate. But as indicated, the slight interest the early LBI showed in its own history did not mean a dearth of documents – quite the contrary. The board meetings and working sessions held in this period were so exhaustively recorded (sometimes on tape) that a detailed reconstruction of debates and decisions is possible. Because of the institute's international structure, copies of all important minutes, papers and correspondence were mailed to each branch and sometimes to all board members, so that at present identical material is located in the most disparate archives. But while the sources are thus available in rather unusual abundance, their consultation is not rendered easy through the dispersal among so many collections.<sup>5</sup>

Usually published in the *Year Book*, the short retrospective discussions offered by different authors at five- or ten-year intervals from the institute's founding offered initial building-blocks for an LBI history.<sup>6</sup> But a true historical treatment only began in the 1970s, in connection with the burgeoning research on emigration from Nazi Germany. In 1972, Herbert A. Strauss established the Research Foundation of Jewish Immigration in New York; together with the Munich-based *Institut für Zeitgeschichte*, the foundation produced a three-volume biographical handbook of post-1933 emigration from German-speaking areas.<sup>7</sup> In the course of an oral history project linked to this project, Strauss and his collaborators extensively interviewed leading figures in the New York LBI such as Max Kreutzberger, Max Gruenewald and Fritz Bamberger.<sup>8</sup> In the 1980s, now relocated to Berlin, Strauss served as

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<sup>4</sup> Joseph Walk, "Die Gründung des Leo Baeck Instituts vor 40 Jahren," in *LBI Information*, vol. 5/6 (1995), pp. 16–21, here pp. 16f.

<sup>5</sup> Future research on the LBI would greatly benefit by the systematic completion of a "History of the LBI collection" at the LBI Archives in New York; this ought to include the most important documents on the institute's history, above all the minutes of all board meetings since May 1955.

<sup>6</sup> See Siegfried Moses, "The First Ten Years of the Leo Baeck Institute," in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 10 (1965), pp. ix–xv; Gerson D. Cohen, "German Jewry as Mirror of Modernity: Introduction to the Twentieth Volume," in *ibid.*, vol. 20 (1975), pp. ix–xxxii; Ismar Schorsch, "The Leo Baeck Institute: Continuity amid Desolation," in *ibid.*, vol. 25 (1980), pp. ix–xii; Reinhard Rürup, "An Appraisal of German-Jewish Historiography," in *ibid.*, vol. 35 (1990), pp. xv–xxix; George L. Mosse, "Das Ende einer Epoche? Das Leo Baeck Institut nach dem zweiten Weltkrieg," in *LBI Information*, vol. 5/6 (1995), pp. 7–15; Walk, "Gründung."

<sup>7</sup> Werner Roeder and Herbert A. Strauss (eds.), *Biographisches Handbuch der deutschsprachigen Emigration nach 1933 / International Biographic Dictionary of Central European Émigrés 1933–1945*, 3 vols., Munich 1980–1983.

<sup>8</sup> See Dennis Rohrbaugh (ed.), *The Individual and Collective Experience of German-Jewish Immigrants 1933–1984: An Oral History Record*, New York, London and Saur

one of the chief initiators of a project supported by the *Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft* on the history of emigrant scholarship. Between 1987 and 1990, he directed a project on the emigration of German-speaking Judaists at the Center for Research on Antisemitism at Berlin's Technical University;<sup>9</sup> a first discussion of the LBI's history based on documents and interviews was published in connection with this project.<sup>10</sup> The focus here was on the continuities and discontinuities between Jewish historiography in pre-1933 Germany and the work of the LBI.

In the 1990s, LBI-linked historians published a series of short overviews and autobiographical sketches that also shed light on the institute's history.<sup>11</sup> The first and until now only full-length history, focusing on the institute's early years, is Ruth Nattermann's 2003 doctoral thesis for the University of Düsseldorf, which was published the following year.<sup>12</sup> On the basis of detailed study of the documents and in the light of recent research on social memory, Nattermann interprets the institute's founding, as well as the work initiated in its first decade, as the expression of a "commemorative community": a *Gedächtnisgemeinschaft*.<sup>13</sup> It was up to this community, Nattermann argues, to decide in what form and variants German Jewry was to be remembered – and which themes should be, as she puts it, "forgotten," for ex-

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1986; see also Herbert A. Strauss (ed.), *Jewish Immigrants of the Nazi Period in the USA*, 6 vols., New York and Munich 1978–1992.

<sup>9</sup> See Herbert A. Strauss, "Die Leo Baeck Institute und die Erforschung der deutsch-jüdischen Geschichte," in *Geschichte und Gesellschaft*, vol. 9 (1983), pp. 471–478; Robert Jütte, *Die Emigration der deutschsprachigen "Wissenschaft des Judentum."* *Die Auswanderung jüdischer Historiker nach Palästina 1933–1945*, Stuttgart 1991; Christhard Hoffmann and Daniel R. Schwartz, "Early but Opposed – Supported but Late: Two Berlin Seminaries which Attempted to Move Abroad," in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 36 (1991), pp. 267–304; Christhard Hoffmann, "Jüdische Geschichtswissenschaft in Deutschland, 1918–1938. Konzepte, Schwerpunkte, Ergebnisse," in Julius Carlebach, *Wissenschaft des Judentums – Anfänge der Judaistik in Europa*, Darmstadt 1992, pp. 132–152; *idem*, "Zerstörte Geschichte. Zum Werk der jüdischen Historikerin Selma Stern," in *Exilforschung. Ein internationales Jahrbuch*, vol. 11 (1993), pp. 203–215.

<sup>10</sup> Christhard Hoffmann, "Deutsch-jüdische Geschichtswissenschaft in der Emigration. Das Leo-Baeck-Institut," in Herbert A. Strauss, Klaus Fischer, Christhard Hoffmann and Alfons Söllner (eds.), *Die Emigration der Wissenschaften nach 1933. Disziplingeschichtliche Studien*, Munich, London, New York and Paris 1991, pp. 257–279.

<sup>11</sup> Arnold Paucker, "History in Exile: Writing the Story of German Jewry," in Siglinde Bolbecher *et al.* (eds.), *Zwischenwelt*, vol. 4, *Literatur und Kultur des Exils in Großbritannien*, Vienna 1995, pp. 241–255; Peter Alter (ed.), *Out of the Third Reich: Refugee Historians in Post-War Britain*, London 1998 (with contributions by, among others, Julius Carlebach, John Grenville, Werner E. Mosse, Arnold Paucker and Peter Pulzer); Fred Grubel, *Schreib das auf eine Tafel, die mit ihnen bleibt. Jüdisches Leben im 20. Jahrhundert*, Vienna, Cologne and Weimar 1998.

<sup>12</sup> Ruth Nattermann, *Deutsch-jüdische Geschichtsschreibung nach der Shoah. Die Gründungs- und Frühgeschichte des Leo Baeck Institute*, Essen 2004. Much of the material in the present book was submitted before Nattermann's study appeared.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 237 ff.; see also Nattermann's contribution in this volume.

ample the social history of German-Jewish women or the period of persecution.<sup>14</sup> Nattermann considers the shared German language to be a central factor within the early LBI, bridging ideological differences and helping in an essential way to create the “‘we identity’ upon which the social fabric of the LBI was based.”<sup>15</sup> Nattermann’s study closes with the institute’s crisis in the mid-1960s when, in the manner outlined above, the “commemorative community” gradually began to give way to a younger generation with a markedly more neutral scholarly stance.<sup>16</sup>

### III

This volume constitutes a *Festschrift* for the Leo Baeck Institute on its fiftieth anniversary. At the same time, it represents the first effort to offer a history of the LBI from its founding until the present, on the basis of the available documentation. Different facets of this history are approached in the volume’s individual chapters; since the LBI has three independent branches which, however, are unified into one institute pursuing shared projects, a certain overlapping between the chapters is inevitable. Although the volume’s authors have discussed their contributions with each other and agreed on each chapter’s contents, there has been no effort to mold differing perspectives and valuations into a common interpretive line.

The volume has two main sections, one treating the LBI’s institutional history, the other the history of the research and ideas associated with the institute. This author’s opening chapter outlines the long and difficult path from the first postwar plans for creating a German-Jewish cultural institute for emigrants to the LBI’s establishment in May 1955. An impression here emerges of the enormous resistance that needed to be overcome to reach that point: it involved not only inevitable difficulties in financing, but even more in the lack of support for preserving the cultural heritage of *German Jewry*. This chronological description of the LBI’s founding is complemented by Ruth Nattermann’s systematic account of the most important representatives of the founding generation; this chapter addresses the question of the common experiences, organizational ties and personal networks, and the shared and clashing ideological perspectives that characterized the “community of founders.”

The LBI was founded by the Council of Jews from Germany; the sites of its three branches thus corresponded to the three seats of the Council: Jerusalem, New York, London. As suggested, over the years each branch de-

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<sup>14</sup> Nattermann, *Deutsch-jüdische Geschichtsschreibung*, pp. 263–274.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 225.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 286.



veloped its own distinct profile. In Jerusalem, leading figures in German-Jewish Zionism were at the helm in the early years. As Guy Miron shows, ideological questions thus stood at the foreground: how could the Zionist project of nation-building, and especially the development of a nationally oriented historiography in Israel, be reconciled with the effort to preserve the specific and unique heritage of *one* group of countrymen, the German Jews? The tension between the requirement of Zionist partisanship on the one hand, scholarly objectivity on the other, led both to heated internal debates and differences of opinion with the other branches – an ideological conflict which only lost its importance with the changes at the institute in the 1960s and 1970s referred to above. In New York, in contrast, the LBI offered a direct view of the destroyed world of German Jewry, especially its cultivated bourgeoisie, in the form of an important library and archive, lectures, exhibitions and other cultural activities. In his contribution, Mitchell Hart shows how an Upper East Side townhouse occupied by the LBI between 1962 and 2000 came to serve as a symbol of German Jewry, offering the emigrants a sense of home – and visitors from abroad (among them many German politicians) the impression of an authentic locus from the German-Jewish past.

For a long time, the London LBI would lack comparable ideological, cultural or academic anchoring. Consequently, Nils Roemer lays stress on the London branch's significance for German-Jewish historiography. As the editorial headquarters of the institute's *Year Book*, as organizer of its larger scholarly conferences and – not least – as the initiator of academic contacts with Germany, the London branch played a paramount role in the development of German-Jewish history as an academic discipline. It is interesting that despite the contacts initiated in London, no LBI branch has been established in Germany. But the institute does have a significant presence in that country, in the form (since 1989) of the working committee known as the *Wissenschaftliche Arbeitsgemeinschaft* and (since 2001) an office at Berlin's Jewish Museum containing microfilms of the New York archives. In her article, Stefanie Schüler-Springorum offers a detailed look at the LBI's cooperation with German historians: initially highly hesitant, it slowly intensified in the course of the 1980s and 1990s. Following this account, in the final article of the volume's first section, Aubrey Pomerance discusses the LBI's international board, focusing on the main fields of cooperation (and confrontation) between the branches: financing, relationships with Germany, conceiving and carrying through projects.

The second section of this *Festschrift* opens with articles on the institute's three main tasks: the *collection* of documents and recollections; *research* on individual historical themes and questions; and the comprehensive *depiction* and public *representation* of modern German-Jewish history. These activities are examined through the examples of the LBI's memoir-collection, its *Year*

*Book*, and the four-volume *German-Jewish History in Modern Times*. Writing from a perspective of cultural studies, Miriam Gebhardt understands the memoir collection that emerged in the 1950s as not merely constituting a static “heritage” but, especially, as having a “constructive” character: something that emerges through a distinction between the archival material itself, the (selective) process of archivization and the use made of the material through various recipients (the material’s “reading”). This approach facilitates an overview of the different phases in the development and use of the LBI Memoir Collection. In his subsequent discussion of the *Year Book*, Christhard Hoffmann stresses the policies and politics maintained by its editors, the background of its authors and the main themes at work in its articles. At the same time, he underscores the importance of this periodical for the emergence and development of German-Jewish studies. This development was reflected in the appearance, in the 1990s, of the *German-Jewish History in Modern Times*, edited by Michael A. Meyer – the oldest and most important of the institute’s projects thus finally being realized. In his article, Christian Wiese places this work against the backdrop of earlier plans, showing why, despite a successful synthesis of and advance beyond previous scholarship, the work cannot be that *single*, final *Gesamtgeschichte* that the LBI’s founders had envisioned in 1955.

The three following articles illuminate individual themes that have been important for the LBI’s self-understanding. No concept awakened more emotions and opposing views within the early institute than that of *assimilation*: for some, a process reflecting Jewish self-abandonment and even self-betrayal, for others a natural process contributing to the enrichment of Jewish culture and the evolution of Jewish identity. The theme was, in fact, so controversial that in the LBI’s early years as much as possible was done to avoid it. Till van Rahden’s essay offers a reconstruction of the use of the concept of assimilation in twentieth century German-Jewish historiography; van Rahden appeals for a reflective application of this debated analytic category, so that its historicity and multivalence is consistently taken into account. Another extremely sensitive theme in the LBI’s early period was the reaction of Jewish organizations to antisemitism and Nazi policies after 1933. In view of undifferentiated and polemical approaches to the theme in the 1960s – in particular those of Raul Hilberg and Hannah Arendt – the representatives of German Jewry felt obliged to take a public stance, but for a long time they could not ground their opposing arguments in historical research. Jürgen Matthäus explores this dilemma against the backdrop of both internal debates in the LBI and the state of Holocaust historiography in the 1960s.

The basic problems of the German-Jewish cultural encounter may be more clearly and pointedly manifest in the life and work of Jewish writers than in historiographical controversies. As Andreas Kilcher shows with the

example of Hans Tramer – the chief representative of literary history at the LBI – the institute’s literary historical research was often stamped by a distinctly Zionist perspective: one defining the transition from an assimilatory to a Zionist self-understanding as a logical historical development; and one judging the work of Jewish authors against this interpretive grid. Following this essay, the volume concludes with an afterword by Robert Liberles on the LBI’s research program in the present and the future.

#### IV

This project received help and support from many individuals and institutions; the editor and authors would here like to offer thanks to all of them. A first expression of thanks is due to the Leo Baeck Institute, which entrusted its history to a team of young historians and offered them unlimited access to all the available archival material. Collaboration with the Jerusalem LBI, responsible for the project within the institute, was always very pleasant and productive. Robert Liberles, the president of the Jerusalem LBI when the project started in 2002, actively participated in the phase of planning and conceptualization, offering many good suggestions regarding possible themes and contributors. Shlomo Mayer, director of the Jerusalem LBI, administered the project in his characteristically calm and friendly manner. Various individuals in all the institute’s branches and subdivisions actively contributed to the *Festschrift*; thanks can here only be extended to the various directors: Raphael Gross (London), Shlomo Mayer (Jerusalem), and Carol Kahn Strauss (New York); Michael Brenner (*Wissenschaftliche Arbeitsgemeinschaft*) and Georg Heuberger (*Freunde und Förderer des LBI*). A special word of thanks is due Frank Mecklenburg for his tireless help in searching for and preparing documents, and the archives at the New York LBI, which offers very fine working conditions, along with an extremely helpful and efficient staff, in its new space in the Center for Jewish History. Miriam Intrator, in particular, displayed extraordinary skill in her processing of the numerous photographic orders.

A warm word of appreciation is also due the many individuals linked to the LBI, and thus part of its history, who agreed to be interviewed for this volume and offered material from their own collections (minutes, memoranda, photos). At a workshop/conference at the *Evangelische Akademie Tutzing* in February 2004, the authors were able to intensively discuss first versions of their articles with both specialists and historical witnesses at the LBI. The participating commentators – Michael Brenner, Raphael Gross, Shlomo Mayer, Frank Mecklenburg, Ruth Nattermann, Arnold Paucker, Pauline Paucker, Monika Richarz, Reinhard Rürup and Barbara Suchy – contributed in an essential way to the completion, correction and refinement of the

individual articles. Finally, Michael Meyer read and commented on some of the articles before preparation of proofs.

Of the contributions to this volume originally written in German, those by Andreas Kilcher, Till van Rahden and Christian Wiese, and Christhard Hoffmann's essay on the *Year Book*, were translated by Patricia Szobar; Joel Golb translated the essays by Miriam Gebhardt, Ruth Nattermann and Stefanie Schüler-Springorum, along with this introduction. In line with his responsibilities as one of the *Year Book*'s two manuscript editors, Joel Golb reviewed all the volume's contributions with care, when necessary suggesting line-by-line emendations, thus often improving an essay's conceptual structure and readability. As the project's copy editor, Lionel de Rothschild both unified the style of the main text and footnotes and clarified many difficult questions of detail, in this manner strengthening the quality of the volume's overall diction.

Friedrich Dannwolff, for decades responsible for the LBI's *Schriftenreihe* at the Mohr Siebeck publishers, cared for this jubilee volume with his characteristic friendly professionalism.

The Thyssen Foundation (Cologne) offered financial support for the research involved in this project, the necessary translation and editing work, and the conference in Tutzing. This publication was made possible with the help of the Conference on Jewish Material Claims against Germany.



# The Founding of the Leo Baeck Institute, 1945–1955

Christhard Hoffmann

## The End of German Jewry and Jewish Historical Culture

In September 1933, the Berlin rabbi and professor at the *Hochschule (Lehranstalt) für die Wissenschaft des Judentums* Leo Baeck became president of the newly founded *Reichsvertretung* of German Jews.<sup>1</sup> In a situation of crisis and uncertainty, with Nazi politics rescinding Jewish emancipation within a few months and daily life increasingly threatened by persecution and terror, the Jews in Germany managed to overcome ideological differences and form a common body representing their interests. At the same time, a critical reassessment of the course of modern Jewish history, especially of Jewish emancipation and assimilation, evolved within the Jewish public.<sup>2</sup> The question of how to read signs of the present was discussed by looking back to the past. In public lectures, newspaper articles and studies, the course of Jewish history since the Enlightenment was scrutinized in an effort to find the origins of a wrong track that had led to the perplexities of the present. With their critical view of Jewish assimilation, orthodox and Zionist authors had less difficulty in presenting an answer to this question than the adherents of the *Centralverein deutscher Staatsbürger jüdischen Glaubens*, whose belief in liberalism, progress, and the blessings of a German-Jewish cultural symbiosis seemed superseded and proven illusionary by the Nazi takeover.

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<sup>1</sup> See Leonard Baker, *Days of Sorrow and Pain: Leo Baeck and the Berlin Jews*, New York 1978; Georg Heuberger (ed.), *Leo Baeck: 1873–1956. Aus dem Stamme von Rabbinern*, Frankfurt am Main 2001; Günter Plum, “Deutsche Juden oder Juden in Deutschland?” in Wolfgang Benz (ed.), *Die Juden in Deutschland 1933–1945. Leben unter nationalsozialistischer Herrschaft*, Munich 1988, pp. 35–74, here pp. 49ff.

<sup>2</sup> A good overview of these debates is found in Guy Miron, “Emancipation and Assimilation in the German-Jewish Discourse of the 1930s,” in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 48 (2003), pp. 165–189; see also Jacob Boas, *The Jews of Germany: Self-Perceptions in the Nazi era as reflected in the German-Jewish press*, Ph.D. dissertation, University of California at Riverside 1977.

That German Jews turned to the study of history in order to understand the present was, for its part, a consequence of modernity. In the course of the nineteenth century, German Jewry had developed a specific modern form of relationship to the past that perhaps can best be described as *Geschichtskultur* – “historical culture.” According to Wolfgang Hardtwig, the term means “the totality of forms in which knowledge about history is present in a given society.”<sup>3</sup> It includes not only academic historiography but also other public presentations of the past such as those conveyed by commemorations and monuments, museums, educational and popular literature, the press, and public debates. During the first half of the nineteenth century, the relation of Jews – or at least of a leading class of intellectuals within German Judaism – to their own tradition was transformed through both the rise of historicism to a dominant cultural position and, connected with this, the establishment of *Wissenschaft des Judentums*.<sup>4</sup> The task of the modern historian was to represent the past in such a way that the unity of history, its “meaning,” would become clear, thereby enabling meaningful action in the present.<sup>5</sup> Modern Jewish historical scholarship, which enlarged and with time replaced the traditional, religious forms of Jewish collective memory, thus served as a medium for the self-definition and self-assertion of Jews in the age of acculturation. “History” – at least for those German Jews who wished to retain their Judaism in some form – became an important medium for the establishment and preservation of a Jewish identity in the modern, secular world; it became, as Yosef Yerushalmi has formulated it, “the faith of fallen Jews.”<sup>6</sup> Jewish historical culture was initially dominated by liberal-reformist views, advocating political emancipation and personal acculturation – *Bildung* – and adhering to the optimistic belief in modern development as ever-increasing progress; with the emergence of a neo-Orthodoxy and Zionism that challenged the liberal interpretation of history, it became more polyphonic and

<sup>3</sup> Wolfgang Hardtwig, *Geschichtskultur und Wissenschaft*, Munich 1990, p. 8.

<sup>4</sup> For the modernization of Jewish historical consciousness see Richard Schaeffler, “Die Wissenschaft des Judentums in ihrer Beziehung zur allgemeinen Geistesgeschichte im Deutschland des 19. Jahrhunderts,” in Julius Carlebach (ed.), *Wissenschaft des Judentums. Anfänge der Judaistik in Europa*, Darmstadt 1992, pp. 113–131; Michael A. Meyer, “The Emergence of [Modern] Jewish Historiography: Motives and Motifs,” in Ada Rapoport-Albert (ed.), *Essays in Jewish Historiography*, Middletown 1988, pp. 160–175; Ismar Schorsch, *From Text to Context: The Turn to History in Modern Judaism*, Hanover, NH and London 1994; Ernst Schulin, *Arbeit an der Geschichte. Etappen der Historisierung auf dem Weg zur Moderne*, Frankfurt am Main and New York 1997, pp. 114–163.

<sup>5</sup> Reinhart Koselleck, “Geschichte, Historie” (V. Die Herausbildung des modernen Geschichtsbegriffs), *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe*, vol. 2, Stuttgart 1994, pp. 647–691; for an example of how this approach was adapted to Jewish studies, see Ludwig Philippson, “Wissenschaft und Leben,” in *Allgemeine Zeitung des Judentums (AZJ)*, vol. 20 (1856), pp. 619 ff.

<sup>6</sup> Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi, *Zakhor: Jewish History and Jewish Memory*, New York 1989, p. 86.

dissonant. All the same, no matter how disputed the Jewish past – and in particular the modern era – would eventually become, it remains a fact that all German-Jewish groups and ideological movements continued to refer to history in order to justify their ideological positions. Jewish historical culture offered a communicative space, comparable to a public market-place, allowing for controversy, negotiation, and competition and thus for a plurality of Jewish identities based on history.<sup>7</sup> It can be assumed that this tradition of a critical, self-reflective and contested relationship to the past, most pronounced in the Weimar and early Nazi years, was one essential precondition for the rebuilding of German-Jewish historical culture after the Holocaust.

At the beginning of the 1930s, the main institutions of Jewish historical scholarship in Germany comprised the three rabbinical seminaries – the conservative Jewish Theological Seminary in Breslau, the liberal *Hochschule*, and the orthodox *Rabbinerseminar*, both in Berlin; the research department of the *Akademie für die Wissenschaft des Judentums*; and the *Gesamtarchiv der deutschen Juden*. Two major scholarly periodicals with international reputation were published, the *Monatsschrift für Geschichte und Wissenschaft des Judentums* and the *Zeitschrift für die Geschichte der Juden in Deutschland*.<sup>8</sup> The realm of Jewish historical culture went beyond the institutions of *Wissenschaft des Judentums* and included local historians, archives and museums, and as major agents of popularizing Jewish history, newspapers, publishing houses, and the institutions of Jewish adult education such as the *Lehrhaus*.<sup>9</sup>

After Hitler came to power in January 1933 and the rights of Jews had been instantly restricted by regulations and violence, Jewish academic, cultural and educational institutions, as well as newspapers and publishing houses, continued to function until the pogroms of November 1938, and in the case of the *Hochschule* even until June 1942. That there was any space for Jewish academic and cultural activities within the Third Reich may at first seem paradoxical, given Nazi policies aimed at a total segregation of “Jewish” and “German” living spheres by way of emigration and expulsion of the Jews from Germany. For the time being, however, Jews were indeed granted a kind of “cultural autonomy” in Germany, as long as it occupied a space clearly se-

<sup>7</sup> On the functions of a differentiated Jewish history-culture, see Christhard Hoffmann, “Constructing Jewish Modernity: Mendelssohn Jubilee Celebrations within German Jewry, 1829–1929,” in Rainer Liedtke and David Rechter (eds.), *Towards Normality: Acculturation and Modern German Jewry*, Tübingen 2003 (Schriftenreihe wissenschaftlicher Abhandlungen des Leo Baeck Instituts 68), pp. 27–52.

<sup>8</sup> For an overview, see Werner Schochow, *Deutsch-jüdische Geschichtswissenschaft*, Berlin 1969; Christhard Hoffmann, “Jüdische Geschichtswissenschaft in Deutschland: 1918–1938,” in Carlebach (ed.), *Wissenschaft des Judentums*, pp. 132–152.

<sup>9</sup> See Michael Brenner, *The Renaissance of Jewish Culture in Weimar Germany*, New Haven and London 1996; Katharina Rauschenberger, *Jüdische Tradition im Kaiserreich und in der Weimarer Republik. Zur Geschichte des jüdischen Museumswesens*, Hannover 2002.



parated from “German” culture.<sup>10</sup> In fact, Jewish academic institutions such as, in particular, the *Hochschule* experienced a certain revival in the form of new professors dismissed from the universities, for example the historians Arnold Berney, Hans Liebeschütz and Eugen Täubler, and the establishment of a general academic department allowing students to study the humanities and social sciences along with Jewish subjects.<sup>11</sup> Forced into a cultural ghetto by the exclusionary politics of the Nazis, the *Hochschule* remained faithful to the ideal of combining Jewish scholarship with universal-humanist *Bildung*.<sup>12</sup> The study of Jewish subjects in the institutions of Jewish adult education, organized by Martin Buber’s *Mittelstelle für jüdische Erwachsenenbildung* after the Nazi takeover, was also marked by a new intensity. Amidst daily persecution, harassment and defamation, the *Lehrhäuser* and *Lernzeiten* conveyed a positive image of Jewish tradition and history and thus contributed to Jewish self-assertion and self-respect within Nazi Germany.<sup>13</sup>

The pogroms of November 1938 marked the end of Jewish culture inside the Third Reich. For the institutions and scholars of *Wissenschaft des Judentums*, as for German Jews in general, there was no way left but emigration. However, plans for a wholesale transfer of rabbinical seminaries abroad remained unsuccessful. Already in 1933, the project of transferring the *Rabbinerseminar* to Palestine was stopped due to the vehement opposition by the Lithuanian ultra-Orthodoxy; and the planned transfer of the *Hochschule* to Cambridge (England) in 1939 and its rebuilding as an Academy of Jewish Studies in close association with Cambridge University came to nothing because of the outbreak of World War II.<sup>14</sup> German-speaking scholars in Jewish studies had to find positions abroad as individuals. Since the Hebrew University’s capacity to absorb scholars was limited, teaching opportunities were basically restricted to the different rabbinical seminaries in England and the United States.<sup>15</sup> But within such institutions, the willingness to help

<sup>10</sup> Ernst Krieck, “Die Judenfrage,” in *Volk im Werden*, vol. 1 (1933), pp. 57–62.

<sup>11</sup> Herbert A. Strauss, “Die letzten Jahre der Hochschule (Lehranstalt) für die Wissenschaft des Judentums in Berlin 1936–1942,” in Carlebach (ed.), *Wissenschaft des Judentums*, pp. 36–58; *idem*, *In the Eye of the Storm: Growing up Jewish in Germany, 1918–1943*, New York 1999, pp. 75–165; see also Christhard Hoffmann, “Wissenschaft des Judentums in der Weimarer Republik und im ‘Dritten Reich,’” in Michael Brenner and Stefan Rohrbacher (eds.), *Wissenschaft vom Judentum. Annäherungen nach dem Holocaust*, Göttingen 2000, pp. 24–41, here pp. 38ff.

<sup>12</sup> Strauss, *In the Eye of the Storm*, p. 77.

<sup>13</sup> Jacob Boas, “Countering Nazi defamation: German Jews and the Jewish Tradition, 1933–1938,” in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 34 (1989), pp. 205–226; Paul Mendes-Flohr, “Jewish Cultural Life under National Socialism,” in Michael A. Meyer (ed.), *German-Jewish History in Modern Times*, vol. 4, New York 1998, pp. 283–312.

<sup>14</sup> See Christhard Hoffmann and Daniel R. Schwartz, “Early but Opposed – Supported but Late: Two Berlin Seminaries which Attempted to Move Abroad,” in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 36 (1991), pp. 267–304.

<sup>15</sup> On the Jewish historians who emigrated to Palestine, see Robert Jütte, *Die*

Central European refugee scholars varied sharply. In 1938, the liberal Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati launched a “college in exile” project that accommodated nine Central European refugee scholars, among them Eugen Täubler and Selma Stern;<sup>16</sup> other institutions, such as the conservative Jewish Theological Seminary in New York, were more reluctant in this respect. Dominated by scholars with an East European background who often harbored misgivings toward the reformist and “German” orientation of the German-speaking Judaists, almost none of the refugee scholars was accepted there.<sup>17</sup>

While most German-speaking scholars in Jewish studies could save their lives by emigration, few were able to continue their studies in the countries of resettlement without rupture. Even those who found an academic position or who tried successfully to rebuild the tradition of Jewish historical scholarship had to adjust to the new situation and the expectations of their new countries. Under these circumstances, it was difficult to concentrate on the unsolved questions of recent German-Jewish history. This is illustrated most clearly by the case of Guido Kisch. In 1938, after the Nazis banned Jewish periodicals, Kisch, one of the editors of the *Zeitschrift für die Geschichte der Juden in Deutschland*, founded a new historical periodical, *Historia Judaica*, that was devoted to the academic study of Jewish (world) history in all its aspects (religious, political, social, cultural) from antiquity to the present.<sup>18</sup> Its publishing history reflected the gradual expulsion of Jewish scholarship from Europe. The first issue (1938) was printed in Prague, the second (1939) in Belgium, but thereafter the journal found a permanent home in the United States. The majority of its contributors were displaced Jewish scholars from Central Europe, like Kisch. Nevertheless *Historia Judaica* did not develop a profile as an émigré’s journal focusing on the collective experience of the refugees, and it did not make critically reappraising the course of Jewish history in Central Europe a salient task. It is true that in order to “sell” the

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*Emigration der deutschsprachigen “Wissenschaft des Judentums.” Die Auswanderung jüdischer Historiker nach Palästina 1933–1945*, Stuttgart 1991; David N. Myers, *Re-Inventing the Jewish Past: European Jewish Intellectuals and the Zionist Return to History*, New York and Oxford 1995, pp. 74–108.

<sup>16</sup> Michael A. Meyer, “The Refugee Scholars Project of the Hebrew Union College,” in B.W. Korn (ed.), *A Bicentennial Festschrift for Jacob Rader Marcus*, New York 1976, pp. 359–375.

<sup>17</sup> Even 50 years later, in an interview with the author in New York on July 2 1987, Louis Finkelstein, who was the managing head of the seminary in the late 1930s, tried to justify its negative attitude toward the refugees: since the “College in Exile Project” was the idea of the Hebrew Union College, there was no need for it to be copied by the seminary.

<sup>18</sup> On *Historia Judaica* see Guido Kisch, “Historia Judaica 1938–1961,” in *Historia Judaica*, vol. 23 (1961), pp. 3–14; Solomon Grayzel, “An Adventure in Scholarship,” *ibid.*, pp. 15–20.

journal on the American Jewish market, Kisch emphasized its usefulness in fighting antisemitism in the United States,<sup>19</sup> but its content was actually purely academic, bone-dry and more or less detached from the turmoil of contemporary history. Its main emphasis was on the legal history of the Jews in the medieval and early modern periods, on social and religious Jewish history, and on complementary subjects such as Jewish numismatics. In its academic orientation, the periodical reflected a high degree of specialization. That was probably due to Kisch's situation in the United States: as a refugee scholar, it was essential for him to find a niche for his work, and he therefore concentrated on his specialties.<sup>20</sup>

In the wake of the catastrophic end of German-Jewish history, other émigré scholars had difficulties continuing their studies as if nothing had happened. Particularly those who had made modern German-Jewish history their specialty were often unable to cling to the patterns of interpretation developed before 1933. Especially after Auschwitz, this history presented itself in a different light. Selma Stern, who had begun her multivolume work on the Prussian state and the Jews at the *Akademie für die Wissenschaft des Judentums* in the 1920s, described such psychological obstacles in a very clear fashion:

Until then I believed that the chances of the emancipation being annulled were as miniscule as an annulment of the law, justice and constitutional state in which it was anchored. But now "history as it happened" has shown me that my work, meant to illuminate a pressing concern of the present and serve life as it is being lived, has lost its meaning after that life has been extinguished.<sup>21</sup>

### Early Plans for the Establishment of a German-Jewish Cultural Institute

With German-speaking refugee scholars in Jewish studies scattered around the world, the initiative for establishing activities and institutions for the memory of German Jewry came from the official representations of emigrated German Jews in the three main centers of settlement: the American Federation of Jews from Central Europe in New York, the London Association of Jewish Refugees in Great Britain, and the Jerusalem *Irgun Olej Merkas Europa*. In order to defend the interests of former German Jews, the three

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<sup>19</sup> Margaret F. Stieg, *The Development of Scholarly Historical Periodicals*, Alabama 1986, p. 109.

<sup>20</sup> Salo W. Baron, interview with the author, Canaan, CT, July 8, 1987; Salo W. Baron to the author, November 9, 1988 and January 13, 1989.

<sup>21</sup> Selma Stern, *Der preussische Staat und die Juden*, vol. 1, no. 1, Tübingen 1962 (Schriftenreihe wissenschaftlicher Abhandlungen des Leo Baeck Instituts 7), p. xiii.

organizations established an umbrella organization at the end of the war, the Council for the Protection of the Rights and Interests of the Jews from Germany (the Council).<sup>22</sup> After the war, these organizations not only provided information and legal help to their members in restitution matters and represented the interests of former German Jews in negotiations with the West German government on reparations, but also initiated cultural activities commemorating the legacy and history of German Jewry. In the beginning, these activities were mostly limited to the publication of articles on historical topics in newsletters and papers, such as the *Mitteilungsblatt* (Jerusalem), the *AJR-Information* (London) or the (independent) *Aufbau* (New York).<sup>23</sup> Later, these activities became more organized, especially in New York. Responding to an appeal by Nathan Stein, the president of the American Federation, in the *Aufbau*,<sup>24</sup> several German-Jewish refugee scholars, among them the historians Berthold Rosenthal, Adolf Kober, Eugen Täubler, and the religious philosopher Max Wiener, expressed the willingness to participate in historical studies on German Jewry.<sup>25</sup> Kober and Wiener drew up the rough outline of a memorial book for the American Federation to be entitled *Jews and Judaism in Germany from the Beginning of Emancipation to Catastrophe*.<sup>26</sup> As a result of the positive response, the American Federation established a cultural (historical) committee in December 1948, with Kober as chair and including, among others, Stein, Gruenewald, Rudolf Callmann, Fritz Kaufmann and Adolf Leschnitzer.<sup>27</sup> In May 1949 the committee proposed a detailed cultural program consisting of three major projects: a Jewish research library; the collection of records of the history of the German Jews, especially of memoirs; and a comprehensive work on the economic, cultural and religious history of the Jews in Germany since emancipation.<sup>28</sup> In order to strengthen support for the cultural work of the American Federation and in particular for the history project, Stein published another appeal in January 1950, *Ein Ruf an unsere Generation*. Referring to the famous appeal by Franz Rosenzweig in 1917, “Zeit ist’s,” which had been aimed at renewing Jewish scholarship in

<sup>22</sup> See Susanne Bauer-Hack, *Die jüdische Wochenzeitung Aufbau und die Wiedergutmachung*, Düsseldorf 1994, pp. 66ff.

<sup>23</sup> See, for example, Eva G. Reichmann, “Spiritual Heritage,” in *AJR Information* (February 1947); S. Rappaport, “The Legacy of German Jewry,” *ibid.* (June 1947); Hans Liebeschütz, “Background of a Catastrophe,” *ibid.* (September 1947).

<sup>24</sup> Nathan Stein, “Zur Erinnerung,” in *Aufbau*, 12 November 1948.

<sup>25</sup> Rosenthal to Stein, November 16, 1948; Kober to Stein, December 20, 1948, Archives of the *Zentrum für Antisemitismusforschung* of the Technical University, Berlin (*ZfA Archives*), AmFed Coll. 17/17.

<sup>26</sup> Kober to Gruenewald, July 15, 1949 (Enclosures), *LBI Archives New York*, Gruenewald Coll. See Appendix 2.

<sup>27</sup> See Kober to Stein, December 20, 1948; Muller to Kober, December 27, 1948, *ZfA Archives*, AmFed Coll. 17/17.

<sup>28</sup> Kober to Stein, May 15, 1949, *ZfA Archives*, AmFed Coll. 17/17.

the spiritual crisis of World War I,<sup>29</sup> Stein called upon the surviving Jews from Germany to record their experiences and to pass on the legacy of German Jewry to the younger generation.<sup>30</sup> But despite the good intentions and serious efforts, these plans did not materialize. The reasons for the failure are well demonstrated by the fate of the planned Memorial Library of German Jewry in New York.

It is a well-known paradox that the Nazis destroyed Jewish life while preserving the objects of Jewish culture. Libraries of Jewish communities and institutions of higher learning in Central and Eastern Europe were confiscated and sent to Germany where they were put at the disposal of different Nazi institutes for “research on the Jewish Question.”<sup>31</sup> After the war, these stolen books were collected in an American army depot in Offenbach, from where they were distributed to Jewish libraries around the world, mostly in Israel. The task of allocating the books was given to the Jewish Cultural Reconstruction Corporation in New York, led by the historian Salo W. Baron.<sup>32</sup> Few German-Jewish refugee scholars knew about the whereabouts of Jewish books after the dissolution of Jewish institutions in Germany. One of them was Eugen Täubler, who until his emigration to the U.S. in 1941 had taught at the *Hochschule* in Berlin. Already in 1944 Täubler had developed a plan to take over the Nazi institutes after the German defeat, along with their libraries, and to transform them into a unified academic institute for research on and defense against antisemitism.<sup>33</sup> As the end of the war approached, Täubler took up the aborted plan of transferring the *Hochschule* to Cambridge, outlining the scheme of a “Leo Baeck Library” modeled after the famous “Warburg Library” and designed as an international research academy

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<sup>29</sup> Franz Rosenzweig, “Zeit ist’s. Gedanken über das jüdische Bildungsproblem des Augenblicks,” [1917] in *idem, Zweistromland. Kleinere Schriften zu Glauben und Denken*, ed. by Reinhold and Annemarie Mayer, Dordrecht 1984, pp. 461–481. See also Christhard Hoffmann, “Jüdisches Lernen oder judaistische Spezialwissenschaft? Die Konzeptionen Franz Rosenweigs und Eugen Täublers zur Gründung der ‘Akademie für die Wissenschaft des Judentums,’” in *Zeitschrift für Religions- und Geistesgeschichte*, vol. 45 (1993), pp. 18–32.

<sup>30</sup> Nathan Stein, “Ein Ruf an unsere Generation,” in *ZfA Archives*, AmFed Coll. 17/15 (see Appendix 3); a slightly modified version is printed in *Ten Years American Federation of Jews from Central Europe, 1941–1951*, New York 1951, pp. 14f.

<sup>31</sup> On the Nazi institutes for the study of the “Jewish Question,” see Schochow, *Deutsch-jüdische Geschichtswissenschaft*, pp. 154–185; Helmut Heiber, *Walter Frank und sein Reichsinstitut für Geschichte des neuen Deutschlands*, Stuttgart 1966; Fritz-Bauer-Institut (ed.), “Beseitigung des jüdischen Einflusses.” *Antisemitische Forschung, Eliten und Karrieren im Nationalsozialismus*, Frankfurt am Main and New York 1999.

<sup>32</sup> On Baron, see Robert Liberles, *Salo Wittmayer Baron: Architect of Jewish History*, New York 1995.

<sup>33</sup> See Täubler’s outline “Über das ‘Institut zur geschichtlichen Erforschung der Judenfrage’ in Berlin,” *UB Basel*, Nachlaß Täubler, B.II.13; see also Täubler’s letter to Stephen S. Wise, March 4, 1944, *ibid.*, E. I. 902.

of Jewish studies with centers in Berlin, Jerusalem and Cambridge.<sup>34</sup> After the war, Täubler suggested other universities as possible hosts. In a personal letter to Leo Baeck of September 11, 1946, he outlined a plan to revive the Berlin *Hochschule* as a “Leo Baeck Library” at Columbia University in connection with the chair in Jewish history held there by Baron.<sup>35</sup> The library would function as a center of scholarship for German Jews in America, its academic profile determined by the special research interests of Täubler and Baeck. Among the tasks Täubler envisaged was the editing of a three-volume final work of German *Wissenschaft des Judentums* and the publication of a scholarly periodical devoted to research on ancient religious syncretism. Neither of these ambitious plans was realized or even seriously discussed in the immediate postwar years.

While Täubler’s plans were limited to the academic realm, focusing on the establishment of pure research institutes, the idea of a memorial library as a cultural center of former German Jews first came up in 1947, when details about the Offenbach book depot became known. It was Herbert A. Strauss, former student at the Berlin *Hochschule* and then a research fellow with the Commission on European Jewish Cultural Reconstruction (JCR), who informed the American Federation about the pending allocation of books and who, in a memorandum of October 17, 1947, suggested the establishment of a central library for Jewish immigrants from Germany.<sup>36</sup> Strauss’s idea was taken up by the Federation and presented by Gruenewald in a meeting of the JCR in the fall of 1947. However, because of the objections of David Werner Senator, the Hebrew University’s administrator, the plan was dropped for the time being.<sup>37</sup> Senator argued that books ought to be allocated only to libraries that already existed and that the Jewish National and University Library in Jerusalem should be entitled to first priority.<sup>38</sup> This principle was generally accepted by the Council’s representative on the JCR, Gruenewald, who

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<sup>34</sup> Täubler to Berlak, January 4, 1944, *UB Basel*, Nachlass Täubler, E.I. 902; Täubler to Stein, January 27, 1945, *ibid.*, E IV 037.1.

<sup>35</sup> Täubler to Baeck, September 11, 1946, *UB Basel*, Nachlass Täubler, E IV 089 (see Appendix 1); see also Täubler’s memorandum, *ibid.*, B. II. 12.

<sup>36</sup> Strauss to Mueller, October 17, 1947, Papers of Herbert A. Strauss; Herbert A. Strauss interview with the author, New York October 19, 2003; see also Herbert A. Strauss, “Was ist aus unseren Büchern geworden,” in *Mitteilungen der Congregation Habonim* vol. 8, no. 3 (January 1948), pp. 4–6. Already in May 1947, Strauss suggested that German Jews established a scientific institute, comparable to *YIVO*, in the tradition of *Wissenschaft des Judentums*; see Strauss, “Wissenschaft des Judentums,” in *Mitteilungen der Congregation Habonim* vol. 7, no. 7 (May 1947), pp. 4f.

<sup>37</sup> Gruenewald to Baeck, January 25, 1949, *ZfA Archives*, AmFed Coll. 17/17.

<sup>38</sup> This became the official policy of the JCR, see the copy of the JCR guidelines enclosed in the letter of Muller to Täubler, May 12, 1949, *UB Basel*, Nachlass Täubler, E.III.075; see also the Minutes of a special JCR board meeting, January 11, 1949, *ZfA Archives*, AmFed Coll. 17/17.

nevertheless argued that the limited claims of German Jews would in no way affect the preferential treatment of the Jerusalem library. More than a year later, after the establishment of the American Federation's cultural committee in December 1948, the plans for a library for German Jewry were taken up again.<sup>39</sup> When Gruenewald, arguing that the planned library was essential for the academic work of the committee, failed to persuade Baron and the JRC, Baeck brought all his authority to bear, writing to Baron in order to support the library project:

There is a strong feeling amongst them [Jews from Central Europe] that the former German Jews who constitute an articulate element in the United States, England and South America ought to receive a share in the cultural property, which at one time belonged to their congregations and institutions. Nor is the claim a merely sentimental one. It expresses the fact that their historical bonds still exist and with them a deeply felt consciousness of their heritage. It continues to live in their congregations and institutions, which already exist or are in the process of formation. Their interest, and the interest of those who work in the field of Jewish research, can be clearly defined. It comprises the area of what is known as *Wissenschaft des Judentums*, the publication of the *Academy der Wissenschaft des Judentums*, and of the Rabbinical Seminaries.<sup>40</sup>

Meanwhile, the opponents of the library project had found a new, powerful spokesman in Gershom Scholem, who objected to a distribution of books to institutions that had only been established after the war and advised against the establishment of a special Memorial Library of German Jewry:

It is open to question whether German émigré academic groups are not of a too transitory character to ensure us of their continued development. Even in the U.S., I would think it a rather unfortunate step to establish a special memorial Library for German Jewry, as has been suggested by the Council . . . . It would be more advisable if such a project would be sponsored by one of the established higher institutions of learning in order not to scatter both the available material and the centers of research.<sup>41</sup>

On June 7, 1949, at a special meeting of the JCR's board of directors, plans for a Memorial Library of German Jewry were discussed at length. In an attempt to counter Scholem's argumentation, Gruenewald presented a proposal, earlier submitted by Täubler<sup>42</sup> with the approval of President Nelson Glueck of the Hebrew Union College,<sup>43</sup> for the establishment of a library

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<sup>39</sup> Gruenewald to Muller, January 14, 1949, and Gruenewald to Baeck, January 25, 1949, *ZfA Archives*, AmFed Coll. 17/17.

<sup>40</sup> Baeck to Baron, April 12, 1949, *ZfA Archives*, AmFed Coll. 17/17.

<sup>41</sup> Scholem to Baron, May 21, 1949, *ZfA Archives*, AmFed Coll. 17/17.

<sup>42</sup> Täubler to Muller, May 5, 1949, *ZfA Archives*, AmFed Coll. 17/17.

<sup>43</sup> Glueck to Muller, June 6, 1949 (teletype), *ZfA Archives*, AmFed Coll. 17/17.

commemorating German Jewry under the auspices of the Jewish Institute of Religion in New York:

It would be set aside as a Memorial Library and link the memory of its founder [Stephen S. Wise], who has done so much for so many German Jews, and the Hebrew Union College which has saved more Jewish scholars than any other institution in America, with the memories and with the remnants of the former German Jews.<sup>44</sup>

This proposal was referred to the advisory committee for reconsideration, where it apparently was approved. In October 1949, Baron informed Gruenewald “that the matter of the Central Jewish Library has already been decided ... [and that] the Jewish Institute of Religion has already begun receiving books for that special collection.”<sup>45</sup> The librarian at the Jewish Institute of Religion, Rabbi Edward Kiev, informed the American Federation accordingly.<sup>46</sup> As a consequence, lists of the most essential titles for the Memorial Library were already prepared by the Cultural Committee of the American Federation.

Despite these promises and preparations, the plans for a Memorial Library of German Jewry came to nothing in the end. What was behind this failure is not entirely clear from the sources. As was to be expected, Scholem did not give in and came out with a “violent protest” against the approval of the library plan.<sup>47</sup> It was certainly a major disadvantage that in the summer of 1949, Täubler, having developed the plans for cooperation with the Jewish Institute of Religion and, even more important, having been crucial in supervising the selection process and maintaining contact with the president of the Hebrew Union College,<sup>48</sup> was forced by ill-health to withdraw totally from the project.<sup>49</sup> In addition, there were different opinions about the character the library should assume: while the librarian of the Jewish Institute of Religion regarded it just as a completion of the collection, marked with a special stamp but otherwise fully incorporated into the institute’s library, the German Jews imagined an identifiable, representative library, set aside in one or more separate rooms that could serve as a cultural center.<sup>50</sup> It seems that

<sup>44</sup> Minutes of the special meeting of the board of directors of the JCR, June 7, 1949, *ZfA Archives*, AmFed Coll. 17/17.

<sup>45</sup> Gruenewald to Muller, October 14, 1949, *ZfA Archives*, AmFed Coll. 17/17.

<sup>46</sup> Kiev to Gruenewald, October 26, 1949, *ZfA Archives*, AmFed Coll. 17/17.

<sup>47</sup> Hannah Arendt to Gruenewald, November 9, 1949, *ZfA Archives*, AmFed Coll. 17/17.

<sup>48</sup> Muller to Täubler, June 22, 1949 and June 27, 1949, *ZfA Archives*, AmFed Coll. 17/17.

<sup>49</sup> Täubler to Glueck, July 6, 1949, *UB Basel*, Nachlass Täubler, E IV 014.5; Muller to Täubler, June 22, 1949, *ibid.*, E III 075.11; Muller to Täubler, August 30, 1949, *ibid.*, E III 075.13; Muller to Täubler, November 2, 1949, *ibid.*, E III 075.12.

<sup>50</sup> Gruenewald to Muller, April 14, 1950, *ZfA Archives*, AmFed Coll. 17/17;



these differing concepts were irreconcilable in the end. When they had not received an answer from Nelson Glueck to their letters after almost a year, the German Jews finally realized with resignation that the whole project had failed.<sup>51</sup>

The history of the rise and fall of the Memorial Library plan illustrates most clearly the difficulties encountered by the emigrated German Jews in establishing a cultural institute for the memory of German Jewry. Their efforts were stymied not only by a lack of funding but, even more so, by a lack of understanding and support on the side of various Jewish institutions. That the Jews from Germany came away empty-handed when their former cultural property was restituted and allocated to Jewish institutions after the war can be seen, at least partly, as a result of a negative attitude towards things German that was widespread in the post-Holocaust Jewish world. By implication, this attitude also took in German Jews, who were often seen as illusionary assimilationists who had thrown away their Jewish heritage in exchange for the hollow promises of German culture.

### The Jerusalem Initiative

While there were many ideas and ambitious plans for the establishment of a cultural institute for the memory of German Jewry after the war, their own realization was mainly hampered by a lack of resources. This situation only changed with the prospect of German reparation payments opened up by Adenauer's declaration at the German *Bundestag* on September 27, 1951.<sup>52</sup> As the representative body of the German-speaking Jews emigrated from Germany, the Council had been a member of the Jewish Restitution Successor Organization (JRSO) since its establishment by the American administration

Gruenewald to Glueck, *ibid.*; Gruenewald to Muller, November 9, 1949, *ibid.*: "I also told Rabbi Kiev about our plan to dedicate in a solemn ceremony the memorial Library. Such an act would increase the interest of former German Jews in the memorial Library and in my view stimulate their interest in the Jewish Institutes of learning as well. However, the realization of such a plan would depend on two conditions: 1) that the memorial Library be set aside and form a visible part of the entire library; and 2) that the library be representative of the cultural work of the German Jews." See also Gruenewald to Muller, April 14, 1950, *ibid.*

<sup>51</sup> Gruenewald to Muller, October 31, 1950, *ZfA Archives*, AmFed Coll. 17/17: "Dr. Nelson Glueck has received several letters – none of which he has chosen to answer. I expect a minimum of courtesy even from the captains of the scholastic industry. I have no time to spend on educating them in the rules of behaviour. I have no doubt that Dr. Nelson Glueck is not willing to carry out the recommendations of the Board of Directors. Furthermore, I doubt whether at this late stage we would be able to obtain books sufficient in quantity or quality for the setting up of a library."

<sup>52</sup> Nana Sagi, *German Reparations: A History of the Negotiations*, New York and Jerusalem 1986, pp. 77ff.

in Germany in June 1948, and of the parallel British organization, the Jewish Trust Corporation (JTC), since 1950.<sup>53</sup> Now a new umbrella organization was needed that could represent the interests of Jews living outside of Israel and take up negotiations with the West German government. On October 26, 1951, representatives of twenty-two Jewish organizations, among them those of the Council, met in New York to set up the Conference on Jewish Material Claims against Germany (Claims Conference) as the representative body for future activity.<sup>54</sup> Nahum Goldmann became its chairman. In preparation for this meeting, the Council compiled a list of those of its social and cultural schemes it considered suitable for financial support by the JRSO.<sup>55</sup> It specified three important cultural tasks for the Council: 1) the preservation of records; 2) a comprehensive history of German Jews since 1812; and 3) cultural and educational activities, for example the establishment of libraries, for German Jews in the countries of their resettlement. At the same time, the Council agreed on an internal division of labor between its three centers: while the London office of the Council would be responsible for organizational and legal matters, and the New York office for social schemes, the Israel section was put in charge of developing cultural projects.<sup>56</sup>

In the spring of 1952, some months before the completion of the Luxembourg Agreement, the possibility of German restitution payments began to take concrete shape. This period saw the intensification of planning activities for the establishment of a German-Jewish cultural institute. In this context, a sharp controversy about the direction of future work developed between the London and Jerusalem offices of the Council. After a meeting of the London office, in a letter of May 12, 1952, Hans Reichmann suggested that the Federal Republic should be included in the German Jews' cultural work and proposed a number of possible projects for further discussion: the founding of a chair for German-Jewish history at a German university; the creation of a memorial foundation for the German Jews to finance research assignments; the financing by the German government of a monumental work on the history of the German Jews; and the establishment of an extensive Jewish museum in one of the old Jewish settlements such as Mainz, Worms, Cologne, or Frankfurt am Main. The reaction from Jerusalem to these ideas was, as might have been expected, unequivocal and hostile. On June 24, 1952 Siegfried Moses wrote to Reichmann:

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<sup>53</sup> Sagi, *German Reparations*, pp. 41f.

<sup>54</sup> Sagi, *German Reparations*, pp. 75ff.

<sup>55</sup> Rosenstock to Muller, October 22, 1951, *ZfA Archives*, AmFed Coll. 14/52.

<sup>56</sup> Minutes of the constituent meeting of the Israel section of the Council, September 3, 1951, *LBI Archives New York*, Council Coll.; see also the Minutes of the following meeting on September 10, 1951, *ibid.* The Israel office's responsibilities were already decided at the Council meeting of December 17, 1950, see the Minutes in *ZfA Archives*, AmFed Coll. 12/10.

The position of the Israel Section and the *Irgun Olej Merkas Europa* on proposals of this kind is absolutely and unconditionally negative. We urgently wish that all groups of the Council should dispense with the development of such trains of thought, because we deem them completely unworthy of discussion. Not only because of the moral and practical points of view, which in our view make a Jewish initiative in this area absolutely impossible, but above all because in ideological terms such trains of thought can only be understood as representing a tendency which we entirely reject: a certain endeavor to continue the German-Jewish symbiosis, to which history has put an end, at least in the limits and forms in which it would now be theoretically possible.<sup>57</sup>

The correspondence between Reichmann and Moses is symptomatic of the differences between various representatives of the Jews who had emigrated from Germany, differences that can be traced back to ideological discrepancies in the Weimar Republic period between the *Centralverein* and the *Zionistische Vereinigung für Deutschland*. In his suggestions, Reichmann evidently assumed that restitution payments from the German government could only be given (or could be given more easily) if they benefited institutions in Germany. He was willing at least to consider the possibility of cooperation with the German authorities. Moses, on the other hand, rejected this idea from the outset, suggesting that Reichmann still adhered to the illusion of a German-Jewish symbiosis, hence suffered from the delusion that the Germans could be influenced by education or placated by apologetics. For Moses, the history of the German Jews had been brought to a complete end by Nazi persecution – this history no longer had a future. The establishment of research and teaching institutions for German-Jewish history *in Germany* and with Germans as beneficiaries was therefore inconceivable. Rather, the legacy of German Jewry was to be preserved as the property of the Jewish people, to be passed on to Jewish youth, above all in the newly established state of Israel.

It can be assumed that the irritable exchange of letters between London and Jerusalem in 1952 contributed to the Jerusalem office of the Council taking responsibility for the cultural program and the development of a German-Jewish cultural institute, a role that had been formally agreed upon earlier. Already in 1951, the Israeli section had developed the plan for a *Gedächtnisbuch* – a memorial book of German Jewry, worked out in detail by Bruno Kirschner and Ernst Simon in September 1951.<sup>58</sup> Arranged under six subject headings, it listed twenty-six special topics on all aspects of modern German-Jewish history and named possible contributors.<sup>59</sup> Robert Weltsch was designated editor of this collaborative work, originally to be published in 1953,

<sup>57</sup> Moses to Reichmann, June 24, 1952, *ZfA Archives*, AmFed Coll. 12/9. The translation of the letter was first published in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 41 (1996), pp. 277f.

<sup>58</sup> *LBI Jerusalem*, file 1038. See also the Minutes of the meeting of the Israel section of the Council, September 10, 1951, *LBI Archives New York*, Council Coll.

<sup>59</sup> See Appendix 4.

that is, twenty years after the beginning of the Nazi persecution of the Jews and on the occasion of Leo Baeck's eightieth and Martin Buber's seventy-fifth birthdays.<sup>60</sup> Although the *Gedächtnisbuch* did not materialize before 1963 when it was published in a totally different form,<sup>61</sup> the Kirschner-Simon plan of 1951 was instrumental in developing the cultural working program of the Council. In its systematic design it was, in a version expanded by Simon in August 1954, still the only authoritative scheme when the research program of the LBI was finally discussed in detail at its founding conference in May 1955.<sup>62</sup>

At an executive meeting of the Council on June 7, 1953, in London, it was re-emphasized that the Jerusalem section was in charge of elaborating the Council's cultural program and formulating applications for financial support to the Claims Conference. Cultural schemes that had previously been developed in London and New York were consequently sent to Jerusalem.<sup>63</sup> This division of labor was combined with a claim to leadership. At the meeting in London, Moses categorically declared that "in matters of principle, Israel does not want to and actually cannot be outvoted [by the other sections]."<sup>64</sup> During the fall of 1953, the planning process gained speed. In order to meet the December 1 deadline for applications to the Claims Conference, a draft of the cultural program was quickly formulated and sent to the other Council sections for approval on November 13, 1953.<sup>65</sup> It consisted of four projects: 1) the Leo Baeck Institute of Jews from Germany; 2) a fund for cultural institutions; 3) the founding (and funding) of a chair for the history of Western and Central European Jewry at the Hebrew University; and 4) the Wiener Library. The research program of the LBI was only roughly outlined in the two-page draft. It emphasized that the institute aimed at investigating "the role played by German Jewry in World Jewry, its achievements and heritage, including a partial presentation of the rest of Central European Jewry (e.g. Prague, Jews in Austria-Hungary)."<sup>66</sup> It would perform this task by collecting documents and carrying out historical research. The proposed fields of research were divided in two: 1) the period since the Emancipation,

<sup>60</sup> Note of Kirschner and Simon, February 25, 1952, *LBI Jerusalem*, file 1038.

<sup>61</sup> Robert Weltsch (ed.), *Deutsches Judentum – Aufstieg und Krise. Gestalten, Ideen, Werke*, Stuttgart 1963.

<sup>62</sup> Minutes of the planning conference of the LBI, May 25, 1955 (at 11 a.m.), *LBI London*, file "Minutes 1955–57."

<sup>63</sup> Reichmann to Tramer, July 10, 1953, *LBI Jerusalem*, file 1072; Reichmann to Muller, July 10, 1953, *ZfA Archives*, AmFed Coll. 17/18.

<sup>64</sup> Minutes of the meeting of the Israel Section of the Council, November 12, 1953, *LBI Jerusalem*, file 1038.

<sup>65</sup> Moses to Muller and Reichmann, November 13, 1953, *ZfA Archives*, AmFed Coll. 17/18.

<sup>66</sup> Leo Baeck Institute, Outline of Work and Research Program (First Draft), November 1953, *LBI Jerusalem*, file 1038.

with main emphasis on the political, national and religious trends in German Jewry after the Emancipation and their effects on the development within world Jewry, on the Nazi catastrophe, and on the role of German Jews in the development of Zionism and in the building of the state of Israel; and 2) the period up to the Emancipation, with the continuation of former long-term research projects of the *Wissenschaft des Judentums* in Germany that had been stopped by Nazi persecution, such as the *Germania Judaica*, the bicentenary edition of Mendelssohn's collected works, and Selma Stern's multivolume document edition *The Prussian State and the Jews*. As to the institute's publication program, it was intended to edit a quarterly with smaller studies and to publish research monographs, source editions and classic works of Jewish theology in English or Hebrew translation. The institute was also charged with collecting documentary material on the history of Central European Jewry, especially by initiating autobiographies of public figures in Jewish life.

The naming of the institute had been discussed and decided upon at a meeting of the Jerusalem section on November 12.<sup>67</sup> The name "Academy for the Centralization and Preservation of Central European Culture" suggested by others was turned down as too unspecific. It was Siegfried Moses who suggested the name "Leo Baeck Institute," on the grounds that it reflected the institute's focus on German Jewry while at the same time being open enough to include all of Central Europe in its range of interests. In order to distinguish the institute from religious institutions that also bore Leo Baeck's name, it was decided to add "of Jews from Germany." Moses's suggestion was then accepted unanimously. It was indicative of the time-pressure under which the application was drafted that Leo Baeck's personal approval of the naming was only solicited after the proposal had been passed.<sup>68</sup>

The submission of the application to the Claims Conference at the end of 1953 was the first step towards founding the LBI. Given the previous polemics of the *ZVfD* against the "German" (rather than "Jewish") orientation of the *Centralverein* and of German Jewry in general, it may at first seem paradoxical that the Council's Israeli section, in other words the German Zionists, took the initiative and set the agenda in planning a cultural institute for the memory of the German Jews. But there were practical reasons behind a Jerusalem initiative. In his position as State Comptroller of Israel (in the rank of minister), and with his extensive political, diplomatic and administrative experience, Siegfried Moses was the natural chairman and organizer of the LBI project. Moreover, with Martin Buber, Gershom Scholem, Ernst Simon and others, there were more university professors and academic heavyweights in Jerusalem than in the other centers of German-Jewish emigration. Still, to

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<sup>67</sup> Minutes of the meeting of the Israel Section of the Council, November 12, 1953, *LBI Jerusalem*, file 1038.

<sup>68</sup> Moses to Baeck, Jerusalem November 13, 1953, *LBI Jerusalem*, file 1038.

reduce the Jerusalem initiative to reasons of practicability and efficiency is inappropriate. The main motivation was certainly a firm conviction that preserving the heritage of German Jewry was a valuable and essential contribution to developing the Zionist project and building the state of Israel.

Feeling vindicated by the course of recent history in their sense of the illusionary character of a German-Jewish symbiosis, German Zionists were perhaps less shaken by soul-searching and self doubts than the adherents of the *Centralverein*; they could perhaps more easily emphasize (or in any case do so with less risk of being misunderstood) the positive aspects of the German-Jewish past.<sup>69</sup> The insistence on the specific values of *German Jewry* among German Zionists in Israel was most clearly visible in the case of Georg Landauer, who after emigrating to Palestine in 1934 became the managing director of the Jewish Agency Bureau for the Settlement of German Jews and who was the founder of “*Aliyah Chadasha*,” a party based in the German immigrant community during the British Mandate period.<sup>70</sup> A Zionist activist (in *Hapoel Hazair*) since the 1920s and an ardent advocate of an ethical solution to the conflict with the Arabs, Landauer felt increasingly estranged and disappointed in Israel and moved to the United States in 1953.

Published on the twentieth anniversary of the Nazi boycott of Jewish shops in April 1933, Landauer’s article “*Über das Erbe des deutschen Judentums*” bears witness to a new reflection upon the course and “essence” of German-Jewish history among German Zionists.<sup>71</sup> The old well-worn Zionist thought patterns about German-Jewish liberalism and assimilation were questioned and the legacy of German Jewry was vindicated:

How it is mocked, even cast under suspicion and spurned by its own children, this spirit of German Judaism! How the fruitful synthesis of Judaism and world culture is falsified as nothing more than “assimilation”! Certainly, there have always been “assimilationists” who have discredited this assimilation ... . Nevertheless the essence of the phenomenon lay in German Judaism emerging from the ghetto’s atrophy into the fresh air of wider cultural vistas, imbibing them avidly, but shaping them in a creative way. Thus drawing on important elements from inherited Judaism and the newly acquired culture, it spontaneously created values through which both other peoples and Judaism itself received new, deeper and broader, impulses.

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<sup>69</sup> Esra Bennathan interview with the author, London April 29, 2003.

<sup>70</sup> On Landauer, see Robert Weltsch, “Georg Landauer in seiner Zeit,” [1957] in *idem*, *An der Wende des modernen Judentums. Betrachtungen aus fünf Jahrzehnten*, Tübingen 1972, pp. 260–270; Ernst Simon, “Georg Landauers Vermächtnis,” [1958] in *idem*, *Brücken. Gesammelte Aufsätze*, Heidelberg 1965, pp. 417–433.

<sup>71</sup> Georg Landauer, “Über das Erbe des deutschen Judentums,” in *Mitteilungsblatt (MB)*, vol. 21, no. 13/14 (March 30, 1953), pp. 1f.

With particular fervor, Landauer came out against the opinion, widespread within the Jewish world at the time, that German Jews had been “less Jewish” than other Jewries:

The Jewish tribes [*Stämme*] are distinguished ... not through one being more Jewish, the other less so, or as it is often arrogantly put, one being composed of better Jews, the other of worse ones. In their Judaism they are equal. However, they are distinguished through their forms of assimilation. Russian Judaism is more Russian and German Judaism more German; none is more Jewish, and none can any longer be *only* Jewish. This is the reason, therefore that we should be proud of our heritage. It is our contribution.

In Landauer’s view, the integration of German Jews into the surrounding German and European cultures, their cosmopolitan attitude and open-mindedness, were not at all a mistake, but rather a model for the future of Jewish life: “We will ... only be able to continue existing as Jews when we make humanity’s great cultural values and the striving of all peoples for freedom and salvation into our own, integrate them within us.” In its insistence on the positive legacy of German Jewry, Landauer’s article can almost be read as a founding manifesto, paving the way ideologically for the future work of the LBI.<sup>72</sup> Indeed, Baeck and Moses had agreed on designating Landauer to play a key role in the planned cultural institute.<sup>73</sup> His early death, on February 4, 1954, made these plans irrelevant.

### Negotiations with the Claims Conference

On February 16, 1954, F. G. Boas and Hans Reichmann met in London with Salo Baron, who served as “*rapporteur*” of the Claims Conference in cultural matters, to discuss the Council’s application. In general, Baron’s feedback was encouraging. Of the four cultural projects proposed by the Council, the idea of the Leo Baeck Institute seemed most promising to him and was most likely to receive financial support from the Conference. A more specific working plan was needed, though, with detailed information on research topics, designated contributors, and a specified estimate of the budget.<sup>74</sup> In order to meet the extended deadline of March 10, 1954, a tentative working plan was draft-

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<sup>72</sup> See Hans Tramer, “Die Erhaltung unseres Erbes,” in *MB* vol. 23, no. 23 (June 10, 1955), p. 1.

<sup>73</sup> Minutes of the meeting of the Israel Section of the Council, November 12, 1953, *LBI Jerusalem*, file 1038; Moses to Baeck, March 2, 1954, *LBI Archives New York*, AR 5890, box 11.

<sup>74</sup> Reichmann to Muller and Tramer, February 16, 1954, *ZfA Archives*, AmFed Coll.

ed in Jerusalem by Kirschner and Tramer, based on the Kirschner-Simon plan of 1951 and approved by the Israel executive of the Council.<sup>75</sup>

Although the revised scheme for the LBI arrived just in time, it was not discussed at the meeting of the cultural advisory committee of the Claims Conference and did not receive funding for 1954.<sup>76</sup> To the great disappointment of those involved in the planning process, the establishment of the institute had to be postponed for an indefinite time. The situation was worsened by the increasingly strained relationship between the Council and the Jewish restitution organizations. That the cultural program of the Council was not considered at all, while other cultural projects were supported with a total sum of 900,000 dollars in 1954, seemed to correspond only too well with the general pattern of the JRSO's and Claims Conference's responses: to ignore and dismiss the legitimate claims of the emigrated German Jews represented by the Council. In protest at this general policy, the Council declared its withdrawal from the JRSO on March 12, 1954.<sup>77</sup> Within the Council, however, disagreement emerged about a further course of action. Cooperation between its sections was tried to the breaking point when Leo Baeck, in his capacity as president of the Council, wrote a letter to the German finance minister, Fritz Schaeffer, informing the German side that the Council, no longer represented by the JRSO, would like to be heard before any compensation payments were granted to that organization.<sup>78</sup> This step naturally provoked an angry reaction on the part of the JRSO<sup>79</sup> – but also one by the Council's Israel section. Criticizing the management of the Council's London secretariat, and in particular Baeck, for having violated the principle of not displaying internal Jewish differences to the German side, Moses resigned from his post as Council vice-president, declaring further membership of the *Irgun Olej Merkas Europa* in the Council conditional on its reorganization and a reallocation of responsibilities.<sup>80</sup> During the summer of 1954, faced with the most critical situation since its founding, the Council managed to reconcile these internal differences and resume concerted action in the conflict with the JRSO.<sup>81</sup> At a Paris round table conference on No-

<sup>75</sup> Moses to Baeck, March 2, 1954, *LBI Archives New York*, AR 5890, box 11.

<sup>76</sup> Gruenewald to Reichmann, March 30, 1954, *ZfA Archives*, AmFed Coll. 14/20.

<sup>77</sup> Leo Baeck to Monroe Goldwater (JRSO), March 12, 1954, *LBI Archives New York*, AR 7204, box 5, folder 2; see also Hans Tramer, in *MB* vol. 23, No. 3 (January 21, 1955); Bauer-Hack, *Die jüdische Wochenzeitung Aufbau*, pp. 172ff.

<sup>78</sup> Baeck and Breslauer to the Bundesminister der Finanzen, May 24, 1954, *LBI Archives New York*, AR 7204, box 5, folder 2.

<sup>79</sup> Benjamin B. Ferencz to Breslauer, June 1, 1954, *LBI Archives New York*, AR 7204, box 5, folder 2.

<sup>80</sup> Moses to Baeck, June 18, 1954, *LBI Archives New York*, AR 7185, box 3, folder 4.

<sup>81</sup> See Hans Tramer, "Der Kampf der Juden aus Deutschland," in *MB* vol. 22, no. 29 (July 16, 1954); Walter Breslauer, "Die Claims Conference und 'Landsmannschaften,'" in *MB* vol. 22, no. 35 (August 27, 1954).



vember 2, 1954, an agreement was reached with the JRSO about the allocation of funds from it to the Council; this allowed it to rejoin the JRSO.<sup>82</sup> Relations with the Claims Conference were also improved during this conference.<sup>83</sup>

Although the Council was preoccupied with crisis management and “big politics” over most of the year, the LBI project was not forgotten. Through different channels and contacts, its backers lobbied for support. Given the broadly negative attitude towards German Jews in the post-Holocaust Jewish world, it was essential to vindicate the legacy of German Jewry as an integral part of Jewish culture. This concern is most clearly documented in a personal letter from Martin Buber to Salo Baron written in June 1954, significantly in Hebrew. In it, Buber expressed his strong disappointment about the ways the Council had been treated by the Claims Conference and tried to convince Baron of the importance of the LBI’s mission:

I will not hide from you, dear Prof. Baron, that this treatment [declining the proposal for formal reasons without any discussion of its spiritual scope] has hurt my friends and me in a virtually personal manner . . . . We are not contacting you, however, to claim satisfaction for the insult to us as scholars . . . but rather for that to German Jewry, whose good name and dignity we are obliged to save. This Jewry and its reputation are not well known in Israel and even less so in the Diaspora. There are many reasons for this, which you surely know as well as I do. Still, allow me to try to formulate one of them, which seems central to me. The German Jew was a Jew by personal decision before he became a Jew through the common fate of the [Jewish] people. He once stood at the crossroads and had to make the choice between either returning to his people or withdrawing from them. History only showed in 1933 that the choice was illusory. Beforehand, however, the choice was quite realistic, at least subjectively, for those who made a decision in favor of their Jewishness as well as for those who rejected it.

This fundamental experience is unfamiliar to the eastern Jews, whose objective and subjective belonging to their people was never called into question. This unique historical phenomenon of German Jewry, with its heroism and weakness, with its saints and traitors, should be commemorated in the national memory. The dead do not diminish the living, and most of our brethren died and indeed were murdered. We, the living remainder, have the obligation to present their aspirations and life in the proper light, without apologetics or tribal hatred. I am sure that you, the historian of the people of Israel . . . will be the first to recognize the necessity and magnitude of this task. Furthermore, as an archival researcher who often encountered great difficulties originating from the lack of living witnesses, you will also ap-

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<sup>82</sup> Agreement between the Council for the Protection of the Rights and Interests of Jews from Germany and the Jewish Restitution Successor Organization, Paris November 3, 1954, *LBI Archives New York*, AR 7204, box 5, folder 2.

<sup>83</sup> See Hans Tramer, “Durchführung eines Abkommens,” in *MB* vol. 23, no. 3 (January 21, 1955).

preciate the urgency in implementing this task. If we do not fulfill this task in the immediate coming years, in which we can still record the testimony of the oldest survivors, we will have failed in our duty.<sup>84</sup>

Although Buber had addressed Baron personally, Baron did not answer this letter but forwarded it to Judah J. Shapiro, the director of the Department of Cultural and Educational Reconstruction of the Claims Conference.<sup>85</sup> In his meetings and correspondence with members of the Council, Shapiro tried to clarify the Conference's position regarding cultural projects and refute the impression that the Council had been treated unfairly. Applications for a "general fund" were unacceptable in principle, he insisted. Each cultural project had to be presented separately. The LBI project, on the other hand, was considered promising. The revised plan of March 1954 had arrived too late to be considered for that year but would be discussed in the fall when the allocations for 1955 were going to be made.<sup>86</sup> Over the year, Shapiro came up with more specific advice regarding preparation of the application. In particular, he insisted that only projects meant to be undertaken outside Israel be listed in the application, since the Claims Conference could not give financial support to institutions or scholars in Israel.<sup>87</sup>

The final version of the application was drafted during the summer of 1954 in Jerusalem.<sup>88</sup> It included the outline of a detailed working program, elaborated by Ernst Simon in August and subsequently published in an edited version in the first *LBI Year Book*.<sup>89</sup> In addition, it presented a list of eighty-four possible contributors, mostly German-Jewish émigré scholars, but also including some of the big names in the field of Jewish historiography such as Yitzhak Baer, Salo Baron, and Jacob Rader Marcus. Some details of the application may be worth noting as they reveal an effort to forestall possible objections on the part of the Claims Conference's cultural committee. It was emphasized that the LBI intended to cooperate with other Jewish institutions that pursued similar aims, "dividing fields of research in order to avoid duplicity of work." In contrast to the first application of November 1953, where the LBI was just a plan for the future, it was now presented as already existing (as "founded by the Council of Jews from Germany"), although that was hardly the case other than on paper. When and where such a

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<sup>84</sup> Buber to Baron, June 10, 1954 (Hebrew), *LBI Jerusalem*, file 159. The author is grateful to Guy Miron for both furnishing a copy of this letter and providing an English translation of the Hebrew original.

<sup>85</sup> Shapiro to Buber, July 14, 1954, *LBI Jerusalem*, file 159.

<sup>86</sup> See Reichmann to Tramer, July 23, 1954, *ZfA Archives*, AmFed Coll. 17/18.

<sup>87</sup> Shapiro to Buber, July 14, 1954, *LBI Jerusalem*, file 159.

<sup>88</sup> Cultural Projects of the Council [Application to the Claims Conference, August 1954], *ZfA Archives*, AmFed Coll. 17/18.

<sup>89</sup> Siegfried Moses, "Leo Baeck Institute of Jews from Germany," in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 1 (1956), pp. xvf.

founding act is meant to have taken place in 1954 remains somewhat mysterious. In an article on the founding of the LBI, Joseph Walk claimed that the institute was “pre-founded” on March 2, 1954 in a meeting at Buber’s house in Jerusalem.<sup>90</sup> However, this claim does not stand up to scrutiny. When Siegfried Moses wrote to Leo Baeck on precisely the same day, sending a copy of the revised draft of the application, he made no reference to a founding meeting.<sup>91</sup>

On a more official level, an LBI New York report written sometime in late 1955 stated that the Council “resolved on the establishment of ... the ‘Leo Baeck Institute’ ” at the convention in London on October 31, 1954.<sup>92</sup> This meeting was held in preparation for the Paris round table conference with the JRSO starting two days later, and the step of formally establishing the LBI may have been neglected at the time, if only because taking that step would not have had any immediate consequences. Be that as it may, it can be assumed that furnishing the LBI’s founding with an early date (since then a persistent source of confusion) was based on a sense that an already existing institute would more easily be granted funds than a merely virtual one.<sup>93</sup> In the question of separate working plans for the new institute’s Israeli and other branches, the application did not even try to meet the rules of the Claims Conference. Convinced that such a solution was unpractical and absurd, it categorically stated: “Scholars and contributors throughout the world will be entrusted with research and presentations irrespective of their domicile.”<sup>94</sup>

After the revised application had been sent on to New York in early September, Gruenewald, his stance based on past experience as the Council’s representative in the cultural committee of the Claims Conference, tried to dampen all too optimistic expectations:

It is necessary to understand that in the Cultural Committee we shall meet stiff opposition. The atmosphere there too, however disguised, is not friendly. Except for Dr. Newman of Dropsie College, there was not one favorably inclined. That there existed in Germany and that there exists among their survivors anything related to a

<sup>90</sup> Joseph Walk, “Die Gründung des Leo Baeck Instituts vor 40 Jahren,” in *LBI Information*, vol. 5/6 (1995), pp. 16–21, here pp. 16f. Most likely, Walk was referring to an “oral tradition” within the LBI. When asked about further evidence, he could not substantiate his claim. (I am grateful to Dr. Ruth Nattermann, who talked to Professor Walk, for this information).

<sup>91</sup> Moses to Baeck, March 2, 1954, *LBI Archives New York*, AR 5890, box 11. It may well be that one of the late February–early March 1954 meetings held to discuss the working program’s final draft took place in Buber’s house. But that was hardly a “founding meeting.” It is also possible that a confusion with the meeting in Buber’s house of the LBI planning committee during the founding conference on May 30, 1955, is at work here on Walk’s part (see below).

<sup>92</sup> Report of the LBI [1955], *LBI Jerusalem*, file 1072.

<sup>93</sup> See Moses to Baeck, May 16, 1954, *LBI Jerusalem*, file 1038.

<sup>94</sup> Research Plan of the LBI [Fall 1954], *ZfA Archives*, AmFed Coll.

Jewish Culture is a strange notion to the Yiddishists, the Orthodox and, I am afraid, the Hebraists too. The tendency exists to see in German Jewry a *Churban* [destruction catastrophe] before it became one through Hitler. This at least was what I encountered in previous meetings. It may be better now.<sup>95</sup>

When Gruenewald delivered the proposal to Shapiro in early December, the reaction was largely positive. Shapiro expected the LBI “to become one of the solid achievements of the Conference.” He insisted, though, that funds from the Conference could not be used for expenses in Israel and that the estimate of the budget had to be reworked in order to reflect this policy. Shapiro emphasized, furthermore, that the work of the LBI should focus on German-speaking Jews in Europe, not just on German Jews, and should include the Hebrew culture in Germany as well. As far as possible, publications were to be in English or Hebrew rather than in German. Cooperation with the Wiener Library in London also seemed desirable to him.<sup>96</sup>

Already at the end of December, Gruenewald received a provisional reply stating that pending further information the Claims Conference would allocate 15,000 British pounds to the LBI for its work outside Israel.<sup>97</sup> This was much less than the 120,000 U.S. dollars the Council had originally asked for in order to undertake the work of the LBI in the year 1955. In negotiations with Shapiro, Gruenewald and the Council then tried to obtain an increase in the allocated sum – without success.<sup>98</sup>

As in previous year, the reply of the Claims Conference left the Council disappointed. Again, nothing was given at all to the Council’s “general cultural fund,” and the 42,000 dollars granted for the LBI’s work outside Israel were insufficient to run the institute in its first year. In addition, social projects of the Council such as a hardship fund had not been considered at all. As a reaction, there was discussion of declining the allocation outright, along with withdrawing from the Claims Conference and mobilizing public opinion for the cause of the German Jews.<sup>99</sup> But this confrontational course was regarded as futile and firmly opposed by others, in particular by Siegfried Moses. At an executive meeting of the Council in London, he argued that the “time of demonstrative steps was over” and that it was necessary to “lead the fight from within.”<sup>100</sup> He urged the Council not to postpone the estab-

<sup>95</sup> Gruenewald to Tramer, September 1, 1954, *LBI Jerusalem*, file 1038.

<sup>96</sup> Gruenewald to Moses, December 6, 1954, *ZfA Archives*, AmFed Coll. 17/10.

<sup>97</sup> Shapiro to Gruenewald, December 29, 1954, *LBI London*, file M(j)3.

<sup>98</sup> Gruenewald to Moses, January 20, 1955, *LBI London*, file M(j)3; Breslauer to Moses, February 7, 1955, *ZfA Archives*, AmFed Coll. 16/27.

<sup>99</sup> Breslauer to Moses, February 7, 1955, *ZfA Archives*, AmFed Coll. 16/27; Minutes of the meeting of the Boards of Directors of the American Federation of Jews from Central Europe, March 3, 1955, *ZfA Archives*, AmFed Coll. 1/35.

<sup>100</sup> Minutes of the Executive Meeting of the Council, London March 23, 1955, *LBI Jerusalem*, file 1072.

lishment of the LBI: “We are the last generation that can sustain and evoke [*wachhalten und wachrufen*] the history of German Jewry. For the council, the LBI is the first great unified task. These two facts make the project exceptionally important.” Moses suggested augmenting the available funds through use of part of the allocation sum granted by the JSRO to the Council at the Paris conference.<sup>101</sup> After much heated discussion, it was decided to defer this proposal. And despite the funding uncertainties, it was agreed to go ahead with the establishment of the LBI and convene a founding meeting in Jerusalem at the end of May 1955.

### The Founding Conference in Jerusalem (May 25–31, 1955)

In April 1955, members of the LBI’s Israeli section came together to discuss the nature of the institute’s founding meeting.<sup>102</sup> Should it be an internal working conference, held in German, or rather a public meeting addressed to the Israeli public in Hebrew or English? Buber was against a public proclamation, arguing that the conference should rather clarify potential problems and prepare the institute’s practical work; others argued for a public event with prominent speakers in order to mobilize Israel’s German Jews and inform the general public. In the end, a compromise was arrived at: the internal working conference would be ended and highlighted with a public event at the *Beth Hachaluzoth* proclaiming the founding of the “Leo Baeck Institute of Jews from Germany” and including a lecture in German by Ernst Simon on “the spiritual heritage of German Judaism.”<sup>103</sup>

Since the eponymous Leo Baeck was recovering from a car accident and unable to travel, he could not be present at the founding. To mark the occasion, Baeck sent a message of greeting that was read by Hans Reichmann at the public event on the evening of May 30, 1955.<sup>104</sup> Representing the other

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<sup>101</sup> See also the Minutes of a meeting of the Israeli Section of the Council, March 10, 1955, *LBI Jerusalem*, file 1018. In preparation for the Paris conference with the JRSO, the Council had originally applied for a general fund, consisting of 60 percent of the allocation as a social hardship fund and 40 percent as a cultural fund. However, the JRSO had refused to give money for cultural matters so that the whole fund was declared a hardship fund.

<sup>102</sup> Meeting of the Israeli Section of the Council, April 21, 1955, *LBI Jerusalem*, file 1018.

<sup>103</sup> Printed in *MB* vol. 23, no. 27 (July 8, 1955), pp. 3–5; reprinted in Ernst Simon, *Brücken*, pp. 47–58.

<sup>104</sup> Hans Tramer, “Die Erhaltung unseres Erbes,” in *MB* vol. 23, no. 23 (June 10, 1955), pp. 1 and 8; Baeck’s address has been republished by Michael Meyer in *LBI Information*, vol. 10 (2003), p. 8.

sections of the Council, Max Gruenewald and Rudolf Callmann had come from New York, Hans Reichmann and Robert Weltsch from London. On the Israeli side, a whole group of “founding fathers” took part in the deliberations: apart from Siegfried Moses, who was the chairman and *spiritus rector* of the meeting, these included Shalom Adler-Rudel, Kurt Blumenfeld, Martin Buber, Heinz Gerling, Bruno Kirschner, Dolf Michaelis, Ernst Simon, Gershom Scholem, Hans Tramer, Oskar Wolfsberg (Yeshayahu Aviad) and Curt Wormann.<sup>105</sup> Starting on Wednesday, May 25 and lasting to Tuesday, May 31, three meetings were held each day, interrupted only by the weekend. On the morning of May 30, there were separate meetings of two committees, for finances and organization on the one hand, planning on the other.<sup>106</sup> Participants later remembered the meeting of the planning committee in Buber’s house, with Blumenfeld, Gruenewald, Simon, Tramer and Weltsch present (along with the host), as the true founding act of the LBI.<sup>107</sup> To a large extent, the many talks and meetings held at the Jerusalem conference were aimed at finding a common basis for the institute’s future work. Thus far, the LBI’s basic shape had emerged with an eye on ensuring financial support from the Claims Conference. Now it was necessary to achieve a common understanding within the Council regarding the details: the general approach in dealing with the German-Jewish past, the concrete planning of research and publication activities, and the institute’s administrative organization. Given the uncertainties and limits of the budget, it was generally understood that priorities had to be set. The discussions proceeded on the assumption that the Leo Baeck Institute’s lifetime would probably not extend beyond five to ten years.<sup>108</sup>

At the end of the conference, a statement formulated by Weltsch was made public that expressed the newly established institute’s *raison d’être*.<sup>109</sup> Another, more elaborated version, probably written by Simon, was sent as an appendix to the conference minutes.<sup>110</sup> According to both statements of purpose, the LBI aimed at recording the unique experience of German Jewry and preserving it within the collective memory of the Jewish people. The

<sup>105</sup> On the biographical background of the founding generation, see the contribution of Ruth Nattermann in this volume.

<sup>106</sup> Minutes of the meeting of the LBI, May 30, 1955 (afternoon), *LBI London*, file “Minutes 1955–57.”

<sup>107</sup> Max Gruenewald interview with the author, New York, May 27, 1987; see also Dennis Rohrbaugh (ed.), *The Individual and Collective Experience of German-Jewish Immigrants 1933–1984: An Oral History Record*, New York, London and Saur 1986, pp. 101ff.

<sup>108</sup> Minutes of the planning conference of the LBI, May 25, 1955 (afternoon), *LBI London*, file “Minutes 1955–57.”

<sup>109</sup> Published in Hans Tramer, “Die Erhaltung unseres Erbes,” in *MB* vol. 23, no. 23 (June 10, 1955), p. 8 (see Appendix 6).

<sup>110</sup> *LBI London*, file “Minutes 1955–57”; see Appendix 5.

individuality of German Jewry was not so much defined by its long and noble past or by its tragic end as by its special encounter with modernity. As Weltsch put it in his statement, “geographical and historical circumstances led to the entrance of the Jews into the European world in a special and unique manner – a fact of decisive importance without which Jewry in its contemporary form would not have been possible either in the state of Israel or in the Diaspora.”<sup>111</sup> In its response to the challenges of modernity, German Jewry could be seen as a paradigm of modern Jewry in general. As such, its history was of direct significance for the present. At the same time, this history was not beyond dispute – ending in catastrophe, it possibly had borne the seeds of its own fall and was thus now in need of critical scrutiny. In this situation, the LBI had taken on the duty of bearing witness, of recording the testimonies and memories of German Jewry, in order to present its history in its true light, without any apologetics:

The Institute wants to show the past; it wants to demonstrate – in loyalty, unbiased and without euphemism – whatever Jewish men and women have done, felt, thought and created throughout the centuries; how they proved themselves and where they failed, how they tackled the problems of their lives and the collision between the Jewish and the European world. The “Leo Baeck Institute” wants to demonstrate the historic part played by the community from which the Central European Jewry originates – wherever it may be now – a part which through unparalleled historical circumstances has come to a tragic but not dishonorable end.<sup>112</sup>

In a time in which German-Jewish history was almost exclusively viewed from the vantage-point of its catastrophic end, the LBI thus intended to bear witness to the future; particularly in mind of the needs and hopes of Jewish youth, it wished to acknowledge the realities and possibilities of this history. This task could only be accomplished by surviving German Jews – by those who had first-hand experience and a personal recollection of German-Jewish life. Importantly, in order to collect and record the collective German-Jewish experience, it was necessary to mobilize the whole group of emigrated German Jews, not just academic specialists. Related to this, alongside the collection of archival documents and memoirs, the LBI planned both to carry out historical research and publish books and essays for a general audience, as it was hoped to produce a comprehensive “History of German Jewry in the Modern Period” within a couple of years.

The centrality of the concept of commemoration is evident in both of the LBI’s statements of purpose: like other groups of emigrants, the German Jews wished to preserve their heritage and pass it on to future generations.

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<sup>111</sup> *MB* vol. 23, no. 23 (June 10, 1955), p. 8. (English translation found in papers of LBI presentation (New York 1955) in *LBI Jerusalem*, file 1072).

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*

Referring to the concepts of *Zakhor* (“remember!”) and *Shalsholet ha-kabbalah* (“the chain of tradition”), the LBI’s mission was thus articulated in terms of traditional, religious collective memory and with a focus on the continuity of Jewish history: the void left for Jews by persecution and destruction was to be filled by commemoration of the German-Jewish past, thus restoring the broken chain of tradition. At the same time, the relationship to this past was defined in entirely modern terms: those offered by the methodical standards of historical scholarship, placed in the service of the Rankean, historicist ideal of striving to describe the past “as it really happened.” This past, it was nevertheless emphasized, was not yet fully known. It was this critical, self-reflective, and scholarly approach to the history of German Jewry that would make the work of the Leo Baeck Institute so special: commemoration was largely understood as an intellectual matter, as an act of clarification, study and scholarly debate, whereas – despite the religious terminology defining the founders’ sense of purpose – other, more ritualized forms of cultural memory, such as specific memorial days, memory sites or folklore, were largely absent.<sup>113</sup>

Compared with the commemorative activities of other emigrant groups (or the heritage cult of our own postmodern era),<sup>114</sup> the relative lack of nostalgia seems striking. This was, undoubtedly, caused by the fact that after the expulsion and destruction of Jewish life in Germany, this history had completely come to an end, was beyond recall. As the founders themselves indicated, given the disputed character of this history, a naïve or even sentimental identification with it was no longer possible. The particular tradition of *Bildung* of German Jewry, including that of *Wissenschaft des Judentums* and the *Lehrhaus* and a differentiated, multivoiced historical culture, must have reinforced this position.

The research program of the institute was also discussed in great detail at the founding conference. Given the uncertainties of the budget, which had been only granted for the coming year, some participants such as Scholem were rather pessimistic about the possibilities of long-term research planning. It quickly became clear that the LBI could not systematically put into effect the comprehensive working program that had been presented by Simon; rather, it had to start with those topics presenting themselves for one reason

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<sup>113</sup> On the concept of cultural memory, see in general: Jan Assmann, *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis. Schrift, Erinnerung und politische Identität in frühen Hochkulturen*, John R. Gillis (ed.), *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity*, Princeton 1994; on the commemoration of emigrant groups, see Orm Øverland, *Immigrant Minds, American Identities: Making the United States Home, 1870–1930*, Urbana and Chicago 2000; Yotam Hotam and Joachim Jacob (eds.), *Populäre Konstruktionen von Erinnerung im deutschen Judentum und nach der Emigration*, Göttingen 2004.

<sup>114</sup> See David Lowenthal, *The Heritage Crusade and the Spoils of History*, Cambridge 1998.



or another – for example because a given researcher happened to be available.<sup>115</sup> On the other hand, in order to secure further funding, the LBI was under pressure to show nigh immediate results. One prominent response to this pressure was to establish the *Year Book*, offering a representative selection of topics being investigated by the institute, and available to the reader in a relatively short time.

Given the central position the *Year Book* has occupied in the history of the LBI until today, it is remarkable to discover that starting such a publication was not unanimously approved at the founding conference – indeed that the idea first met with widespread opposition. Buber's skepticism was expressed as follows: "A Year Book is a promise, i.e. it would have to appear at least three times in a row."<sup>116</sup> Instead, Buber favored a single, non-recurring *Sammelband*, focused on a special topic. Other participants including Scholem were afraid that the concentration on short-term publications of limited size would hamper the institute's scholarly agenda: the pursuit of thorough and solid research would necessarily take time. Moses responded by pointing out that a yearbook would exert a certain beneficial pressure to get things done, Blumenfeld then indicating that yearbooks ran the risk of being too heterogeneous in character to leave a lasting impression: each volume, he suggested, should focus on a special topic and contain no more than five or six contributions. An individual yearbook should be "of a piece." In the end most objections were dispelled by Robert Weltsch being designated the yearbook's editor. Those present at the planning conference expressed great confidence that Weltsch alone could handle such a difficult challenge.<sup>117</sup>

Although there was some discussion of the institute's longer-term research projects – unanimous approval being expressed for supporting, if possible, the sorts of projects referred to already in the November 1953 project-draft: the *Germania Judaica*; the edition of Mendelssohn's collected works – in view of the immediate future, most discussions concentrated on the question of what the first yearbook (or *Sammelband*) should focus on. It was Buber, summarizing the discussions of the planning committee, who suggested starting with the most recent past, the history of German Jewry in the twentieth century:

This should ... not involve embarking on an encomium for good qualities and great works, but representing reality, the entire substantial reality of the situation, the way

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<sup>115</sup> Minutes of the planning conference of the LBI, May 25, 1955 at 11 a.m., *LBI London*, file "Minutes 1955–57."

<sup>116</sup> Minutes of the planning conference of the LBI, May 26, 1955, *LBI London*, file "Minutes 1955–57."

<sup>117</sup> Minutes of the planning conference of the LBI, May 25, 1955 (afternoon), *LBI London*, file "Minutes 1955–57."

the concrete history between Germans and Jews, before and under Hitler, really unfolded.<sup>118</sup>

In Buber's view, German Jewry played a specifically antagonistic role (the role of *Gegenspieler*) vis-à-vis Hitler that was worth researching. He suggested topics such as "the spiritual resistance of German Jewry," "the leadership of German Jewry," and "the educational work [*Bildungsarbeit*] of German Jewry."<sup>119</sup> Buber's suggestion of focusing on the Weimar and Nazi years was based mainly on pragmatic considerations: a limitation to a clearly defined period with its specific circumstances and challenges would allow for the yearbook's inner coherence; in contrast to the study of more remote periods, the research could be based on personal recollections and easily available documents.<sup>120</sup> In any case, we may assume that Buber considered a clarifying, objective treatment of a topic as emotionally loaded as Jewish life in the years leading up to and under Hitler to be an urgent need for the surviving Jews from Germany. Buber's suggestions and the discussions at the conference clearly shaped the contents of the first *Year Book*, centering on "Jewish organization and spiritual resistance during the Hitler epoch."<sup>121</sup> Later, after a division of labor had been found with *Yad Vashem*, study within the LBI of the Nazi years would recede into the background.<sup>122</sup>

Regarding the organizational structure of the LBI, the conference confirmed the scheme proposed in the application to the Claims Conference, according to which there would be two governing bodies: the research and publication board, composed of at least three members, from Israel, England and the United States respectively; and the administrative board, comprising three representatives, again from the British, Israeli, and American Council sections respectively. To assist the research and publication board, each branch of the institute would establish an advisory committee for research and publications, which would include scholars, authors, and persons from public life. At the concluding May 31, 1955, meeting of the Council formally establishing the LBI, Leo Baeck was designated president and Siegfried Moses chairman of both boards.<sup>123</sup>

In addition, it was decided that the Israeli members of the two boards would be elected, the other members being nominated later by the London

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<sup>118</sup> Minutes of the planning conference of the LBI, May 30, 1955 (afternoon), *LBI London*, file "Minutes 1955–57."

<sup>119</sup> Minutes of the planning conference of the LBI, May 26, 1955 (11 a.m.), *LBI London*, file "Minutes 1955–57."

<sup>120</sup> Minutes of the planning conference of the LBI, May 30, 1955 (afternoon), *LBI London*, file "Minutes 1955–57."

<sup>121</sup> *LBI Year Book*, vol. 1 (1956), pp. 51–192.

<sup>122</sup> See the contribution of Jürgen Matthäus in this volume.

<sup>123</sup> Minutes of the meeting of the Israel section of the Council, May 31, 1955, *LBI London*, file "Minutes 1955–57."

and New York sections of the Council.<sup>124</sup> Despite the fact that there were three working centers, it was understood that Jerusalem was to be the institute's spiritual and organizational center and the seat of the central board. Originally it was planned to officially make the Jerusalem office the institute's general secretariat, thus possessing clear-cut superiority to the other two centers. But as the Claims Conference did not wish to sponsor research activities within Israel, Moses suggested that Jerusalem's status should not be emphasized too much. It was thus agreed that each branch would have a secretariat, the Jerusalem branch serving as the secretariat of the two boards, the other two branches serving as secretariats for the advisory committees alone. At the same time, it was decided to list the names of the three cities with LBI branches under the LBI letterhead and the *Year Book's* title page as if they were equals.<sup>125</sup>

Consequently, the claim of the Jerusalem branch to leadership and decision-making authority was concealed but not relinquished. After the conference, Reichmann wrote to Max Kreutzberger that he "could not change the claim for priority of our Jerusalem friends."<sup>126</sup> This claim naturally met with a critical response in London and New York and was, over time, either rejected or ignored.<sup>127</sup> The issue would take up board meetings of the LBI during the 1950s; in the end a *modus vivendi* was found allowing for a great deal of research and publishing independence by the three centers while maintaining a duty of mutual information, deliberation and discussion.<sup>128</sup> When it came to the question of how a research project was to be agreed on and, in particular, the role of the scholarly experts in the process, stipulations remained vague; formal procedures had to be worked out later.

With the conclusion of the Jerusalem conference, the LBI was formally established and could take up its work. Information about the newly founded institute and its mission was disseminated in follow-up meetings in London and New York, in the hope of mobilizing the support of former German

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<sup>124</sup> The first members of the research and publication board were: Blumenfeld, Buber, Kirschner, Scholem, Simon, Tramer, Wolfsberg and Worman from Israel, Gruenewald, Kreutzberger and Stern-Täubler from the USA, and Eva Reichmann, Weltsch and Wiener from England; of the administrative board: Adler-Rudel, Gerling, Michaelis, Tramer and Worman from Israel, Callmann, Kreutzberger and Stein from New York, and Boas and Hans Reichmann from London.

<sup>125</sup> Minutes of the meeting of the Committee for Organization and Finances of the LBI, May 30, 1955, *LBI London*, file "Minutes 1955-57."

<sup>126</sup> Reichmann to Kreutzberger, June 17, 1955, *LBI London*, file M(j)3.

<sup>127</sup> Minutes of the London Advisory Committee of the LBI, August 20, 1955, *LBI London*, file "Minutes 1955-57;" Minutes of a working meeting in New York, preparing the work of the LBI, September 21, 1955, *ibid.*

<sup>128</sup> See the summary of the development in a progress report of the LBI 1954-1959 compiled by Adler-Rudel in August 1959, *LBI New York*, Office Records II 60/36. See also the contribution of Aubrey Pomerance in this volume.

Jews, the scholars among them in particular. At the London meeting on October 16, 1955, Leo Baeck highlighted the institute's task by emphasizing that Jewish history was a history of "constant rebirth":

With a present-day historical overview of what was accomplished in the cultural realm of German-speaking Jews from Lemberg to Strasbourg, Prague to the Scandinavian countries, it is as if one stands before a miracle. The task standing before us is to render anew this epoch into the epoch it once was.<sup>129</sup>

## Appendix: Documents on the Founding History of the LBI

### 1. Eugen Täubler's Plan for a "Leo Baeck Library": Letter to Leo Baeck, September 11, 1946<sup>130</sup>

Lieber, verehrter Dr. Baeck:

Wir haben noch nicht die Grundlage gefunden, auf der ein Briefwechsel uns in der Erfüllung einer besonderen Lebensaufgabe verbinden musste. Wir sind dazu prädestiniert unter dem Gestirn Ihres Vaters, der für mich ebenso lebensweisend gewesen ist wie für Sie. Um es objektiver zum Ausdruck zu bringen: ich glaube, wir beide standen immer und stehen noch mehr heute in einer besonderen Art stiller Verbundenheit, die zunächst auf der ideellen Verbundenheit des Humanistischen mit dem Jüdischen beruht, aber weiter darauf, dass diese uns nicht nur in einen geistigen Kreis einschliesst, sondern uns zu Kultur wird in dem besonderen Sinn des Wortes, in dem es die Verantwortung für die Gestaltung einer besonderen Form des Lebens in sich schliesst. Wie fühlen beide, dass wir damit über die Verantwortung uns selbst gegenüber hinauswachsen. Sie haben dies in grossartiger Weise zum Ausdruck gebracht. Aber die Erfüllung muss in anderer Weise fortgesetzt werden. Das deutsche Judentum ist als solches substantiell verloren. Palästina? Ich wage nicht eine Antwort zu geben. Amerika? Ich schweige lieber, was mir vom Gesichtspunkt des deutschen Judentums hier nötig erscheint: der geistigen Tradition des deutschen Judentums hier eine seiner geschmähten Existenz in überlegener Weise repräsentierende Wirkungsstätte zu schaffen und so das Andenken seiner geschichtlichen Bedeutsamkeit zu erhalten.

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<sup>129</sup> Minutes of the London Meeting of the LBI, October 16, 1955, *LBI London*, file "Minutes 1955–57."

<sup>130</sup> *UB Basel*, Nachlass Täubler, E IV 089.

Ich will das mir notwendig und möglich Erscheinende kurz bezeichnen:

1) Die Lehranstalt wird ideell und rechtlich als fortbestehend erklärt und, ohne Lehraufgaben, übergeleitet in eine Leo Baeck Library at the Columbia University formerly of the Lehranstalt f[ür] d[ie] Wissensch[aft] d[es] Jud[entums] in Berlin.

2) Diese Library dient im engeren Sinne als Seminar-Bibliothek des jüdisch-wissenschaftlichen Lehrstuhls des Herrn Baron, in einem weiteren als eine Art Forschungsinstitut und als wissenschaftlicher Mittelpunkt der amerikanisch-deutschen Juden.

3) Die Library veröffentlicht ein von L.B. und E.T. herausgegebenes Abschlusswerk der Wissenschaft des Judentums in Deutschland, bestehend aus wissenschaftlichen Beiträgen aus allen Gebieten der Wissenschaft des Judentums. Nach dem Überschlag, den ich mir gemacht habe, könnten es drei Bände werden, unter Heranziehung aller wissenschaftlichen Kräfte, z.B. der palästinensischen.

4) Es wird eine Gesellschaft der Freunde der L.B.L. gegründet, die für einen ausreichenden Fonds für fortlaufende Anschaffungen sorgt.

5) Soweit die Library als Forschungsinstitut dient, soll dies nicht in der Art des s.Z. in Berlin gegründeten der Fall sein, sondern nur mit Raterteilung und mit der Herausgabe einer Zeitschrift, Αἰών genannt und gewidmet der religions- und geistesgeschichtlichen Forschung im Bereich des antiken Synkretismus, c. 400 a. – 400 p. (Augustin). An welchen Mitarbeiterkreis aus den humanistischen und theologischen Fakultäten, und wie ich mir im Einzelnen in einer besonderen Weise die Durchführung denke, darüber – wenn Sie zustimmen – später. Ich wüsste für den Namenträger der Library und seinen Hauptinteressenkreis keinen adäquateren Ausdruck. Hinter dem Αἰών sollte ad multos annos et infinitum Person und Geist ihres patronus stehen.

Ich hätte zu jedem der fünf Punkte sehr viel hinzuzufügen, aber will es zunächst nur bei diesen Andeutungen bewenden lassen, um eine prinzipielle Gegenäußerung von Ihnen zu erhalten. Nur dies noch: ich habe hier mit deutschen Juristen darüber gesprochen, ob nach dem Wegfall der Reichsvertretung und der unter Zwang geschehenen Inkorporierung der Lehranstalt in sie eine Willenserklärung der noch vorhandenen Kuratoren der Lehranstalt dafür genügt, sie in der alten Weise als existierend zu erklären. Meine Frage wurde von allen bejaht. Die Bücher sollen an drei verschiedenen Stellen ausserhalb des russischen Teils liegen. Drei der Kuratoren sind in England und vertreten die Majorität. Ein erheblicher Teil der Bücher käme für die Columbia wohl nicht in Betracht, nur das wirklich wissenschaftlich Nutzbare, sodass über den anderen Teil eventuell für die Universitätsbibliothek in Jerusalem verfügt werden könnte.

Wir können Ihnen kein Denkmal in Stein und Bronze setzen, und im Bomben-Zeitalter hat aere perennius erst einen vollen Sinn bekommen. Die Leo Baeck Library in der grössten Judenstadt, in der Verbindung mit einer

der grössten Universitäten: das wäre das Ihrer würdige Denkmal, in dem Sie wirklich fortleben.

Im Fall Ihrer prinzipiellen Zustimmung<sup>131</sup> würde ich Ende Oktober nach N.Y. fahren, um mit Baron, und eventuell auch noch mit meinem althistorischen Kollegen Westermann die Dinge zu besprechen. ...

## 2. Adolf Kober and Max Wiener:

Outline of a historical work *Jews and Judaism in Germany from the Beginning of Emancipation to Catastrophe* (1948/49)<sup>132</sup>

### A. Adolf Kober: Juden und Judentum von der beginnenden Emanzipation bis zum Untergang

Ein langer und wichtiger Abschnitt der jüdischen Geschichte hat mit der Zerstörung der jüdischen Gemeinden und der jüdischen Gemeinschaft in Deutschland in den Jahren 1933–1943 sein Ende gefunden. Ein oberflächlicher Rückblick auf die Geschichte der Juden in Deutschland, die urkundlich mit dem vierten nachchristlichen Jahrhundert beginnt, lässt uns ihre aussergewöhnliche Bedeutung erkennen. Diese Bedeutung erstreckt sich sowohl auf die mittelalterliche Geschichte der Juden in Deutschland nach der wirtschaftlichen und geistigen Seite hin als ganz besonders auf ihre Geschichte in der Neuzeit seit der beginnenden Emanzipation in ihrer Vielseitigkeit. Es erscheint als das Gebot der Stunde, der geschichtlichen Wahrheit und der jüdischen Würde, diese Geschichte festzuhalten und damit der jüdischen Vergangenheit in Deutschland und den Opfern unserer Zeit ein Denkmal zu setzen. Wir können und sollten es nicht der Nachwelt überlassen, das gefälschte und entstellte Bild von Juden und Judentum, das Nazi-Gelehrte und Institute von Juden und Judentum entworfen haben, wieder richtig zu stellen, sofern es dann überhaupt noch möglich ist. Aber auch gegen Unterschätzung der Leistung des deutschen Judentums, wie es in manchen jüdischen Kreisen üblich ist, haben wir die Pflicht, den wahren Tatbestand festzustellen. Wir wollen keine Apologetik treiben, sondern in wissenschaftlicher und unparteiischer Weise und gemeinverständlicher Form sagen, „wie es gewesen ist“, und ein zusammenfassendes Bild von Juden und Judentum in

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<sup>131</sup> In marked contrast to Täubler's enthusiasm, Baeck's response several months later was rather reserved. In fact he devoted only two sentences to the project: "Tief bewegt und gerührt hat mich Ihr Gedanke, lieber Herr Professor, über die Verbindung eines wissenschaftlichen Arbeitsplatzes mit meinem Namen. Sie sagen damit so viel, dass ich nichts sagen kann." Baeck to Täubler and Stern, December 1, 1946, *UB Basel*, Nachlass Selma Stern, E 10.

<sup>132</sup> Kober to Gruenewald, July 15, 1949 (Enclosures), *LBI Archives New York*, Gruenewald Coll.

Deutschland von der beginnenden Emanzipation bis zum Untergang entwerfen. Die Zeit hierfür ist gekommen. Denn wie lange noch werden Träger der letzten Jahrzehnte der jüdischen Geschichte in Deutschland imstande sein, von dieser Geschichte lebendiges Zeugnis abzulegen? ...

### Juden und Judentum in Deutschland von der beginnenden Emanzipation bis zur grossen Katastrophe

Einleitung: Die Aufgabe

- I Überblick über die Geschichte der Juden und des Judentums in Deutschland bis zum Beginn der Emanzipation
  - II Politische und soziale Entwicklung
    - a. Kampf um die Gleichberechtigung
    - b. Einstellung der Juden zum deutschen Volke
    - c. Einstellung des deutschen Volkes zu den Juden
    - d. Der Antisemitismus
    - e. Statistisches
  - III Innerjüdische Leistung
    - a. Geistes- und Religionsgeschichte, Wissenschaft des Judentums und Pflege des rabbinischen Schrifttums
    - b. Gemeinden und Gemeindeverbände
    - c. Vereinswesen
    - d. Jüdisches Schulwesen
    - e. Jüdisch-kulturelles Leben
    - f. Parteileben
  - IV Die Leistung der Juden in der deutschen Kultur
    - a. In der Wirtschaft
    - b. In der Politik
    - c. In den Wissenschaften (Philosophie, Naturwissenschaften und Medizin, Philologie, Geschichte, etc.)
    - d. In der Literatur
    - e. In der Musik
    - f. In der Kunst
    - g. Im Journalismus
  - V Die Katastrophe
- Schlußbetrachtung: Bedeutung der Juden und des Judentums Deutschlands für das Weltjudentum

Als Ergebnis dürfte es sich zeigen, dass die Leistung der deutschen Juden in keinem Verhältnis zu ihrer Zahl steht und dass die hier behandelte Geschichte der deutschen Juden zum mindesten ebenbürtig der spanischen Epoche in

der Geschichte des Judentums an die Seite gestellt werden darf. Als unsere Mitarbeiter kommen nur Fachleute in Betracht. Wir hoffen, das Werk, das etwa 400–450 Seiten umfassen soll, unter den Auspizien der Federation of Jews from Central Europe schreiben und veröffentlichen zu können.

### B. Max Wiener: Juden und Judentum in Deutschland von der beginnenden Emanzipation bis zum Untergang

Das Buch will dem Gedächtnis des deutschen Judentums gewidmet sein, als ein Denkmal der Treue und zugleich als wahrhaftige geschichtliche Darstellung. Den Rahmen bildet die politische und soziale Entwicklung im Gesamtverlauf der deutschen Geschichte dieser Periode, wie die deutschen Juden in der Spanne von fünf Generationen sich immer tiefer in das Gefühl hineinlebten, völlig eingedeutscht zu sein, wie – zumal in der zweiten Hälfte dieser Epoche – sich eine Reaktion gegen diesen Glauben von innen und aussen erhob, und wie es schliesslich zur Katastrophe kam.

Das innere Leben der Judenheit, wie es sich in der Organisation ihrer Gemeinden und Gemeindeverbände, ihrer Erziehungsanstalten, ihres Vereins- und Parteiwesens ausdrückte, ist nur in Abhebung von diesem Hintergrunde verständlich. Ganz zu schweigen von ihrem spezifischen Kulturbewusstsein, ihrer Leistung im Aufbau der eigenen Geistes- und Religionsgeschichte, die – ob orthodox oder liberal orientiert – eine tiefe Beeinflussung durch die Erscheinungen der Umwelt offenbart. Die Darstellung wird zu zeigen haben, welche starken und welche schwachen Seiten sich daraus ergaben. Insbesondere erklärt sich aus dieser unbedingten und zweifellos ehrlichen Hingebung an das Deutschtum wie dieses Judentum dem aufkommenden Nationalismus, dem jüdischen sowohl wie dem deutschen, lange Zeit recht hilflos gegenüberstand, wie seit dem letzten Jahrzehnt des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts ein gut Teil der jüdischen Vitalität durch den Kampf zwischen Zionismus und humanitärem Liberalismus aufgezehrt ward. Aber dieser Gegensatz hat – wie unsere Geschichte nicht vergessen darf – auch gewaltige Kräfte ausgelöst, die ohne ihn nie ans Licht gekommen wären. Nicht wenige grosse Führer des nationalen Judentums gingen aus dem deutschen Kulturbereich hervor, und selbst die, die aus dem vollsaftigen östlichen Judentum herstammten, verdankten nicht wenig deutschem Gedankengut.

Die Behandlung der *Leistung der Juden in der deutschen Kultur* kann nicht völlig an der Frage vorbeigehen, ob – wie von nicht wenigen ausgezeichneten jüdischen Denkern behauptet wurde – wirklich ein innerer Zusammenhang zwischen jüdischem und deutschem Geistesleben besteht. Wir werden diese strittige Frage informatorisch streifen, uns aber nicht in eine tiefe, psychologische oder gar metaphysische Auseinandersetzung einlassen. Tatsache bleibt, dass der Anteil der Juden am deutschen Schaffen ihren Bevölkerungs-



prozentsatz gewaltig übersteigt. Das gilt besonders von der Zeit ab, da die Juden in der zweiten Hälfte des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts mehr und mehr in den grösseren Städten wohnten und so ihrem Nachwuchs höhere Schulen leicht zugänglich wurden. Nicht weniger wichtig aber ist die Tatsache, dass das Streben jüdischer Eltern, ihren Kindern den Aufstieg in eine höhere soziale Schicht eröffnet zu sehen, sie zu grösserer Opferwilligkeit in der Erziehung antrieb. Die christliche Umgebung hat diese Bewegung meist mit Widerwillen betrachtet. Aber jüdische Energie überwand grosse Schwierigkeiten. Das Gebiet der Wirtschaft war das erste, das jüdischer Entfaltung offenstand. Der Anteil der Juden an der Finanzkraft des Landes ist fast immer übertrieben worden, und ihre Bedeutung im Bankwesen war Jahrzehnte vor dem Einsatz der Katastrophe im Abstieg. Ihre Beteiligung an der Grossindustrie war zu keiner Zeit hervorragend. Relativ früh ist auch eine absichtliche Wegwendung vom rein Ökonomischen und Hinkehr zum eigentlich Geistigen zu beobachten. Politik und Journalistik, Literatur, Musik und bildende Kunst zeigten in steigendem Maass den Juden interessiert und schöpferisch. Als Kunst- und Literar-Kritiker stehen sie zahlen- und bedeutungsmässig vorn da. In ihrer Tätigkeit auf dem Gebiete wissenschaftlicher Forschung und ihrer Anwendung liessen sie sich kaum durch äussere Hemnisse, wie, dass man ihnen Universitätslehrstühle versagte, beirren. Die Leistungen vieler von ihnen in Philosophie, Naturwissenschaft und Medizin, Rechtslehre, Philologie und Geschichte gehören mit zu dem Glänzendsten, was in Deutschland auf all diesen Gebieten produziert worden ist. Der deutsche Jude hat so ein gut Teil seiner Fähigkeit, vielleicht das stärkste, was er hatte, Deutschland gewidmet. Aber er blieb in den Augen der meisten, selbst von denen, die solche Tätigkeit zu würdigen wussten, ein Fremdling, der auch dann nicht in das deutsche Geistesleben hineingehört, wenn er Grosses zu seiner Förderung leistete. Man wollte nicht beschenkt sein. Auch die grössten Leistungen konnten die Schranken nicht niederreissen. Die tiefe Liebe des Juden zum Deutschtum wurde mit Kälte, wenn nicht Abneigung erwidert.

Geistige Schöpfungen sind eine unvergängliche Wirklichkeit in sich selbst. Die Deutschen haben das Judentum in Deutschland und im grössten Teil von Europa zerstört. Was unzerstörbar bleibt, sind die jüdischen Leistungen selber und ihre Bedeutung für die Welt in aller Zukunft.

3. Nathan Stein: Appeal to our Generation (1950)<sup>133</sup>

## Ein Ruf an unsere Generation

Ein anderes „Zeit ist’s“ tönt an unser Ohr. Der Ruf ist diesmal nicht allumfassend, nicht an das Tiefste rührend. Aber er ist dringend. Er trifft unser Geschlecht: uns Alle, die wir das jüdische Leben im früheren Deutschland, die kulturelle Lage, die geistige Situation, die gemeindlichen und freiwilligen Einrichtungen, das wissenschaftliche Streben, das berufliche und wirtschaftliche Leben der ehemals deutschen Juden mit eigenen Augen gesehen haben. Der Ruf trifft uns, die wir die Einwirkung der Emanzipation auf die jüdische Welt in Deutschland, ihre Auswirkung auf die Geschichte der Wissenschaft des Judentums, ihren Einfluss auf das religiöse Leben – und auf die Entwicklung des Zionismus kennen gelernt haben. Er trifft uns, die wir die Aneignung der deutschen Geisteswerte und ihre besondere Prägung durch die ehemals deutschen Juden miterlebt haben. An uns ist es dahin zu wirken, dass die Geschichte der deutschen Juden im Emanzipationsalter von 1780 bis 1930 mit seinem Auftakt und mit seinem Nachklang beschrieben wird. Wenn es jetzt nicht geschieht, dann werden allmählich die Stimmen derer verstummen, die wissen, „wie es eigentlich gewesen ist.“

Wir sind dieses Werk uns selbst und unseren Kindern schuldig. Es ist eine grosse Leistung, welche die wenigen deutschen Juden für das Judentum, für die Judenheit und für die Menschheit in dieser Periode getan haben. Unsere Nachfahren sollen darum wissen.

Wir sind dieses Werk der Judenheit schuldig. Wir waren nur wenige. Wir waren nicht frei von Fehlern und Fehlleistungen, aber wir haben auf manchem Gebiete geführt und haben Führende hervorgebracht. Wir sind jetzt nur ein Häuflein; unser Zahlenanteil an der jüdischen Gesamtheit ist noch geringer geworden, als er vordem war. Aber wir wollen vor der Geschichte nicht als *quantité négligeable* gewertet werden. Was unsere Vorfahren für das jüdische Leben in Deutschland, für das Judentum und für die Welt bedeutet haben, soll nicht verkleinert werden, oder als unbeachtlich abgetan werden. Es darf nicht in Vergessenheit geschickt werden.

Wir sind dieses Werk der Wahrheit schuldig. Wir wollen keine Verteidigungsarbeit tun. Wir wollen die Dinge schildern und für sich sprechen lassen – durch Tatsachen, durch Urkunden, durch Erweise, durch Forschung. Die spätere Wissenschaft soll eine reine Quelle für diese Periode finden neben anderen – von unlauteren nicht zu reden.

Unser Geschichtsbuch muss den Werdegang der Emanzipations-Periode, die Geschichte hebräischer Gelehrsamkeit und jüdischer Wissenschaft, das

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<sup>133</sup> Nathan Stein, „Ein Ruf an unsere Generation“, in *ZfA Archives*, AmFed Coll. 17/15.

Gemeinschaftsleben der ehemals deutschen Juden und ihren Anteil am Geistes- und Berufsleben in Deutschland schildern.

Wir müssen es bald tun: wenn nicht jetzt, wann denn?

Ein kleiner Kreis von hier lebenden Historikern sollte den Plan und die Arbeitsteilung entwerfen, die Zeit für die Fertigstellung erwägen, die erforderlichen Kosten abschätzen und Pläne für ihre Aufbringung vorschlagen.

4. Bruno Kirschner and Ernst Simon:

Outline of a Commemorative Book on German Jewry (1951)<sup>134</sup>

Die deutschen Juden (Die Juden in Deutschland)

Ihr Leben, ihre Geschichte, ihre Leistungen, ihr Vermächtnis

Ein Gedächtnis-Buch

	pp.	Hauptvorschlag	Ersatzvorschläge
1. Einleitung	5	Baek	
2. Ein Gang durch die Geschichte der Juden in Deutschland	20	Selma Stern	Täubler

### Einzeldarstellungen

#### *I. Der äußere Lebensrahmen der deutschen Juden*

3. Politische und Rechtsgeschichte	15	Landauer	S. Stern, Täubler
4. Statistik. Wanderungsbewegungen	10	Segall	
5. Sozialgeschichte	15	Weinryb	Landauer, Baer, Kreutzberger
6. Antisemitismus. Taufbewegung	15	Heinemann H. Arendt Eva Reichmann Alfred Wiener	
7. Wirtschaftsgeschichte	10	Guido Kisch	
8. Gemeinde- und privates Organisationswesen	10	Eugen Mayer	Jos. Meisl

<sup>134</sup> *LBI Jerusalem*, file 1038.

*II. Das geistige Leben der deutschen Juden im eigenen Bezirk*

9. Das religiöse Leben	20	Hugo Bergmann	Ucko, Thieberger
10. Erziehungswesen, Volksbildung	15	E. Simon	
11. Die Wissenschaft des Judentums u. wissensch. Institutionen			
a) Jüd. Lernen	5	Goitein	
b) Wissenschaft	15	Ucko	
12. Nichtwissensch. Literatur, Presse u. Verlagswesen	15	Max Meyer	Tramer
13. Kunstbetätigung der Juden:			
a) Bildende Künste	10	Rahel Wischnitzer	Schwartz, Schiff
b) Musik	5	E. Goldschmidt	

*III. Der jüdische Anteil am allgemeinen Leben*

14. Im öffentl. Leben einschl. Presse	15	Robert Weltsch	
15. In der Literatur	10	Werner Kraft	
16. In der Kunst:			
a) Bildende Künste	10	Karl Schwarz	Schiff, Landsberger
b) Musik	5	Steinitz	Gradenwitz, Riesenfeld
c) Theater u. Film	5–10	M. Geis	
17. In den Geisteswissenschaften	10	Heinemann	Weil, Goitein Hugo Bergmann
18. In den Naturwiss. u. Technik	5–10	Samburski	Jes. Leibowitz
19. Im Rechtsleben	5	Max Eschelbacher	M. Cohn
20. In der Wirtschaft	5–10	Ernst Kahn	Naftali, Schloss

*IV. Einzelne Gemeinden*

21. Alte Gemeinden. Profil einer alten Gemeinde	5	Goitein, A. Kober	Meisl
22. Neuere Grossgemeinden. Profil einer Grossgemeinde	10	Meisl, Eugen Meyer	A. Posner

*V. Die deutschen Juden und der Zionismus*

23.	15	Lichtheim	Elias Auerbach, Hantke, Blumenfeld, Alex Bein, Herlitz, Holdheim
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*VI. Die deutschen Juden*

24.	a) in Israel	20–25 Kreutzberger	Landauer, Benno Cohn, Bonné
	b) in der übrigen Welt	15–20 N. Stein	
25.	Zum Abschluss	5 Buber	
26	Quellen. Bibliographie	5 Herlitz	
		300–350 pp.	

*GesamtreDAkteur:* Robert Weltsch

*Bildredakteur:* Karl Schwartz

5. The Aims of the LBI (1954/1955)<sup>135</sup>

Die Erinnerung an das deutsche Judentum, das nach einer fünfzehnhundert-jährigen wechselvollen Geschichte als geschlossene Gemeinschaft versunken ist, für alle kommenden Geschlechter zu verewigen, ist die erhabene Aufgabe, die sich das LBI gestellt hat. Das deutsche Judentum – eine der Kürze halber gewählte zusammenfassende Bezeichnung, die nicht im politischen Sinne (das deutsche Reich in seinen historischen Grenzen), sondern zum Ausdruck des durch gemeinsame Erlebnisse, Sprache und Kultur verbundenen mitteleuropäischen Judentums gemeint ist – ist eine der schönsten Blüten am Baum der jüdischen Geschichte gewesen. Das innere Leben dieser Judenheiten war unvergleichlich reich und fruchtbar. Der Klal Jisrael-Gedanke, der seelische und der tatsächliche Zusammenhang mit dem Gesamtjudentum ist, von unbedeutenden Schichten abgesehen, zu keiner Zeit aufgegeben worden; im Gegenteil, er wurde in vielerlei Formen gepflegt und gefestigt. Mit der Klärung und der Lehre der *religiösen* Ideen, die seine Denker entwickelt – mit der *Wissenschaft* des Judentums, die es geschaffen, vertieft und ausgeweitet – mit der *sozialen* Organisationskraft, die es der Bewältigung brennender jüdischer Tagesprobleme gewidmet – mit dem *politischen* Aspekt und Gestaltungswillen, mit dem es an die Lösung der jüdischen Lebensfragen herangegangen ist, mit seinen *künstlerischen* Schöpfungen neuen Charakters und

<sup>135</sup> LBI London, file “Minutes 1955–57.”

Stils – hat das deutsche Judentum im eigenen Hause vorbildlich gewirkt und, weit darüber hinaus, grosse Teile der jüdischen Welt schöpferisch befruchtet.

Das deutsche Judentum ist als historische, kulturelle, soziale Einheit vernichtet und wird nach menschlichem Ermessen als Gesamtheit nie wieder erstehen – aber die Fackel, die es einst in der jüdischen Welt vorangetragen, wird noch lange zurückleuchten, wenn sie in Treue gehütet wird. Das Gedächtnis an Leben, Lehre und Leistungen unserer Väter zu bewahren, ihr Vermächtnis an die Zukunft lebendig zu erhalten, dunkle Perioden, verborgene geschichtliche und kulturelle Zusammenhänge wissenschaftlich aufzuhellen, unbekannte und verschüttete Quellen historischer Erkenntnis aufzudecken – dieser Aufgabe weiht das LBI seine Arbeit.

Denen der Unrigen, die begnadet wurden, das Grauen zu überstehen, und der jungen Generation, die noch etwas von dem Glück spürt, ein Glied in einer grossen geschichtlichen Kette zu sein, wollen wir die Erinnerung an eine bedeutende Vergangenheit *wachhalten*. In den Geschlechtern, die nach uns kommen, den heranwachsenden und den noch ungeborenen, die – in neue jüdische Lebensgemeinschaften einmündend – naturgemäss keinen lebendigen Zusammenhang mehr haben werden mit dem, was einst deutsches Judentum war, soll das Gedächtnis an ihren leiblichen und geistigen Ursprung in der einzigen Form, die sich noch bietet, in schriftlicher Darstellung, *wachgerufen* werden. Denjenigen Kreisen des jüdischen Volkes, deren Leben sich ohne dem Einzelnen fühlbare Berührung mit dem deutschen Judentum zuträgt und die von der Vergangenheit und dem Charakter der deutschen Juden eine höchst unzureichende Vorstellung haben, muss gesagt werden, was ihre Brüder in Deutschland waren und geleistet haben, damit sie deren Beitrag für die innere Gesamtstruktur des jüdischen Volkes erkennen, Und wenn vielleicht dereinst, auf Wegen, die der Zukunft vorbehalten bleiben müssen, das wohl bewahrte Gedenken an Art und Leistungen des deutschen Judentums für das jüdische Volk von neuem *fruchtbar* gemacht werden kann, so wird das ein edler Lohn sein, der der Arbeit des LBI erwächst.

Es wird also das beherrschende Thema des Arbeitszieles des LBI sein: *Werden, Blüte und Vergehen des deutschen Judentums* neu zu erforschen und darzustellen in allen Bezirken dieser machtvollen und einmaligen geschichtlichen Erscheinung. Allein nicht das oft und erschöpfend Gesagte soll wiederholt werden, sondern die Ergebnisse neuer Forschungen, neuer historischer Betrachtungs- und Deutungsmethoden, die Herausarbeitung der dem deutschen Judentum eigentümlichen Züge sollen der jüdischen, und zugleich der interessierten nichtjüdischen Welt vorgelegt werden.

6. The Mission of the LBI (May 1955)<sup>136</sup>

Aufgabe und Idee des „*Leo Baeck-Institutes of Jews from Germany*“ ist es, zu sammeln und als Besitz des jüdischen Volkes zu erhalten, was Juden im deutschen Sprachgebiet erlebt und geschaffen, errungen und verloren, von Geschlecht zu Geschlecht weitergegeben haben. Das Institut wird den Namen des Mannes tragen, der als letzter grosser Repräsentant dieser Judenheit seine Gemeinschaft furchtlos und stolz und mit grosser Würde vor der feindlichen Welt vertreten hat.

Durch fast anderthalb Jahrtausende war das deutsche Sprachgebiet ein Zentrum jüdischen schöpferischen Lebens; von ihm gingen die Ausstrahlungen befruchtend in die ganze jüdische Welt. In steter Wechselwirkung mit der europäischen Umgebung wie mit den anderen Teilen des jüdischen Volkes wurde der geistige Besitz gemehrt und neue Lebensformen entwickelt.

Geographische und geschichtliche Umstände haben bewirkt, dass sich hier in besonderer und einmaliger Weise der Eintritt der Juden in die europäische Welt vollzog – eine Tatsache von grösster Tragweite, ohne die das Judentum in seiner modernen Gestalt weder im Staate Jisrael noch in der Diaspora möglich wäre.

Das deutsche Judentum hatte sich einzigartige Institutionen geschaffen, die durch die Katastrophe vernichtet wurden; ihre Errungenschaften und ihre Tradition dürfen nicht untergehen und sollen nicht vergessen werden.

Der „*Council of Jews from Germany*“ als die Vertretung der Letzten, die direkten Anteil hatten an dem jüdischen Leben Mitteleuropas vor dem Zusammenbruch, will im Leo Baeck-Institute alle die um sich sammeln, die noch lebendigen Zusammenhang mit dieser Tradition besitzen. Er hat sich zum Ziel gesetzt, durch das Leo Baeck-Institut die unübersehbare Fülle dieses Erbes einzusammeln für uns und unsere Kinder – und das ganze Haus Israel.

Wir wollen zeigen, was war; in Treue, ohne Beschönigung und ohne Tendenz darstellen, was jüdische Menschen im Wandel der Zeiten getan und gefühlt, gedacht und geschaffen haben, wie sie sich bewährt und wo sie versagt haben, wie sie die Probleme ihres Lebens und des Zusammenpralls von jüdischer und europäischer Welt gestaltet haben. Wir wollen die historische Rolle der Gemeinschaft darstellen, aus der wir stammen, wo immer wir heute sind, und die unter einzigartigen geschichtlichen Umständen ein tragisches, aber nicht unehrenvolles Ende gefunden hat.

Das L.B.I. will in wissenschaftlicher Forschung und durch Zurückgehen zu den Quellen ein Bild dieser Judenheit und ihres Werkes geben. Indem wir

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<sup>136</sup> Published in Hans Tramer, „Die Erhaltung unseres Erbes,“ in *MB* vol. 23, no. 23 (June 10, 1955), p. 8.

sagen, was die deutschen Juden gewesen sind und was sie gewirkt haben, helfen wir uns selbst erkennen: Wer wir sind, und woher wir kommen, – und vielleicht auch, wohin wir gehen.

Die Aufgabe wird vor allem auf dreifache Weise in Angriff genommen werden; in der Planung und Förderung reiner Forschungsarbeit, in zusammenfassenden Darstellungen und Publikationen, sowie in der Verarbeitung archivarischer und anderer dokumentarischer Materialien.

Das L.B.I., dessen Arbeitsprogramm von Mal zu Mal mitgeteilt werden wird, will ein Zentrum sein für die Juden, die, was immer ihre Lebensumstände heute sein mögen, sich dieser Vergangenheit verbunden fühlen. Es will Zeugnis ablegen vor der Welt und vor dem jüdischen Volke für eine Vergangenheit, die uns mitgestaltet hat, und die ein nicht wegzudenkender Bestandteil jüdischer Geschichte ist.





## Diversity within Unity: The LBI's "Community of Founders"<sup>1</sup>

Ruth Nattermann

In 1965, Siegfried Moses commented on the establishment of the Leo Baeck Institute as follows: "There was something unique in the fact that it was founded and supported by survivors of German Jewry after a great human and political catastrophe, and designed for the study of the problems of a period of history which began with great hopes and ended in tragedy."<sup>2</sup> The institute's self-understanding could hardly have been expressed more truly. Those who founded the LBI and were a dominant force in its early existence were survivors of the Holocaust. They felt themselves to be the last heirs of German Jewry, its history apparently finished after the Nazi destruction, hence to be preserved in memory.

But who precisely were these individuals? It is surprising to discover that there were few historians among them. In its first decade, the institute mirrored the circle of persons that had determined the intellectual and political life of the Jews in Germany and, to a degree, other German-speaking regions of Europe. In the wake of Nazi persecution they had fled to Palestine, America, England, where many of them joined local branches of the Council of Jews from Germany (the Council),<sup>3</sup> the umbrella organization of German-Jewish refugees. Almost two decades after the violent destruction of Jewish scholarship in Germany, in May 1955 in Jerusalem, it was representa-

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<sup>1</sup> This article is a revised version of a chapter of my Ph.D. thesis on the foundation and early history of the LBI, published with the support of the London LBI and the Axel Springer Stiftung as *Deutsch-jüdische Geschichtsschreibung nach der Shoah. Die Gründungs- und Frühgeschichte des Leo Baeck Institute*, Essen 2004. I am especially grateful to Esra Bennathan, Pauline Paucker, Arnold Paucker and Herbert A. Strauss for valuable advice and information on the LBI's "community of founders."

<sup>2</sup> Siegfried Moses, "The First Ten Years of the Leo Baeck Institute," in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 10 (1965), pp. ix–xv, here p. ix.

<sup>3</sup> See Walter Breslauer and Fritz Goldschmidt, *Die Arbeit des Council of Jews from Germany auf dem Gebiet der Wiedergutmachung*, London 1966, p. 7; Susanne Feld, "'American Federation of Jews from Central Europe.' Von der Landsmannschaft deutsch-jüdischer Einwanderer zur amerikanischen Organisation," in *Menora. Jahrbuch für deutsch-jüdische Geschichte*, vol. 7 (1996), pp. 132–145, here pp. 134f.

tives of this emigrants' organization who founded the LBI, and with it a German-Jewish historiography in exile.

Thanks to the extensive contacts maintained between members of the Jewish elite that had been driven from Germany, recruiting members for the institute's branches in Jerusalem, London and New York and forming them into groups was a relatively fast process. Already by the end of 1955, the LBI's constituency was roughly established. In the course of its first ten years, the picture was occasionally altered through deaths and the arrival of new colleagues – who nonetheless belonged to the same generation and narrow circle as the institute's founders, with few exceptions. Hardly any board members withdrew voluntarily.

The following pages are meant as an overview of the circle of these individuals. The term "community of founders" refers not only to participants in the institute's founding meeting but also to those who were of decisive scholarly or organizational importance for its development during its first decade. The early LBI was not a scholarly organization in the strict sense, choosing its members according to purely pragmatic criteria; for this reason, the personal networks existing between its members – their ideological and organizational ties – are a key to understanding the inner unity within a seemingly disparate group of people. At the same time, as the founding and formation of the LBI was strongly stamped by the marked individuality of those initiating the process, brief biographical descriptions will be offered of the most important among them<sup>4</sup> – the selection here being inevitably incomplete – and their role within the early LBI explained. (Notably, Leo Baeck will not be considered because his death in 1956 meant that he had virtually no role in the institute's work.) Corresponding to the division of the LBI into three branches on different continents, this essay will be divided into three sections, focusing in turn on members of the Jerusalem, London, and New York centers.

## I

According to Robert Jütte, the composition of the Jerusalem board in the LBI's first decade still mirrored "the influence of the great personalities of German Zionism,"<sup>5</sup> an observation quickly confirmed by a review of its most prominent names: Martin Buber, Ernst Simon, Gershom Scholem, Kurt

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<sup>4</sup> These descriptions frequently draw on relevant information on the various figures in the *Biographisches Handbuch der deutschsprachigen Emigration nach 1933 (BHDE)*, ed. by Werner Roeder and Herbert A. Strauss, 3 vols., Munich 1983. Other sources used, such as personal archives etc., will be noted below.

<sup>5</sup> Robert Jütte, *Die Emigration der deutschsprachigen "Wissenschaft des Judentums."* *Die Auswanderung jüdischer Historiker nach Palästina*, Stuttgart 1991, p. 108.

Blumenfeld<sup>6</sup> and Siegfried Moses. The other members of the Jerusalem institute's first generation were Shalom Adler-Rudel, Yeshayahu Aviad (originally Oscar Wolfsberg), Shmuel Hugo Bergman, Alfred Bonné, Josef Burg, Benno Cohn, Heinz Gerling, Georg Herlitz, Bruno Kirschner, Franz Meyer, Dolf Michaelis, Friedrich Thieberger, Hans Tramer, Selmar Spier, Moshe Unna and Curt Wormann.

The network of relations between these individuals was multilayered. Most had known each other since they were young men, in part through an important Jewish student association, the Zionist *Kartell Jüdischer Verbindungen* (League of Jewish Fraternities; *KJV*), founded in Berlin in 1914.<sup>7</sup> Blumenfeld, Cohen, Gerling, Herlitz, Kirschner, Meyer, Moses and Simon were among the *KJV*'s founding members; Blumenfeld emerges as the group's intellectual leader. According to Georg Herlitz "the active leaders and supporters of political, organizational and cultural development of the Zionist movement in all parts of Germany" emerged from this organization.<sup>8</sup> The *KJV* had represented the younger, more radical generation of German Zionists, for whom Blumenfeld coined the phrase "post-assimilationist."<sup>9</sup> Frequently stemming from families (like Blumenfeld's) that had advanced socially before the First World War and were largely acculturated, they had experienced an "intellectual conversion" to Zionism while still very young.<sup>10</sup>

In the years leading up to that war, these younger Zionists, led by Blumenfeld, had gained control of the *Zionistische Vereinigung für Deutschland* (*ZVfD*).

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<sup>6</sup> Although Kurt Blumenfeld was officially on the board, he did not feel any strong identification with the institute. In 1957 he admitted to Arendt that he had only kept the affiliation because of his friendship with Siegfried Moses; he finally resigned in 1958: see Blumenfeld to Arendt, 24 May, 1957, in Hannah Arendt, Kurt Blumenfeld, "... in keinem Besitz verwurzelt." *Die Korrespondenz*, ed. by Ingeborg Nordmann and Iris Pilling, Hamburg 1995, p. 194. See also the essay by Guy Miron in this volume.

<sup>7</sup> See the members' list in *BHDE*, vol. 2, pp. 236f. On the history of the *KJV*, see Walter Gross, "The Zionist Students' Movement," in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 4 (1959), pp. 143–164.

<sup>8</sup> Georg Herlitz, "Siegfried Moses' Entwicklung und Stellung im KJV," in Hans Tramer (ed.), *In zwei Welten. Siegfried Moses zum Fünfundsechzigsten Geburtstag*, Tel Aviv 1962, pp. 17–26, here p. 17.

<sup>9</sup> Jörg Hackeschmidt, *Von Kurt Blumenfeld zu Norbert Elias. Die Erfindung einer jüdischen Nation*, Hamburg 1997, p. 21.

<sup>10</sup> The term "intellectual conversion" comes from Robert Weltsch, who applies it to Siegfried Moses and the whole group around Kurt Blumenfeld: "Siegfried Moses: End of an Epoch," in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 19 (1974), pp. vi–ix, here p. viii; see also Hackeschmidt, pp. 19ff.; Steven M. Lowenstein, "Ideologie und Identität," in Michael A. Meyer (ed.), *Deutsch-jüdische Geschichte in der Neuzeit*, vol. 3: *Umstrittene Integration 1871–1918*, Munich 2000, pp. 278–301, here p. 293; Avraham Barkai, "Die Organisation der jüdischen Gemeinschaft," in *ibid.*, vol. 4: *Aufbruch und Zerstörung 1918–1945*, Munich 2000, pp. 74–101, here p. 92.

In contrast to the older generation of German Zionists, which – in Herzl's spirit – had proclaimed strengthened Zionist “work for the present” in the Diaspora without really considering a mass emigration to Palestine,<sup>11</sup> Blumenfeld's circle had advocated “a radical Zionism imposing individual obligation and aimed almost exclusively at supporting development in Palestine and both ideological and practical preparation for *aliya*, i.e. settlement there.”<sup>12</sup> Although the radical Zionists had officially demanded separation from German society, the influence of German ideational currents upon them was unmistakable. For example, citations of German poets and philosophers were present as frequently in their speeches and essays as in those of the more moderate Zionists – those who defined themselves as “cultural Germans.”<sup>13</sup> Characteristically, Blumenfeld lived and worked in Germany – in the cultural milieu from which he had theoretically distanced himself – until 1933.<sup>14</sup>

The organizational aspects of the relationship between Blumenfeld, Buber and Bergman had their roots in the Zionist labor movement. Together with other prominent members of both the *ZVfD* and the Zionist “Prague Circle” that had formed around Bergman and Robert Weltsch at the start of the century under Buber's influence, they had joined the German *Hapo'el Hatz'a'ir* (“Young Workers”) organization, formed in 1917 by proponents of an anti-Marxist, evolving and ethical socialism.<sup>15</sup>

The *Reichsvertretung der deutschen Juden*, formed in 1933 under Leo Baeck's direction and renamed the *Reichsvertretung der Juden in Deutschland* after the passage of the Nuremberg laws, was another point of juncture. Adler-Rudel, Meyer, Michaelis and Moses had had leading positions inside the *Reichsvertretung*; Buber and Simon were the initiators and central figures in the *Mittelstelle für jüdische Erwachsenenbildung*, established in 1933 within the framework of the *Reichsvertretung's* education committee.<sup>16</sup>

After emigration and flight from Germany, the old networks came together again. Blumenfeld, Gerling, Herlitz, Kirschner, Moses and Wormann, among others, now joined the *Hitachduth Olej Germania ve-Austria* (“Asso-

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<sup>11</sup> The leading personalities within this not insignificant minority were Max Kollenscher (1875–1937), Alfred Klee (1875–1943) and Georg Kareski (1878–1947): see Barkai, “Organisation,” p. 92.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 91f. On Blumenfeld's aims and the conflict between the younger and older generation in the *ZVfD*, see Kurt Blumenfeld, *Erlebte Judenfrage. Ein Vierteljahrhundert deutscher Zionismus*, Stuttgart 1962, pp. 69f.

<sup>13</sup> Lowenstein, “Ideologie,” pp. 293f.

<sup>14</sup> Jehuda Reinharz, “Martin Buber's Impact on German Zionism,” in *Studies in Zionism*, vol. 6 (1982), pp. 171–183, here p. 182.

<sup>15</sup> Barkai, “Organisation,” p. 93.

<sup>16</sup> On the work of the *Mittelstelle*, see Ernst Simon, *Aufbau im Untergang. Jüdische Erwachsenenbildung im nationalsozialistischen Deutschland als geistiger Widerstand*, Tübingen 1959 (Schriftenreihe wissenschaftlicher Abhandlungen des Leo Baeck Institutes 2).

ciation of Emigrants from Germany and Austria"; *HOGOIA*)<sup>17</sup>, founded in Palestine in 1938, with the intention of helping to give a voice to the politically underrepresented German Jews in Palestine. But two other organizations, the *Brith Shalom* ("Peace Association") and *Aliya Chadasha* ("New Aliya"), a political party for immigrants, have more relevance for the Zionist self-understanding of a substantial number of later LBI members – a self-understanding that would form the very basis for establishing a German-Jewish institute in Israel. *Brith Shalom* had already been founded by German Zionists in Jerusalem in 1925 as a political and intellectual movement. Its goal was achieving an understanding between Jews and Arabs and the establishment of a binational state.<sup>18</sup> Among later founding generation members of the LBI's three branches, Shmuel Hugo Bergman, Kurt Blumenfeld, Martin Buber, Hans Kohn, Max Kreutzberger, Siegfried Moses, Gershom Scholem, Ernst Simon and Robert Weltsch had been in *Brith Shalom*. Although varying standpoints were present within the group regarding the Diaspora (Scholem for instance rejected it entirely), there was agreement that nationalism had to be humanized and confirmed as a liberal ideal.<sup>19</sup> This idea had emerged from tenets of cultural Zionism maintained by German Jews in particular and held the stamp of Martin Buber's thinking. For Buber, the rejection of any national chauvinism was to be combined with the idea of Judaism as the bearer of a spiritual world of ethics and justice.<sup>20</sup> Subject to frequent attacks from opposing groups, *Brith Shalom* had practically ceased to exist by the beginning of the 1930s.

As, in a certain sense, heirs to the organization, the groups *Ichud* ("unity") and the above-mentioned immigrants' party *Aliya Chadasha* were both formed in *Yishuv*-Palestine in 1942. *Ichud* was a forum for the more extreme "conciliatory Zionists" to come together again,<sup>21</sup> containing both such radi-

<sup>17</sup> On *Hitachduth*, see Paul A. Alsberg, "Zur Geschichte der Organisation der Mitteleuropäischen Einwanderer in Israel," in *Recht und Wahrheit bringen Frieden. Festschrift aus Israel für Niels Hansen*, Gerlingen 1994, pp. 11–21. See also the members' list in *BHDE*, vol. 2, p. 232.

<sup>18</sup> Judith Klein, *Der deutsche Zionismus und die Araber Palästinas. Eine Untersuchung der deutsch-zionistischen Publikationen 1917–1938*, Frankfurt am Main and New York 1982; Hagit Lavsky, *Before Catastrophe: The Distinctive Path of German Zionism*, Jerusalem 1996; Dieter Wiechmann, *Der Traum vom Frieden. Das bi-nationale Konzept des Brith Schalom zur Lösung des jüdisch-arabischen Konflikts in der Zeit von 1925–1933*, Ph.D. Duisburg 1995.

<sup>19</sup> George L. Mosse, "Ende einer Epoche? Das Leo Baeck Institut nach dem 2. Weltkrieg," in *LBI Information*, vol. 5/6 (1995), pp. 7–15, here p. 8.

<sup>20</sup> On Buber's formulation of a new Jewish self-understanding and his influence on German Zionism, see Hans Kohn, *Martin Buber. Sein Werk und seine Zeit. Ein Beitrag zur Geistesgeschichte Mitteleuropas 1880–1930*, Cologne 1961, pp. 59–210; Reinharz, "Martin Buber."

<sup>21</sup> The expression "*Verständigungs Zionismus*" comes from Anja Siegemund, "Kassandrarufer? Robert Weltsch – eine Stimme des Verständigungs Zionismus," in Jakob

cals and more moderate advocates of the same political tendency, *Aliya Chadasha* represented an important meeting-place for a number of later LBI members. Together with the non-political welfare organization *Irgun Olej Merkas Europa* (Association of Immigrants from Central Europe, *IOME*), it emerged from a split within *HOGO*.<sup>22</sup> Along with Felix Rosenblüth (later the Israeli justice minister under the name Pinchas Rosen), Georg Landauer (1895–1954),<sup>23</sup> a former member of *Brith Schalom*, took over the directorship of the new party, which was also joined by Bergman, Buber, Cohn, Gerling, Moses, Simon, Tramer, Robert Weltsch and Max Kreutzberger.<sup>24</sup> As Esra Bennathan has indicated, Scholem had also supported the party although he was not an official member.<sup>25</sup> In the tradition of *Brith Schalom*, the group around Landauer and Rosenblüth spoke up for a policy of negotiation and conciliation with Palestine's Arabic population. And like *Brith Schalom*, *Aliya Chadasha* was attacked by other political groups for being "the representative of a German ideological world, which was alien to the Israeli reality."<sup>26</sup>

In view of the active engagement with German-Jewish cultural heritage that would be shown in the LBI by Moses, Weltsch and Kreutzberger in particular, but also by the other Zionists mentioned above, their membership in *Aliya Chadasha* is especially salient. In their firm identification with German culture, they clearly did not believe in either negating the Diaspora or in making a necessary break with the Jewish national and cultural past,<sup>27</sup> thus taking a position contrary to that of the *Yishuv's* leaders, with their Eastern European orientation. Their position was perhaps most manifest in an insistence on cultivating the German language – considered the enemy's language and subjected to correspondingly violent attacks in *Yishuv*-Palestine since the 1930s. It is in any case important to note that while German was an expression of the cultural identity of these immigrants, they accepted the Zionist idea of a transition to Hebrew as a basis for national and cultural unity.<sup>28</sup>

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Hessing (ed.), *Jüdischer Almanach des Leo Baeck Institute*, Frankfurt am Main 2000, pp. 108–126, here p. 108.

<sup>22</sup> Alsberg, "Mitteleuropäische Einwanderer," p. 19.

<sup>23</sup> On Landauer, see Herbert A. Strauss, "Georg Landauer: Changes in Zionism over Thirty Years," in *Ner*, vol. 1, no. 4 (1958), pp. 26–30.

<sup>24</sup> See members' list in *BHDE*, vol. 2, p. 209.

<sup>25</sup> Esra Bennathan, letter to the author, February 20, 2003.

<sup>26</sup> Neima Barzel, "The Attitude of Jews of German Origin in Israel to Germany and Germans after the Holocaust 1945–1952," in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 39 (1994), pp. 271–301, here p. 272.

<sup>27</sup> Michael Brenner, "Israel und die Diaspora. Zur Debatte um Heimat und Exil im modernen Judentum," in *Alte Synagoge* (ed.), *Status: Quo? 50 Jahre Staat Israel*, Essen 1999, pp. 78–98, here pp. 83ff.

<sup>28</sup> Barzel, "Attitude," pp. 271ff.

In the context of the political development from 1946 until the United Nations' decision to partition Palestine in November 1947, opposition to the program of Ben Gurion's dominant *Mapai* party vanished within *Aliya Chadasha*. After the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948, *Aliya Chadasha* gradually lost significance and was finally absorbed along with other political groups into the liberal Progressive Party.<sup>29</sup>

Landauer demonstratively drew his conclusions: even before the establishment of the state, he withdrew from *Aliya Chadasha*, instead taking over the presidency of *IOME*. It was he, typically, who a few years later was chosen by Siegfried Moses – meanwhile himself chairman of *IOME* – to take on the central role in the planned Leo Baeck Institute. Leo Baeck had himself voiced support for this plan,<sup>30</sup> which can be understood as an expression of the wish to gather around the man who like few others embodied the values of German Zionism, in this way giving the institute a spiritual direction. With Landauer's death in 1954 the plan came to nothing.

As suggested, Landauer's circle did not hope for a break with the past, but for a transfer of German-Jewish values that they associated with the ideas of pacifism, liberalism and humanism. Although not all members of the institute's Jerusalem center had been members of *Aliya Chadasha*, the influence of their ideals should not be underestimated. Indeed in retrospect, the early LBI can be understood as carrying forward the "outsider" position maintained by both that group and *Brit Shalom* vis-à-vis the *Yishuv*. With the recording of German-Jewish history being at the core of the LBI's sense of purpose, it itself was focused on the Diaspora, not, as was the then prevalent tendency in Israeli society, on its negation, or indeed its elimination from the collective memory. Its activities were thus at sharp remove from those of mainstream Israeli historiography, epitomized by the "Jerusalem School" represented by Benzion Dinur, Yehezkel Kaufman and Yitzhak (Fritz) Baer, whose goal was basically the creation of a unified nationalist historical picture.<sup>31</sup> Both implicitly and explicitly, then, the LBI stood opposed to a specifically Israeli version of Jewish history – one that in extreme cases suppressed entire historical periods to postulate a unilinear development of Jewish history from the Roman conquest of Jerusalem to the establishment of the Jewish state.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Alsberg, "Mitteleuropäische Einwanderer," p. 20.

<sup>30</sup> Moses to Baeck, March 2, 1954, *Jewish National and University Library, Buber Archives*, 819a:13.

<sup>31</sup> Jütte, *Emigration*, pp. 123ff. In 1956 the Jerusalem LBI made efforts to interest Izhak Baer, himself of German-Jewish origin, in the institute's work for the sake of greater academic recognition; Baer, however, was not interested: see Guy Miron's essay in this volume.

<sup>32</sup> Jütte, *Emigration*, p. 123.



Martin Buber (1878–1965)<sup>33</sup> had taught philosophy and sociology at the Hebrew University since 1938. Through his close friendship to many of the founders, above all to Ernst Simon and Robert Weltsch, he belonged to the inner circle of the Jerusalem institute in its early years. Because of Buber's scholarly eminence and importance as a representative of the German-speaking Zionists, organizers like Siegfried Moses considered the relationship to be beneficial from both a scholarly and financial perspective.

The LBI's Israel section had already turned to Buber – presumably at Ernst Simon's suggestion – to help in revising its original plans.<sup>34</sup> On this occasion there was agreement that Buber would be an ideal chairman for the institute's "research and publication board" – an idea originating in Jerusalem following Georg Landauer's death. Buber, however, made his participation subject to actual receipt of the 120,000 dollars planned for the institute's first-year budget; in the end he declined the offer.<sup>35</sup> This notwithstanding, his role in the LBI's planning remained important, with occasional interventions on his part with the Claims Conference at the Council's behest.<sup>36</sup>

As Leo Baeck was ill and could not be present at the institute's founding conference in May 1955, Martin Buber served as the event's symbolic figure. What is often rather questionably conceived as the "pre-founding" of the institute is said to have taken place in Buber's Jerusalem house on March 2, 1954;<sup>37</sup> Esra Bennathan has recalled various "consultations" held there the same year.<sup>38</sup> The planning committee met in Buber's house on May 30, 1955 – the most important meeting taking place during the conference.<sup>39</sup> In a letter written to Kreutzberger a few weeks later, Weltsch

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<sup>33</sup> On Buber, see Hans Kohn, *Martin Buber*, Paul Mendes-Flohr (ed.), *Martin Buber: A Contemporary Perspective*, Syracuse and Jerusalem 2002.

<sup>34</sup> Nattermann, *Deutsch-jüdische Geschichtsschreibung*, pp. 132f.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*; Moses to Weltsch, December 4, 1957, *LBI Archives New York*, Weltsch Coll. MF 491.

<sup>36</sup> Judah Shapiro indicated to Reichmann on August 4, 1954, "We have had a letter from Prof. Martin Buber, addressed to Prof. Baron, in which he outlines the plan for the work of the Leo Baeck Institute." Shapiro to Reichmann, August 4, 1954, Archives of the *Zentrum für Antisemitismusforschung* of the Technical University, Berlin (*ZfA Archives*), AmFed Coll. 17/18; for Buber's letter see Christhard Hoffmann's essay on the founding history of the LBI in this volume.

<sup>37</sup> Joseph Walk, "Die Gründung des Leo Baeck Instituts vor 40 Jahren," in *LBI Information*, vol. 5/6 (1995), pp. 16–21, here pp. 16f. In an interview with the author, London, February 15, 2001, Arnold Paucker, as well, indicated that he had heard rumors of the institute's "prefounding" in Buber's house in 1954.

<sup>38</sup> Esra Bennathan, interview with the author, London, February 7, 2001.

<sup>39</sup> See, for example, the account of Max Gruenewald in an interview with Joan C. Lessing, February 1977, in Dennis Rohrbaugh (ed.), *The Individual and Collective Experience of German-Jewish Immigrants 1933–1984. An Oral History Record*, New York 1986 (*Jewish Immigrants of the Nazi Period in the USA*, vol. 5), pp. 101–104, here p. 101.

stressed that "what was marvelous in Jerusalem was above all old Buber, indomitable day and night and fully set on the task; without him it would have been a debacle."<sup>40</sup>

In any event, in the years after the founding it became increasingly clear that Buber, still termed the "guarantor of the intellectual and scholarly core" of the LBI by Weltsch in 1957,<sup>41</sup> had little time for it alongside his various public and academic duties. He hardly had any role in scholarly developments at the institute, although he did endow it with a generous amount of his Erasmus Prize money (the prize was awarded in 1963).<sup>42</sup> Despite Buber's general absence from the immediate scene, the LBI's first generation did perceive his death in 1965 as a caesura, signifying the approach of generational and institutional change.

Ernst Simon (1899–1988)<sup>43</sup> had belonged to the circle around Buber for decades. Before beginning to teach at the *Freies Jüdisches Lehrhaus* in Frankfurt, he was editor of the newspaper *Der Jude*, which Buber had founded in 1916. In 1928 he emigrated to Palestine, but returned to Germany in 1933 at Buber's request, in order to work with him in developing the *Mittelstelle für jüdische Erwachsenenbildung* at the *Reichsvertretung*.<sup>44</sup> In January 1935, he moved again to Palestine, becoming instructor of the "history of pedagogy" at the Hebrew University four years later. Simon's closest friends alongside Buber were Bergman and Scholem, but he was also on good terms with Weltsch, Baeck, and other prominent members of the LBI.

Simon played an especially important role in the institute's planning phase, being mainly responsible, together with Bruno Kirschner, for preparing the various outlines that appeared in 1953 and 1954.<sup>45</sup> Simon saw Leo Baeck as "a symbol of the best that we have been called on to preserve as a spiritual heritage,"<sup>46</sup> but he declined the position of *wissenschaftlicher Sekretär* that Moses offered him after having tried both Buber and Weltsch.<sup>47</sup> Like Buber, Simon increasingly removed himself from the institute's activities during its first decade because of other duties. His influence on the Jerusalem branch

<sup>40</sup> Weltsch to Kreuzberger, July 19, 1955, *LBI Archives New York*, Weltsch Coll. MF 491.

<sup>41</sup> Weltsch to Moses, November 18, 1957, *LBI Archives New York*, Weltsch Coll. MF 491.

<sup>42</sup> Jütte, *Emigration*, p. 109.

<sup>43</sup> For information on Simon's life, see his letter collection, *Sechzig Jahre gegen den Strom. Briefe von 1917–1984*, ed. Leo Baeck Institute Jerusalem, Tübingen 1998 (Schriftenreihe wissenschaftlicher Abhandlungen des Leo Baeck Instituts 59).

<sup>44</sup> *Neues Lexikon des Judentums*, ed. by Julius H. Schoeps, Munich 1992, p. 424.

<sup>45</sup> Nattermann, *Deutsch-jüdische Geschichtsschreibung*, pp. 110ff.

<sup>46</sup> Simon to F. Winter, September 22, 1958, *LBI Archives New York*, LBI London Coll., box 8.

<sup>47</sup> Moses to Weltsch, December 4, 1957, *LBI Archives New York*, Weltsch Coll. MF 491.

was thus not of an enduring nature, although some of his publications were among the most important in the LBI's early period.<sup>48</sup>

Although Gershom Scholem (1897–1982) was on the Jerusalem LBI's board, his position within the “community of founders” was rather unusual due to conceptual differences. On the basis of personal experience, he had already become convinced during the First World War that the relationship between Jews and non-Jews in Germany was by no means based on mutual acceptance. Rather, what was at work was “one-sided love” on the part of acculturated Jews.<sup>49</sup> In 1916, relatively early for the German Zionists, Scholem thus decided to emigrate to Palestine, which he actually did in 1923. In Jerusalem, his first position was directing the Hebrew and Judaic studies section of the Jewish National Library; following the opening of the Hebrew University on Mount Scopus in 1925, he became dean of its Institute of Jewish Studies.<sup>50</sup>

At the time of the founding of the LBI, Scholem was on the way to becoming the most well-known academic name in Jerusalem, as well as worldwide in the field of Jewish studies. He came to the LBI through his proximity to the Jerusalem circle of German-Jewish intellectuals, among whom Ernst Simon and Hugo Bergman counted among his closest friends. However, the ties extended far beyond the Israeli group: Weltsch and Scholem had known each other for decades, and Hannah Arendt – one of the first members of the New York LBI – had become acquainted with him during a research visit to Europe on his part in 1932.<sup>51</sup>

At first glance, the readiness to participate in the LBI of such an outspokenly sharp critic of the idea of “German-Jewish symbiosis”<sup>52</sup> – an idea powerfully represented in the figure of Baeck – seems surprising. It must, in fact, have been Scholem's particularly marked split between “rootedness and rejection”<sup>53</sup> that led him towards the LBI on the one hand, made him into an outsider, on the other: “One of the most important representatives of Jewish

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<sup>48</sup> See esp. Ernst Simon, *Aufbau im Untergang*; *idem*, “Jewish Adult Education in Nazi Germany as Spiritual Resistance,” in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 1 (1956), pp. 68–104; *idem*, “Martin Buber and German Jewry,” in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 3 (1958), pp. 3–39; and *idem*, “Sigmund Freud, the Jew,” in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 2 (1957), pp. 270–305.

<sup>49</sup> Gershom Scholem, “Zur Sozialpsychologie der Juden in Deutschland 1900–1933,” in *idem*, *Judaica*, vol. 4, Frankfurt am Main 1980, pp. 229–261, here pp. 252f.

<sup>50</sup> David Nathan Myers, “A New Scholarly Colony in Jerusalem: The Early History of Jewish Studies at the Hebrew University,” in *Judaism*, vol. 45, no. 2 (1996), pp. 142–159.

<sup>51</sup> See Scholem, *Briefe I, 1914–1947*, ed. by Itta Shedletzky, Munich 1994, p. 484.

<sup>52</sup> Moshe Zimmermann, *Die deutschen Juden 1914–1945*, Munich 1997, p. 85.

<sup>53</sup> Michael Brocke, “Gershom Scholem: Wissenschaft des Judentums zwischen Berlin und Jerusalem,” in *Freiburger Rundbrief*, vol. 5, no. 3 (1998), pp. 179–186, here p. 179.

cultural life, he embodied the very 'German-Jewish symbiosis' he so vehemently rejected, while describing it in such a masterly way."<sup>54</sup> With the LBI's Zionist members virtually all emerging from the circle around Buber, who had so eloquently advocated the very idea, indeed, of a cultural symbiosis between Jews and non-Jews in Germany (only declaring the idea "ended" in the *Jüdische Welt-Rundschau* on March 10, 1939), Scholem's extremely critical views regarding both Germany and the Diaspora marked him as a lone wolf.<sup>55</sup> At the same time, on account of his deep roots in both the German language and Berlin's German-Jewish milieu, in many respects he must have felt very much part of the LBI's founding circle.

The reality remained that a gulf existed between Scholem's intentions and the ideals of a majority of the institute's members – a gulf that in the end was unbridgeable despite enduring commonalities. The LBI's *Year Book*, especially, was a persistent annoyance to Scholem; this led to the convention of only discussing the publication – of course, the most important associated with the institute – in his absence.<sup>56</sup> Starting in the mid-1960s at the latest, Scholem began increasingly to move away from the institute and towards his own research – a process perhaps initiated in 1964 with the meanwhile famous essay "Against the Myth of German-Jewish Dialogue,"<sup>57</sup> which sparked an ideological controversy within the LBI.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 178.

<sup>55</sup> Arnold Paucker, letter to the author, February 18, 2003.

<sup>56</sup> Arnold Paucker, interview with the author, London, February 6, 2001. In 1955 Weltsch wrote to Moses that Scholem "apparently considers the *Year Book* rubbish [*Mist*] with which he cannot be involved." (Weltsch to Moses, October 17, 1955, *LBI Archives New York*, Weltsch Coll. MF 491.) And in 1964: "In the New York conference Professor Scholem sharply criticized the *Year Book*, which in his view does not sufficiently correspond to the scholarly requirements of the institute." (Minutes of the London LBI board meeting, December 14, 1964, Staatsbibliothek Berlin – Preußischer Kulturbesitz (*Staatsbibliothek Berlin*), Manuscript Collection, Lowenthal's papers, B2/292).

<sup>57</sup> Gershom Scholem, "Wider den Mythos vom deutsch-jüdischen Gespräch," in *Bulletin des Leo Baeck Instituts*, 7, no. 27 (1964), pp. 278–281.

<sup>58</sup> The controversy unfolded in the *Bulletin*: see Gershom Scholem, "Noch einmal: Das deutsch-jüdische 'Gespräch,'" in *Bulletin des Leo Baeck Instituts*, 8, no. 30 (1965), pp. 167–172, here p. 169; Siegfried Moses, "Weltanschauliche Unterschiede im deutschen Judentum," in *Bulletin des Leo Baeck Instituts*, 8, no. 32 (1965), pp. 346–351, here p. 347; Eva Reichmann, "Zur Klärung in eigener Sache," in *Bulletin des Leo Baeck Instituts*, 9, nos. 33–36 (1966), pp. 342–344, here p. 344. In the context of the present overview, a comment by Weltsch to Kreuzberger is worth noting: "All our academics have let us down, i.e. have something else to do; no one wishes to give the LBI priority. Ernst Simon, Scholem, Bamberger, Glatzer etc. – not one of them is doing something for the LBI." (Weltsch to Kreuzberger, April 7, 1966, *LBI Archives New York*, Weltsch Coll. MF 491.)

Siegfried Moses (1887–1974)<sup>59</sup> was born in Lautenburg (East Prussia). During his legal studies in Berlin he joined the *KJV*, and Kurt Blumenfeld became his chief mentor. Moses received his doctorate in 1908 in Heidelberg with a thesis entitled “*Über unwirksamen Beitritt zu einer GmbH*”, (“On Invalid Membership in a Corporation”), then working as a lawyer and notary until the First World War and the start of his military service. After the war’s end, he pursued his career as a jurist: from 1919 to 1920 he was the business director of the *deutscher Städtebund*; in 1921 he became chairman of the *Jüdische Arbeiterhilfe* in Berlin, working at the same time as a lawyer; from 1923 until 1929 he was the director of the *Schocken Söhne* department stores in Zwickau. When Kurt Blumenfeld left Germany in 1933, Moses took over as head of the *ZVfD*; he was also elected acting chairman of the *Reichsvertretung*.

Four years later Moses settled in Palestine, working from 1939 on as a public accountant, auditor and tax consultant. In 1944, he was one of the first to suggest principles for future German reparations in his book *Die Jüdischen Nachkriegsforderungen*.<sup>60</sup> The following year, he was instrumental in bringing together the various organizations for German Jews in Israel, Britain, the USA and France into the newly formed Council.<sup>61</sup> In 1949, he became the Israeli state comptroller with ministerial rank – a position he held until his retirement in 1961.<sup>62</sup>

As chairman of *IOME*, Moses was central in founding the LBI – a project that he told Leo Baeck he had his “heart especially set on.”<sup>63</sup> It is in fact quite likely that without his personal engagement and negotiation skills, the initial funding for the institute would never have been offered by the Claims Conference in December 1954.<sup>64</sup> When Baeck died in 1956, Moses took over as president of both the Council and the international LBI.

Discussions of Moses repeatedly stress his organizational talents – and also an authoritarian streak in his character. It is clear that he steered the institute with a strong hand, having much to say regarding both its personal composition and research program. Thus even at the end of the 1960s, we find him urgently advising Arnold Paucker against work on a “mismanaged assimilationists’ organization like the *CV*.”<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> On Moses, see Robert Weltsch, “Siegfried Moses: End of an Epoch,” in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 19 (1974), pp. vii–ix; Hans Tramer (ed.), *In zwei Welten*.

<sup>60</sup> Siegfried Moses, *Die jüdischen Nachkriegsforderungen*, Tel Aviv 1944.

<sup>61</sup> Breslauer and Goldschmidt, *Die Arbeit des Council*, p. 7; Feld, pp. 134f.

<sup>62</sup> *BHDE*, vol. 1, p. 509.

<sup>63</sup> Moses to Baeck, May 16, 1954, *LBI Jerusalem*, file 1038.

<sup>64</sup> Nattermann, *Deutsch-jüdische Geschichtsschreibung*, pp. 128ff.

<sup>65</sup> Arnold Paucker, “Zur deutsch-jüdischen Geschichtsschreibung über Abwehr, Widerstand und jüdische Verhaltensweisen unter der NS-Diktatur,” in Michael Grüttner (ed.), *Geschichte und Emanzipation. Festschrift für Reinhard Rürup*, Frankfurt am Main and New York 1999, pp. 359–375, here pp. 361f.

The longstanding director of the Jerusalem LBI, Salomon (Shalom) Adler-Rudel (1894–1975), was one of the institute's most prominent figures in its early period.<sup>66</sup>

Born in Czernowitz, Bukovina, he remained, as Robert Weltsch put it, "a proud and conscious *Ostjude*"<sup>67</sup> throughout his life. In 1915 Adler-Rudel moved from Czernowitz to Vienna, where he first worked as a social worker in the Jewish community. With the founding of the *Jüdische Nationalrat für Deutsch-Österreich* in Vienna in 1918, Adler-Rudel took over the direction of the section on vocational counseling and retraining. His lifelong friendship with Robert Weltsch, then general secretary of the *Nationalrat*, stemmed from this period.<sup>68</sup>

After the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian empire, Adler-Rudel moved to Berlin, then emerging as the European center for Jewish communal and social work, where he quickly became one of the main figures in this field in Germany: in 1919 he became general secretary of the *Arbeiterfürsorge-Amt jüdischer Organisationen Deutschlands*, in 1930 director of the *Abteilung für Arbeits- und Berufsfürsorge* of Berlin's Jewish community, which focused mainly on helping workers from Eastern Europe.<sup>69</sup> In addition, he was business manager of the *Hauptstelle für jüdische Wanderfürsorge*, which helped Jews from Eastern Europe to remigrate to their home countries. Until his denunciation by the Nazis as a socialist and his flight from Germany in 1936, he was also active in the *Reichsvertretung*, being responsible for constructive social schemes regarding emigration and vocational training. Adler-Rudel's later contacts with all three LBI branches were largely based on his work for the *Reichsvertretung*.<sup>70</sup>

It is unclear why Adler-Rudel, a committed Zionist, emigrated not to Palestine but to England after his denunciation – quite likely, the decision simply reflected the need to flee as quickly as possible. Once in England, he assisted many other German-Jewish émigrés,<sup>71</sup> helping to establish the Association of Jewish Refugees in Great Britain (AJR), of which he became vice president in 1945. He moved to Israel in 1949.<sup>72</sup>

<sup>66</sup> On Adler-Rudel, see the essays for his seventieth birthday in *AJR Information*, vol. 19, no. 6 (June 1969), p. 10, and vol. 24, no. 6 (June 1964), p. 9.

<sup>67</sup> Robert Weltsch, "Birthday Tributes to S. Adler-Rudel," in *AJR Information*, June 1964, p. 10.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*; Werner Rosenstock, "Politics – Social Work – Research," in *AJR Information*, June 1969, p. 9; Robert Weltsch, "Looking Back over Sixty Years," in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 27 (1982), pp. 379–390, here p. 380.

<sup>69</sup> Salomon Adler-Rudel, *Ostjuden in Deutschland 1880–1940. Zugleich eine Geschichte der Organisationen, die sie betreuten*, Tübingen 1959 (Schriftenreihe wissenschaftlicher Abhandlungen des Leo Baeck Institutes 1).

<sup>70</sup> Weltsch, "Adler-Rudel," p. 10.

<sup>71</sup> Rosenstock, "Politics," p. 9.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*

Adler-Rudel continued his organizational work in Jerusalem.<sup>73</sup> Since his days in the AJR, he had been part of the leadership of the Council; as a member of its Israel section, he witnessed both the development of its cultural program and the negotiations with the Claims Conference. When the LBI was established in 1955, he immediately became part of the Jerusalem board.<sup>74</sup> His appointment by Siegfried Moses as the branch's director in 1958 followed a three-year period with the jurist Selmar Spier (1893–1962)<sup>75</sup> holding that position. Moses, who did not think highly of Spier as an organizer,<sup>76</sup> had begun a search for a “centralizing and directing force” for the branch in 1957.<sup>77</sup> He chose Adler-Rudel mainly because of his professional experience, but in view of the overwhelmingly East European background both of Israel's leadership and of international Jewish organizations, his own eastern origins certainly played a role as well. Moses valued Adler-Rudel's actual and potential organizational contacts both for financial reasons and in regard to the institute gaining more attention from other Jewish institutions such as *Yad Vashem*.<sup>78</sup>

Adler-Rudel viewed his directorship as far more than an administrative task. On the one hand, he contributed significantly to the LBI's own publications;<sup>79</sup> on the other hand, he frequently made clear his own sense of the institute's pedagogical ideals.<sup>80</sup> He viewed the Jerusalem branch against the horizon of future scholarship – something reflected in his early emphasis on the importance of publications in Hebrew, the working and everyday language of Israel's younger generation.<sup>81</sup>

<sup>73</sup> Weltsch, “Adler-Rudel,” p. 10.

<sup>74</sup> Nattermann, *Deutsch-jüdische Geschichtsschreibung*, p. 161.

<sup>75</sup> Before his emigration to Palestine in 1936, Spier had been a lawyer and notary in Frankfurt. After working for the LBI, he became an executive officer for United Restitution Organization in Frankfurt. See Selmar Spier, *Vor 1914. Erinnerungen an Frankfurt geschrieben in Israel*, Frankfurt am Main 1961, and obituary by Robert Weltsch, “Dr. Selmar Spier,” in *AJR Information*, vol. 18, no. 1 (January 1962), p. 10.

<sup>76</sup> Moses to Kreutzberger, April 5, 1956, *LBI Archives New York*, Weltsch Coll. MF 491; Kreutzberger to Weltsch, April 12, 1956, *LBI Archives New York*, Weltsch Coll. MF 491.

<sup>77</sup> Spier to Weltsch, January 3, 1958, *LBI Archives New York*, Weltsch Coll. MF 491.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>79</sup> Adler-Rudel, *Ostjuden in Deutschland*; *idem*, “Moritz Baron Hirsch,” in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 8 (1963), pp. 29–69; *idem*, “A Chronicle of Rescue Efforts,” in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 11 (1966), pp. 213–241. On Adler-Rudel's contributions to the *Bulletin*, see the index to vols. 1–12, *Bulletin des Leo Baeck Instituts*, 13, no. 49 (1974), p. 7.

<sup>80</sup> Salomon Adler-Rudel, “Fünf Jahre Leo Baeck Institut,” in *Bulletin für die Mitglieder der Gesellschaft der Freunde des Leo Baeck Instituts*, 3, no. 9 (1960), pp. 1–7, here p. 7.

<sup>81</sup> Contribution by Salomon Adler-Rudel, in Kurt Loewenstein, *Georg Landauer als Erzieher. Zu unseren kulturellen Aufgaben heute*, Irgun Olej Merkaz Europa, Arbeitstagung über Kulturarbeit, Tel Aviv, February 23, 1961, Tel Aviv 1961, pp. 55f.

The rabbi, organizational official and publicist Hans Tramer (1905–1979) remained one of the institute's most influential figures from its founding until his death. Tramer was born in Bunzlau (Silesia). He studied literature and philosophy at the University of Breslau, earning his doctorate there. Between 1928 and 1932, he attended Breslau's Jewish Theological Seminar, where Leo Baeck and various later members of the institute such as Max Gruenewald and Adolf Kober had also studied; having been ordained a rabbi at the age of 27, he moved to Berlin. He there became the assistant of Joachim Prinz (1902–1988), a prominent rabbi and Zionist youth-leader who also encouraged him to work with young people.

In 1933 – relatively early when compared to most LBI-members – Tramer emigrated to Palestine, where he continued his youth-work,<sup>82</sup> while also joining the central cultural commission of the *Hitachduth Olej Germania* (*Hitachduth*). Founded in 1934, this organization focused primarily on adult education, above all Hebrew instruction and the Zionist education of new immigrants. In 1939, together with Curt Wormann, Tramer took over the direction of the *Hitachduth's* seminar program, which included Hebrew and German courses focused on "Palestine information" and Jewish history and literature as well as Hebrew-language discussion evenings.<sup>83</sup> At the semester's start, Martin Buber, Shmuel Hugo Bergman and Ernst Simon – all part of Tramer's social circle<sup>84</sup> – regularly gave lectures in this venue. When in 1942 both *IOME* and *Aliya Chadasha* emerged from *HOGOIA*, Tramer became the secretary of both organizations, hence one of the central personalities in *Yishuv*-Palestine's German-Jewish organizational milieu.

Tramer's engagement with this milieu revealed a strong identification with the ideals of the group around Georg Landauer. After the disbanding of *Aliya Chadasha*, virtually all of Landauer's followers in Israel migrated to *IOME* in Tel Aviv; Tramer became its general secretary in 1948. At the same time, he became editor of the German-speaking weekly *M[itteilungs]B[latt]*, which between 1942 and 1948 had been the official publication of both *IOME* and *Aliya Chadasha* and now continued to speak for the former organization.<sup>85</sup> This work made him a natural editor of the German-language *LBI Bulletin*, appearing quarterly starting in 1957, founded mainly for the new "Gesellschaft der Freunde des LBI." Along with this work, Tramer would also edit

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<sup>82</sup> Esra Bennathan, interview with the author, London, February 7, 2001.

<sup>83</sup> Alsberg, "Mitteleuropäischen Einwanderer," p. 15. On the broader context, see Curt Wormann, "Kulturelle Probleme und Aufgaben der Juden aus Deutschland in Israel seit 1933," in Hans Tramer (ed.), *In zwei Welten*, pp. 280–329.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 323.

<sup>85</sup> Joachim Schlör, "'Aliya Chadasha und öffentliche Meinung.' Das Mitteilungsblatt des Irgun Olei Merkaz Europa (Tel-Aviv) als historische Quelle," in *Menora. Jahrbuch für deutsch-jüdische Geschichte*, vol. 8 (1997), pp. 70–97; Wormann, "Kulturelle Probleme," pp. 280–329, here pp. 301f.



Kurt Blumenfeld's memoirs<sup>86</sup> and *Festschriften* for Moses and (with Kurt Loewenstein) Weltsch.<sup>87</sup> In addition, he contributed frequently to the *Bulletin* – mainly essays on various poets and writers – and wrote several essays for the *LBI Year Book*, the most notable probably being an essay on Prague that he dedicated to Robert Weltsch.<sup>88</sup>

Along with Bergman, Buber, Scholem and Simon, Curt David Wormann (1900–1991)<sup>89</sup> was part of the circle of Jerusalem LBI members who taught or worked at the Hebrew University. As a representative of *IOME*, he also had a role in the plans preceding the institute's founding, and was elected to the board during the opening conference.

Born in Berlin, Wormann studied literature in Berlin and Freiburg, receiving a doctorate in 1923 for a thesis on the German pastoral novel. During his student years, he befriended the literary historian Friedrich Gundolf, thus gaining access to the famous circle around the poet Stefan George, in which Jews and non-Jews had friendly relations.<sup>90</sup> As is well known, the circle included younger scholars and men of letters who were opposed to what they perceived as an ongoing reduction of the German ideal of *Bildung* to the mere accumulation of knowledge and positivist or utilitarian thinking: intuitive understanding and empathy were the keys for educated individuals to appreciate culture. The circle did not take a stand for or against any political program; political activity tended to be disparaged by its members, the “true” revolution taking place in the “realm of the spirit.” In 1933, the circle thus stood apart – even vis-à-vis the “Jewish question,” now aired with ever more intensity. Following Stefan George's death in Swiss exile – he had left Germany in 1933 out of protest at the Nazi co-option of his work – the group disintegrated as a result of this same “question.”<sup>91</sup>

Despite the George circle's particular, emotional and largely passive concept of *Bildung*, Wormann had maintained the ideal of the individual as a free and socially responsible moral agent. In Berlin he had been active in the so-

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<sup>86</sup> Kurt Blumenfeld, *Erlebte Judenfrage. Ein Vierteljahrhundert deutscher Zionismus*, Stuttgart 1962.

<sup>87</sup> Tramer (ed.), *In zwei Welten*; Tramer and Kurt Loewenstein (eds.), *Robert Weltsch zum 70. Geburtstag von seinen Freunden*, Tel Aviv 1961.

<sup>88</sup> Hans Tramer, “Prague – City of Three Peoples,” in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 9 (1964), pp. 305–339. The essay appeared in German three years earlier in the *Festschrift* for Weltsch: “Die Dreivölkerstadt Prag,” in Tramer and Loewenstein (eds.), *Weltsch*, pp. 138–203.

<sup>89</sup> On Wormann, see Mordechai Nadav and Jacob Rothschild (eds.), *Essays and Studies in Librarianship presented to Curt David Wormann*, Jerusalem 1975.

<sup>90</sup> See Gert Mattenklott, Michael Philipp and Julius H. Schoeps (eds.), “*Verkannte Brüder*”? *Stefan George und das deutsch-jüdische Bürgertum zwischen Jahrhundertwende und Emigration*, Hildesheim and New York 2001.

<sup>91</sup> See Carola Groppe, *Die Macht der Bildung. Das deutsche Bürgertum und der George-Kreis 1890–1933*, Cologne and Weimar 2001.

cialist youth movement and several Zionist organizations. Between 1923 and 1926 he received training as a librarian, this leading to his appointment as head of the public libraries in Berlin-Kreutzberg. With his vocation forbidden to him in 1933 on the basis of the "Aryan clause" of the newly passed Nazi "Law for the Restoration of the Civil Service," he decided to emigrate, leaving for Palestine in September 1934. He found work in the Tel-Aviv city library, beginning around this time to teach in the *Hitachduth's* seminar-program, which he would direct together with Tramer starting in 1939.<sup>92</sup> Himself deeply rooted in German literary culture, Wormann focused his energies on helping German and Austrian immigrants to Israel integrate into the Hebrew-based society of the *Yishuv* without making a break with their own cultural origins. In his own way, he thus represented a Zionism viewing the Diaspora not as something that merited negation, but as offering a culturally rich foundation for a new Jewish state.

In 1949, Wormann became director of the Hebrew University's Jewish National Library; he thus became the third Jew from the German-speaking areas of Europe, following Schmuël Hugo Bergman and Gotthold Weil, to direct an institution that meanwhile had become distinguished. Wormann would be instrumental in establishing the JNL-associated School of Library and Archive Studies in 1956.<sup>93</sup> His own contribution to institute publications would remain rare, his authority within the LBI – whose sense of historical and commemorative purpose he deeply shared – lying chiefly in his position within the Hebrew University.<sup>94</sup>

## II

In the early period of the LBI, the London branch was the institute's smallest. Nevertheless, from the start it was of central importance: both Leo Baeck and Robert Weltsch – editor of the yearbook on which, in Weltsch's words, "the LBI's fortune or misfortune, i.e. the whole future depended," lived in London.<sup>95</sup> In this early period, Alexander Altmann, Jacob Jacobson, Richard Koebner, Hans Liebeschütz, Ernst G. Lowenthal, Hans Reichmann, Eduard Rosenbaum, Alfred Wiener and Kurt Wilhelm were also members of the London board, with Richard Fuchs, Werner Mosse and Siegfried Stein arriving in 1960. While Arnold Paucker was appointed director in 1959, he really belonged, like Mosse, to the institute's younger, second generation by virtue

<sup>92</sup> Wormann, "Kulturelle Probleme," pp. 322f.

<sup>93</sup> Jütte, *Emigration*, p. 102.

<sup>94</sup> See Wormann, "Kulturelle Probleme"; *idem*, "German Jews in Israel: Their Cultural Situation Since 1933," in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 15 (1970), pp. 73–103.

<sup>95</sup> Weltsch to Kreutzberger, July 19, 1955, *LBI Archives New York*, Weltsch Coll. MF 491.

of both age and outlook. This was also the case with Esra Bennathan, who became a board member at the end of the London institute's first decade (1963).

In contrast to the Jerusalem branch, the London LBI comprised mostly liberal Jews – this a reflection of the status of the majority of the German Jews who had fled to England.<sup>96</sup> In Germany the *CV* (*Centralverein*), ideologically opposed to the *ZVfD* in the Weimar period, had formed the organizational and intellectual point of convergence between most of these individuals (exceptions were Weltsch, Altmann, Wilhelm, and the younger generation) – although only Lowenthal, Reichmann, and Wiener were active *CV* members.<sup>97</sup> The *CV* had been founded in 1893 by liberal, bourgeois Berlin Jews as a political and religiously neutral body whose main purpose was defense against growing antisemitism. The founders had considered cultivation of a “German sensibility”<sup>98</sup> in the interests of a mutually beneficial symbiotic relationship as a prerequisite of the success of their defensive efforts: the claim to full social – not merely legislative – emancipation had to be based on absolute fidelity to the “fatherland.” By 1926 the *CV* was the largest Jewish organization in Germany, its members stemming mainly from the liberal, acculturated middle class.<sup>99</sup>

There were fewer former organizational officials on the London board than in Jerusalem. Only Fuchs, Lowenthal and Reichmann had been members of the *Reichsvertretung* itself, along with its president Baeck. (Werner Rosenstock, who was also a member of the *Reichsvertretung*, did not join the LBI until 1963.) The same pattern applied to the AJR and the Council: apart from Lowenthal and Reichmann, only Altmann had worked in England for the German-Jewish refugee organization, while Baeck and Reichmann were the only members of the Council's board.<sup>100</sup> For this reason, only Baeck, Reichmann and Weltsch took part in the negotiations with the Claims Con-

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<sup>96</sup> Arnold Paucker, “History in Exile: Writing the Story of German Jewry,” in Siglinde Bolbecher et al. (eds.), *Zwischenwelt*, vol. 4. *Literatur und Kultur des Exils in Großbritannien*, Vienna 1995, pp. 241–255, here p. 253.

<sup>97</sup> Avraham Barkai, “Wehr Dich!” *Der Centralverein deutscher Staatsbürger jüdischen Glaubens (C.V.) 1893–1938*, Munich 2002, p. 375. Leo Baeck was himself a member of the *CV* board but he always kept a critical distance from the organization: while he was willing to participate in its efforts to battle antisemitism, he still disapproved yet of its neglect of basic Jewish religious values and of what he perceived as an exaggerated identification with *Deutschtum*. See Daniela Eisenstein, “‘Neutralität ist ein Boden der Freien.’ Leo Baeck in den jüdischen Organisationen der zwanziger Jahre,” in Georg Heuberger and Fritz Backhaus (eds.), *Leo Baeck 1873–1956. Aus dem Stamme von Rabbinern*, Frankfurt am Main 2001, pp. 71–76, here pp. 74f.

<sup>98</sup> Barkai, “Organisation,” p. 87.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*; *idem*, “Wehr Dich!”

<sup>100</sup> See member's lists, *BHDE*, vol. 3, pp. 212, 220, 253.

ference that preceded the LBI's founding (Weltsch here serving as the mediator between the British and Israeli sections of the Council).

At Siegfried Moses's invitation, Reichmann and Weltsch appeared at the institute's founding conference in Jerusalem in May 1955 – Baeck, as mentioned, was ill.<sup>101</sup> In any event, at the formal opening of the London LBI on October 16, 1955, presided over by Baeck, most of the above-mentioned London board members were present, along with invited guests from the United States and Israel.<sup>102</sup> In the months between May and October 1955, Weltsch had succeeded in interesting a considerable number of German-Jewish intellectuals in England in the work of the institute. In the process, he had contacted both persons that Baeck had considered in 1954 as possible collaborators, and those suggested by participants in the Jerusalem conference. In this manner, shortly before the London institute's founding, a group of scholars had come together that, while some were personally close to Baeck,<sup>103</sup> largely knew each other too, at least indirectly, as was also the case for the Jerusalem LBI. In London, however, private and professional networks were more important than party-political contacts.

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It was clear to London board members from the start that no one but Robert Weltsch (1891–1983)<sup>104</sup> could be considered as editor of the institute's planned yearbook. Born in Prague, Weltsch was already well known for his work there, while studying to be a jurist, as chairman of the Zionist students' organization *Bar Kochba*, before taking over the editorship of the *Jüdische Rundschau* in Berlin in 1919. Weltsch's friendship with Buber, whose cultural Zionism had had a strong influence on *Bar Kochba*, stemmed from his time in Prague. In 1938, Weltsch left Germany, becoming editor of Gershom Schocken's newspaper *Haaretz* in *Yishuv*-Palestine. He reported on the Nuremberg trials for that paper, then becoming its London correspondent – a position he would hold until his retirement in 1956.

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<sup>101</sup> *MB*, June 10, 1955.

<sup>102</sup> Robert Weltsch, Jacob Jacobson, Richard Koebner, Hans Liebeschütz, Hans Reichmann, Eduard Rosenbaum, Alfred Wiener and Kurt Wilhelm, along with Esra Bennathan, Eva Reichmann and Werner Rosenstock. Alexander Altmann could not attend. See minutes of the first meeting of the London LBI, October 16, 1955. The author thanks Michael Meyer for a copy of these minutes.

<sup>103</sup> This was true for Jacobson, Koebner, Liebeschütz, Hans Reichmann and Wiener, as well as Fuchs, Lowenthal and Eva Reichmann, who joined the institute later.

<sup>104</sup> There is as yet no biography of Weltsch. See Robert Weltsch, "Looking Back over Sixty Years," in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 27 (1982), pp. 379–390; Tramer and Loewenstein (eds.), *Robert Weltsch*; Siegemund, "Robert Weltsch."

Shortly before the founding conference in Jerusalem, Weltsch was offered the position of LBI general secretary, with a seat in Jerusalem. He turned down the offer on grounds of “other commitments” and a “lack of qualification,”<sup>105</sup> this personal decision thus being responsible for London becoming the LBI’s editorial center: Weltsch was assigned the twofold task of setting up the London office and editing the yearbook.<sup>106</sup> At the latest with Leo Baeck’s death in 1956, he emerged as the main figure identified with the London branch. Although his Zionism made him an ideological outsider among his overwhelmingly liberal London colleagues, they had already felt great respect over some decades for this “man of deep Jewish knowledge, steeped in European culture.”<sup>107</sup> The former *CV* official Hans Reichmann, for example, had responded to Weltsch’s legendary article “*Tragt ihn mit Stolz, den gelben Fleck*” with a spontaneous written greeting in which he thanked Weltsch for having spoken in the name of all German Jews.<sup>108</sup> For his part, Weltsch began working for the London LBI at a time when the realities of Israeli life had given him a sense of what he later termed “the doubtfulness of the popular Zionist viewpoint.”<sup>109</sup> This led in turn to more openness with his earlier political opponents, some of whom became his friends. Weltsch formed close friendships with Eva and Hans Reichmann, Hans Liebeschütz, Eduard Rosenbaum and Richard Koebner.<sup>110</sup>

While officially Jerusalem was the LBI’s main branch in the early period, with all communicative channels leading to Weltsch, London functioned as something like its unstated center. Weltsch determined the scholarly direction of the *Year Book*; he forged contacts with new authors and collaborators and had a strong influence on decisions made in institute meetings. At the end of the 1950s, when it seemed for a while that the LBI had lost its original sense of purpose, Weltsch’s response was to press strongly for what he felt was the institute’s actual goal: creation of major, authoritative work representing a true monument to German Jewry.<sup>111</sup>

Robert Weltsch’s role as a central mediator between the three LBI branches was facilitated by his friendship, going back many years, with both the Jerusalem group and Max Kreutzberger in New York. Collaboration be-

<sup>105</sup> Weltsch, “Looking Back,” p. 387.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>107</sup> Arnold Paucker, “Mommensenstraße to Devonshire Street,” in Peter Alter (ed.), *Out of the Third Reich: Refugee Historians in Post-War Britain*, London 1998, pp. 175–193, here p. 184.

<sup>108</sup> Weltsch, “Looking Back,” p. 388.

<sup>109</sup> Weltsch to Eva Reichmann, May 21, 1974, *LBI Archives New York*, Weltsch Coll., box 1, folder 41.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*; Weltsch, “Looking Back,” p. 388.

<sup>111</sup> Weltsch to Adler-Rudel, December 14, 1959, *LBI Archives New York*, LBI London Coll., box 7.

tween the disparate personalities involved was naturally not always simple; Weltsch usually succeeded in making it possible.

The historian Hans Liebeschütz (1893–1978) represented, in Weltsch's words, the London institute's "alter ego."<sup>112</sup> Nominated by Leo Baeck himself for the London board, he had the strongest influence along with Weltsch on the institute's early scholarly direction. Born in Hamburg, he studied ancient history and classical philology between 1912 and 1914 in Berlin and Marburg, while at the same time attending lectures by Hermann Cohen, Ismar Elbogen and Leo Baeck in the *Hochschule für die Wissenschaft des Judentums*. Forced to interrupt his studies on account of the First World War, during which he served in the German infantry on the western front, he completed his studies in 1920 at the University of Heidelberg with a Ph.D. in medieval history on "Emperor Frederick II and his political connections with England from 1235." After working at several gymnasias in Hamburg, he taught medieval history and philosophy at the University of Hamburg between 1929 and 1934, when he was dismissed as a result of the "restoration law."<sup>113</sup>

For roughly the next half decade, Liebeschütz taught in two Jewish educational institutions, the Hamburg *Lehrhaus* and the Berlin *Hochschule*, where he deepened his relationship with Baeck, who had been his teacher there twenty years before.<sup>114</sup> After two arrests and a month's internment in Sachsenhausen he decided at the end of 1938 to flee for England with his family; they arrived in March 1939. He had already had good contacts at the Warburg Institute in Germany, and the institute now helped him settle in England – particularly with his acceptance as a "displaced scholar" by the Society for the Protection of Science and Learning (SPSL).<sup>115</sup> Over the following years, this society helped Liebeschütz obtain positions in various British schools: he became assistant lecturer in medieval European history at the University of Liverpool in 1946<sup>116</sup> and he was pensioned from there in 1959, by then an assistant professor, four years after the founding of the LBI. Subsequently, he became a regular guest lecturer at the University of Hamburg, which awarded him the title of "Professor Emeritus" in 1958 as a "reparations

<sup>112</sup> Weltsch, "Looking Back," p. 387. On Liebeschütz, see Wolfgang Liebeschütz, "Hans Liebeschütz," in *Neue Deutsche Biographie* 14 (1985), pp. 489f.; A.R. Myers, "Dr. Liebeschütz," in *The University of Liverpool Recorder* 79 (January 1979), p. 74; Arnold Paucker, "In Memoriam: Professor Hans Liebeschütz," in *AJR Information*, vol. 33, no. 12 (Dezember 1978); *idem*, "History in Exile," p. 246.

<sup>113</sup> Hans Liebeschütz's c.v., SPSL Papers, Bodleian Library (*Bodleian*), box 255, folder 7.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*; on Liebeschütz's teaching at the *Hochschule*, see Herbert A. Strauss: *In the Eye of the Storm: Growing up Jewish in Germany, 1918–1943. A Memoir*, New York 2000, pp. 75–90.

<sup>115</sup> SPSL document, October 14, 1939 and General Information, April 3, 1939, *Bodleian*, box 255, folder 7.

<sup>116</sup> Liebeschütz to Ursell, July 16, 1946, *Bodleian*, box 255, folder 7.

measure”;<sup>117</sup> he also taught at the universities of Münster and Heidelberg and elsewhere in Germany.

As one of the few trained historians at the early LBI, Liebeschütz worked to professionalize its research. Arnold Paucker describes him as the “archetypical German professor,” spurring the London institute strictly and precisely to excellence<sup>118</sup> – an effort on his part clearly informed by passionate identification with the institute’s ideals.<sup>119</sup> Weltsch wrote that his own work at the LBI would have been impossible without Liebeschütz,<sup>120</sup> who produced numerous essays, two important studies, and an anthology under the institute’s auspices.<sup>121</sup> The focus of his later work was on the significance of Jewish history and experience, particularly in the German context.

Eduard Rosenbaum (1887–1979)<sup>122</sup> came from a bourgeois Hamburg family. He studied economics, sociology and law in Munich, Berlin, Strasbourg, and Kiel, where he earned his doctorate in 1910 with a thesis on “Ferdinand Lassalle: Studies concerning the Historical and Systematic Context of his Doctrine.” His friend John Maynard Keynes observed that Rosenbaum knew German literature “inside out”;<sup>123</sup> like Curt Wormann he was closely connected to the Stefan George circle.<sup>124</sup> His most important professional activity, however, was with the Hamburg Chamber of Commerce. Rosenbaum began working there shortly after the outbreak of the First World War, first as a research assistant, then as secretary, and finally as librarian of the *Commerzbibliothek* – a position he held until his dismissal in 1933.<sup>125</sup> In 1919 he accompanied Walther Rathenau at the Versailles Conference as part of the German delegation’s economics and transport section, making the acquaintance of John Maynard Keynes in this context; in the 1920s he taught at the universities of Kiel and Hamburg, while also working for the ministries of

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<sup>117</sup> A.R. Myers, “Dr. Liebeschütz,” p. 74.

<sup>118</sup> Arnold Paucker, interview with the author, London, February 6, 2001.

<sup>119</sup> Weltsch, “Looking Back,” p. 387.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>121</sup> Hans Liebeschütz, *Das Judentum im deutschen Geschichtsbild von Hegel bis Max Weber*, Tübingen 1967 (Schriftenreihe wissenschaftlicher Abhandlungen des LBI 17); *idem*, *Von Georg Simmel zu Franz Rosenzweig. Studien zum jüdischen Denken im deutschen Kulturbereich*, Tübingen 1970 (Schriftenreihe wissenschaftlicher Abhandlungen des LBI 23); *idem* and A. Paucker (eds.), *Das Judentum in der deutschen Umwelt*, Tübingen 1977 (Schriftenreihe wissenschaftlicher Abhandlungen des LBI 35).

<sup>122</sup> On Rosenbaum, see Robert Weltsch, “Eduard Rosenbaum 75,” in *AJR Information*, vol. 17, no. 7, (July 1962), p. 7; Paucker, “History in Exile,” p. 247.

<sup>123</sup> Keynes to Carr-Saunders, September 29, 1939, Rosenbaum file, LSE Personnel Service, London School of Economics (LSE).

<sup>124</sup> Robert Weltsch, “Eduard Rosenbaum.”

<sup>125</sup> Rosenbaum’s c.v., *Bodleian*, box 237, folder 8; Rosenbaum’s c.v., September 26, 1939, Rosenbaum file, LSE.

finance and foreign affairs in Berlin. Between 1928 and 1933 he edited the important Hamburg economics weekly *Der Wirtschaftsdienst*.<sup>126</sup>

Since the "Aryan clause" did not apply to Rosenbaum – he had already received his first official appointment in April 1913 and the cut-off point for civil servants was August 1, 1914 – he was dismissed from all official functions on December 31, 1933, on the excuse of budgetary restrictions.<sup>127</sup> His good contacts with the Warburg family and Ernst Cassirer, and above all with Keynes, now proved extremely helpful in procuring his own "displaced scholar" status from the SPSL, thus being able to emigrate to England with his family in 1934, where he was offered a research position with an editorial project in Cambridge through Keynes' intervention.<sup>128</sup> Keynes's warm recommendation<sup>129</sup> also led to his appointment as librarian at the London School of Economics library in 1935 after an unsuccessful effort to arrange a long-term position for his friend as a librarian in Cambridge. Rosenbaum would remain at the LSE until his retirement in 1952; he also participated in developing the House of Commons library and that of Britain's National Institute for Social and Economic Research.<sup>130</sup> In July 1955 Robert Weltsch wrote to Rosenbaum to offer him membership on the London board; he had already been spoken of as a possible institution member at the LBI's founding meeting in Jerusalem. Rosenbaum accepted the invitation.<sup>131</sup> At the LBI, Rosenbaum – remembered even now for his rich and witty personality<sup>132</sup> – had the role of economic historian, contributing many articles and comments to the *Year Book* on topics such as "Jewish participation in German economic life,"<sup>133</sup> the M. M. Warburg firm and Walther Rathenau,<sup>134</sup> while serving as the London institute's first treasurer. Rosenbaum was very attached to his memories of Germany, but at the same time he was among the few people in the LBI London who regarded England as what he himself referred to as a "second home."<sup>135</sup>

<sup>126</sup> Rosenbaum's c.v., *Bodleian*; Rosenbaum's c.v., *LSE*.

<sup>127</sup> General Information, *Bodleian*, box 237, folder 8.

<sup>128</sup> Rosenbaum's c.v., *LSE*.

<sup>129</sup> Keynes to Dickinson, January 23, 1935, Rosenbaum file, *LSE*.

<sup>130</sup> Rosenbaum to the Director of the LSE, June 1, 1945 and September 11, 1945, Rosenbaum file, *LSE*.

<sup>131</sup> Weltsch to Rosenbaum, July 22, 1955, *LBI Archives New York*, LBI London Coll., box 6.

<sup>132</sup> Paucker and Bennathan, interviews; Paucker, "History in Exile," p. 247; Weltsch, "Eduard Rosenbaum."

<sup>133</sup> Eduard Rosenbaum, "Some Reflections on the Jewish Participation in German Economic Life," in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 1 (1956), pp. 307–314.

<sup>134</sup> Eduard Rosenbaum, "M. M. Warburg & Co. Merchant Bankers of Hamburg," in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 7 (1962), pp. 121–140; *idem*, "Reflections on Walther Rathenau," in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 4 (1959), pp. 260–264.

<sup>135</sup> Rosenbaum to the Director of the LSE, December 21, 1952, Rosenbaum file, *LSE*.



Born in Potsdam, Alfred Wiener (1885–1964)<sup>136</sup> was the oldest of the LBI's former *CV* officials – he had served as the organization's legal advisor. As a young man he studied at the Berlin *Hochschule* for several semesters; he later focused on Oriental studies at the University of Heidelberg, receiving his doctorate in 1913 for a thesis on “Faraq ba'd as-sidda Literature from Mada'ini (d. 225 A.H.) to Tanuhi (d. 384 A.H.): A Contribution to Arabic Literary History.”

Wiener's presence on the London board, already raised as a possibility at the founding conference in Jerusalem, was grounded in the institute's general interest in the Wiener Library (see below) and Wiener's friendship with Eva and Hans Reichmann. Already shortly before the Second World War's outbreak, he transferred the Jewish Central Information Office, established in Amsterdam in 1933, to London; this formed the basis for the Wiener Library, opened there in 1940 to document Nazi policies and its campaign of murder. The library would be an important source of information for both the British government and the BBC.<sup>137</sup> Wiener – termed “a remarkable combination of conservatism and anti-fascism” by Paucker – led the library until his death in 1964.<sup>138</sup> Eva Reichmann, who had befriended Wiener in the *CV* days, was made the library's research director in 1945. The close relation between the London LBI and the Wiener Library was cemented by the institute's move in 1959 to the same building on Devonshire Street where the library had been housed since 1957.<sup>139</sup> (The library had already begun preparing the “Bibliography of Post-War Publications on German Jewry” for the *Year Book* in 1956.) The collaboration between the two institutions has continued, and both remain housed in the same premises.

Alongside Baeck and Weltsch, Hans Reichmann (1900–1964)<sup>140</sup> was the London board member with the greatest impact on the LBI's planning and realization. Reichmann was born into a solid middle-class house – his father was a pharmacist – in Hohensalza (Posen). He studied law in Berlin, Freiburg and Greifswald, receiving a doctorate in 1924 on “the [Legal] Principle of

<sup>136</sup> On Alfred Wiener, see Ben Barkow, *Alfred Wiener and the Making of the Holocaust Library*, London 1997; Barkai, “*Wehr Dich!*” pp. 162f.; Paucker, “History in Exile,” p. 244; *idem*, “Das Berliner liberale jüdische Bürgertum im ‘Centralverein deutscher Staatsbürger jüdischen Glaubens,’” in Reinhard Rürup (ed.), *Jüdische Geschichte in Berlin. Essays und Studien*, Berlin 1995, pp. 215–228, here p. 219.

<sup>137</sup> Markus Kirchhoff, *Häuser des Buches. Bilder jüdischer Bibliotheken*, Leipzig 2002, p. 153.

<sup>138</sup> Paucker, “Bürgertum,” p. 219; see also C.C. Aronsfeld's description, cited in Barkai, “*Wehr Dich!*” p. 415: “basically a reactionary who respected hard-earned rights and did not see liberal thinking as the last word in wisdom.”

<sup>139</sup> Barkow, *Wiener*, pp. 135f.

<sup>140</sup> See Reichmann's memoirs *Deutscher Bürger und verfolgter Jude. Novemberprogramm und KZ Sachsenhausen 1937 bis 1939*, ed. by Michael Wildt, Munich 1998; Barkai, “*Wehr Dich!*” p. 166; Paucker, “Bürgertum,” p. 219; *idem*, “History in Exile,” pp. 244f.

False Accusation." During his studies, he was active in the *Kartell-Convent* – the association for non-Zionist German students of Jewish origin. In 1927, Ludwig Holländer, the *CV*'s director in Berlin, offered Reichmann a legal position in the organization's main business office there; here he became acquainted with his future wife Eva Jungmann who also worked in this office. Reichmann would be responsible for coordinating the *CV*'s political activities against the Nazis and helped found the *Reichsvertretung* in September 1933. But after a month in Sachsenhausen in November and December 1938 he decided to leave Germany. In April 1939 he and his wife fled for England via the Netherlands, and until the end of the war, he worked in England as a tutor. In 1947, he was elected general secretary of the London-based United Restitution Organization.<sup>141</sup> He also became a leading member of the AJR; in 1955 he joined the Council's board.

Reichmann's work for the LBI was mainly organizational, much of it aimed at the London branch's financial and institutional stabilization. Already in the institute's founding phase, he was one of the Council's most engaged "comrades in arms" in its continual struggle with the Claims Conference for financial support for the LBI. More than once, he seriously entertained the possibility of making the Wiener Library in London into the LBI's main headquarters;<sup>142</sup> but the steering role played by the Council's Israel section meant placing such thoughts aside. He nonetheless offered Robert Weltsch unconditional support over the following years in building up the London institute – both through finding new members such as Ernst Lowenthal (see below) and by taking care of various administrative tasks. Reichmann's work for the institute reflected both his view of Leo Baeck as his "spiritual mentor"<sup>143</sup> and his love for a Germany where he had felt at home and with which he maintained relations.<sup>144</sup> But after Auschwitz he found more than short sojourns in the country impossible. In this respect, some of those who knew him best have described him as a broken man,<sup>145</sup> and the fact is that his life was among the shortest of the LBI's board members. In his last years he developed a deep friendship with Robert Weltsch.

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<sup>142</sup> See Hans Günther Hockerts, "Anwälte der Verfolgten. Die United Restitution Organization," in Ludolf Herbst and Constantin Goshler (eds.), *Wiedergutmachung in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*, Munich 1989, pp. 249–271.

<sup>142</sup> Reichmann to Kreuzberger, December 31, 1954, *LBI Archives New York*, Council Coll., folder 41.

<sup>143</sup> Robert Weltsch, Introduction in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 9 (1964), pp. ix–xxxii, here p. xxviii.

<sup>144</sup> Michael Wildt, Introduction in Hans Reichmann, *Deutscher Bürger*, pp. 1–37, here p. 37.

<sup>145</sup> Bennathan and Paucker interviews; Siegfried Moses, "Gesinnung," in Walter Breslauer (ed.), *Zum Gedenken an Hans Reichmann*, London 1965, pp. 14f.

Although somewhat out of context in that she was not part of the institute's "founding community," brief mention will be made here of Eva Reichmann (1897–1999), for the sake of remedying the widespread neglect of her life and work.<sup>146</sup> It is notable that Reichmann was only elected to the London board after the death of her husband, this although, due in part to her closeness to Leo Baeck (she knew him from childhood as he had been a friend of her parents in Oppeln) and her work for the Wiener Library, she had been active at the institute behind the scenes from the start, frequently offering scholarly advice.<sup>147</sup> The official explanation for her absence was reluctance to have a married couple on the board. Paucker maintains that the decision also reflected a general distance felt by the LBI's first generation vis-à-vis female colleagues.<sup>148</sup> And indeed, in its early days, the LBI, which was founded by men, maintained the profile of a male organization, women only being offered a place in exceptional circumstances. Pauline Paucker has indicated that "the early activities of the LBI were conducted by a group already active in Jewish life in Germany, mostly men; their attitudes to women remained much the same in later life . . . . That there were formidable German-Jewish women was acknowledged but they were considered exceptions – honorary men, in fact."<sup>149</sup> Indeed, the New York board had only a few women; the Jerusalem board did not have any, neither did the London board until Eva Reichmann was admitted in 1964.

The Cologne-born economist Ernst Gottfried Lowenthal (1904–1994)<sup>150</sup> stood with Wiener and the Reichmanns as the fourth former *CV* official elected to the London board. While this occurred in 1958 – Lowenthal was backed by his friend Hans Reichmann, his realm of responsibility being seen as Germany, to which he had returned<sup>151</sup> – Weltsch had already asked him to work for the institute in September 1955, presumably then too on Reichmann's recommendation.<sup>152</sup>

<sup>146</sup> But see Hajo Funke (ed.), "Eva Reichmann (Liegnitz/Berlin/London). Tragt ihn mit Stolz, den gelben Fleck," in *Die andere Erinnerung. Gespräche mit jüdischen Wissenschaftlern im Exil*, Frankfurt am Main 1989, pp. 311–335; Arnold Paucker, "Eva Gabriele Reichmann (1897)," in Hans Erler, Ernst Ludwig Ehrlich and Ludger Heid (eds.), *Meinetwegen ist die Welt erschaffen. Das intellektuelle Vermächtnis des deutschsprachigen Judentums. 58 Portraits*, Frankfurt am Main and New York 1997, pp. 279–284. Eva Reichmann's essay "Deutsche Juden in England," in *Emuna*, vol. 5 (1970), pp. 37–42, is based partly on personal experiences.

<sup>147</sup> Paucker, interview.

<sup>148</sup> Arnold Paucker, letter to the author, February 18, 2003.

<sup>149</sup> Pauline Paucker, letter to the author, March 7, 2004.

<sup>150</sup> On Lowenthal, see Paucker, "Bürgertum," pp. 219f; *idem*, "History in Exile," pp. 246f.

<sup>151</sup> Reichmann to Lowenthal, May 1, 1958, *Staatsbibliothek Berlin*, Manuscript Collection, Lowenthal's papers, B2/292.

<sup>152</sup> Weltsch to Lowenthal, September 27, 1955, *Staatsbibliothek Berlin*, Manuscript Collection, Lowenthal's papers, B2/292.

Starting in 1928, Lowenthal was expert adviser in the *CV*'s central business office in Berlin; later he was deputy editor-in-chief of the organization's official publication, the *C. V.-Zeitung*. He emigrated to England in 1939. Following the end of the war he worked for the Commission of Jewish Cultural Reconstruction (JCR), responsible for distributing recovered stolen Jewish books and cultural goods, as well as for other Jewish organizations. He returned to Germany – the only member of London's LBI to do so at that time – in the early 1950s, settling in Frankfurt, where he began working for the Claims Conference, and devoting much of his time to journalism. In 1969 he moved to Berlin. Presiding there over an extensive *CV* archive, he became one of the main advisers on the historiography of the organization.<sup>153</sup> In line with the role that had been envisioned for him, Lowenthal's main work for the LBI was as a contact person in the Federal Republic. From 1957 onwards, he was instrumental in establishing the LBI's "friends' association" in Frankfurt.

As was the case for Eva and Hans Reichmann, the genealogist and archivist Jacob Jacobson (1888–1968)<sup>154</sup> was close to Leo Baeck. But the former director of the *Gesamtarchiv der deutschen Juden* was not part of the *CV* circle, having been a Zionist (although no activist) since his student days.<sup>155</sup> Jacobson came from a family of rabbis – his grandfather had been Hamburg's chief rabbi and, for many years, chairman of the board of governors of Berlin's neo-Orthodox Hildesheimer seminar, his father a rabbi in Gnesen. Jacobson studied history, receiving his doctorate in 1918 at the University of Marburg. In his thesis he dealt with administrative and cultural developments among the Jews in the province of Posen who had moved from Poland to Prussia. That same year, on Eugen Täubler's recommendation he became Täubler's successor in Berlin at the *Gesamtarchiv*.<sup>156</sup>

Because of this position, which offered Jacobson direct access to family trees and genealogical documents, after the Nazi takeover he found himself forced into a relationship with the *Reichssippenamt*: he had, for example, to furnish the pertinent documentation regarding persons that office suspected of being "Jewish" under the Nuremberg laws, but who themselves maintained that they had an "Aryan" family tree. While his wife and son were able to flee to England in 1939,<sup>157</sup> he had to remain in Berlin, from where he was deported to Theresienstadt in 1942. The years he spent there together with Baeck generated a special bond between the two men; Jacobson would never

<sup>153</sup> Paucker, "Bürgertum," pp. 219f.

<sup>154</sup> On Jacobson, see Paucker, "History in Exile," p. 246.

<sup>155</sup> Werner Rosenstock, "In Memoriam Jacob Jacobson," in *AJR Information*, vol. 23, no. 7 (July 1968), p. 10.

<sup>156</sup> Jacob Jacobson's c.v. in Eugen Täubler's letter of recommendation, University Library of Basel (*UB Basel*), Täubler's papers, E I/353a.

<sup>157</sup> *Ibid.*

get over the horror he experienced there.<sup>158</sup> In 1945, after Theresienstadt was liberated, Jacobson came to England and rejoined his family.

As Jacobson was one of the last representatives of German-Jewish historiography in Germany, and one of its important “patrons” in exile,<sup>159</sup> as well as a friend of both Baeck and Selma Stern, his joining the LBI in 1955 was essentially self-evident. With the LBI’s founding, he now had a chance to receive support for his research after many years of isolated, private study. In his case this was especially important as – in contrast to persons like Rosenbaum and Liebeschütz – he had not been able to find any suitable work in England and was living in considerable poverty, since the mid-1950s in Worcester.<sup>160</sup> As an institute member Jacobson would publish two important genealogical works and could offer Selma Stern valuable help in her monumental study, *Der preußische Staat und die Juden*.<sup>161</sup> He also contributed to the *Year Book*, perhaps his most notable article being on the Jewish citizens’ books of the city of Berlin.<sup>162</sup>

Richard Koebner (1885–1958),<sup>163</sup> another one of the handful of trained historians at the institute in its early days, died only three years after its founding. He nevertheless had an enduring influence on the work of the London branch.

Koebner moved to England in 1955 after teaching modern history at the Hebrew University for more than two decades. In Germany he had held a chair in medieval history at the University of Breslau; following his dismissal in 1933 he had accepted a spontaneous offer from Jerusalem out of dire need – he was not a Zionist and would have preferred exile in England.<sup>164</sup> Starting in 1955, he was a guest professor in London and Manchester. Through his decades spent in Jerusalem Koebner was well known to the LBI circle; he was himself acquainted with Baeck and Stern.<sup>165</sup> He seems to have had hopes of being named director of the London institute on the basis of these contacts

<sup>158</sup> Jacobson to Selma Stern and Eugen Täubler, December 12, 1945, *UB Basel*, Täubler’s papers, E I/332.

<sup>159</sup> Robert Weltsch, “Obituary Jacob Jacobson,” in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 13 (1968), p. xxi.

<sup>160</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>161</sup> Jacobson to Stern, September 18, 1964, *UB Basel*, Stern’s papers, D 10/44.

<sup>162</sup> Jacob Jacobson, “Some Observations on the Jewish Citizens’ Books of the City of Berlin,” in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 1 (1956), pp. 317–330.

<sup>163</sup> On Koebner, see H.D. Schmidt, “Professor Richard Koebner, 30 Tage nach seinem Tode,” in *MB*, May 30, 1958; Robert Weltsch, Obituary, *LBI Year Book*, vol. 3 (1958), p. xix.

<sup>164</sup> See Leo Liepmann to Sir Walter Adams, November 21, 1934 (*Bodleian*, box 255, folder 1): “Professor Koebner is in Jerusalem, he lectures on history. He has some difficulties to adapt himself to the new atmosphere, the outward as well as the inward”; SPSL to Sir Frederic G. Kenyon, March 13, 1948, *Bodleian*, box 255, folder 1.

<sup>165</sup> Baeck to Stern, April 1, 1956, *UB Basel*, Stern’s papers, D 2/24.

and his academic qualifications.<sup>166</sup> But the fact that the London LBI went without a director until 1959 suggests that Koebner was not considered the right person.<sup>167</sup> In any event, in October 1955 he prepared a plan for the institute that would have a strong influence on Robert Weltsch in particular – he drew on Koebner's ideas in both his introduction to the first *Year Book* and in an essay on the institute he wrote in 1963.<sup>168</sup> According to Koebner, three separate facets of German-Jewish history should be focused on by the institute: the contribution of German Jews to general Jewish intellectual life; the religious and social organization of the German Jews; and the position of individual German Jews within German society. Koebner himself planned to concentrate mainly on this third facet, more particularly on the role of the Jews in Germany's economic life. Although he managed to formulate plans for this work in 1956 together with his student Esra Bennathan, he died too early to realize them.

### III

On both a conceptual and personal level, a continuum with earlier German-Jewish cultural projects was most visible in the New York branch of the LBI: years before the institute's founding, members of the American Federation of Jews from Central Europe (AmFed) now on its board had worked to establish a New York-based memorial library for German Judaism, as well as a definitive history of it. Max Gruenewald, Nathan Stein and Adolf Kober were figures from that organization whose plans would be most fully realized in the institute's founding.<sup>169</sup>

As with the Jerusalem and London branches, other prominent members of various organizations for formerly persecuted individuals were on the board during the first decade, along with eminent scholars and intellectuals of German-Jewish origin. As mentioned, in contrast to the other branches the New York LBI included several women in its ranks: Hannah Arendt,

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<sup>166</sup> Nattermann, *Deutsch-jüdische Geschichtsschreibung*, p. 189.

<sup>167</sup> Paucker, "Mommsenstraße to Devonshire Street," p. 183, indicates that it was difficult for the institute "to appoint a candidate from the older generation, whom those in the Institute all knew, and thus would not come to a unanimous decision on anyone."

<sup>168</sup> Robert Weltsch, Introduction in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 1 (1956), pp. xix–xxxii, here pp. xxii–xxiv; *idem*, "Das Leo Baeck Institut (1963)," in *idem*, *An der Wende des Modernen Judentums. Betrachtungen aus fünf Jahrzehnten*, Tübingen 1972, pp. 67–80, here pp. 73–77.

<sup>169</sup> On the plans for a memorial library, see Nattermann, *Deutsch-jüdische Geschichtsschreibung*, pp. 74ff.; on the history project, see *ibid.*, pp. 94ff. See also the contribution of Christhard Hoffmann on the founding of the LBI in this volume.

Selma Stern and the journalist Julie Braun-Vogelstein.<sup>170</sup> These figures represented the New York institute's intellectual dimension, along with the writer Manfred George (editor of the German-Jewish weekly *Aufbau*), the distinguished scholars and intellectuals Alexander Altmann, Fritz Bamberger, Nahum Glatzer, Hans Kohn, Guido Kisch, Adolf Leschnitzer, Sigmund Neumann and Leo Strauss, and Ernest Hamburger – former Social Democratic member of the Prussian *Landtag* and now a high official in the U.N.<sup>171</sup> AmFed was also represented by Max Gruenewald (the organization's president), Rudolf Callmann (its ex-president), the rabbis Leo Baerwald and Hugo Hahn, the banker Frederick H. Brunner (the New York LBI's chairman), the philosophy professor Fritz Kaufmann, and the entrepreneur Fred W. Lessing, who would become the institute's treasurer after the death of the banker Sigmund Wassermann in 1959.<sup>172</sup> In general, AmFed thus represented the firmest organizational link between members of the New York board. To this extent, Max Kreutzberger, who became the New York branch's director – and central personality – in 1955, was an outsider in the institute, coming from the circle of the LBI's founders in Israel and sharing their organizational and ideational tenets. Like Robert Weltsch and the majority of the Jerusalem group, he advocated a humanistic Zionism à la *Brith Schalom*.

Broadly speaking, the ideological orientation of the New York board was less pronounced than in the other two branches: some of the above-mentioned individuals had been *CV* members, for example Rudolf Callmann; others sympathized with Zionism – Max Gruenewald had lived in *Yishuv*-Palestine in 1938 and 1939,<sup>173</sup> Manfred George, Adolf Leschnitzer and Fred Lessing had been members of the *Zvfd*.<sup>174</sup> But the line of demarcation between the two groups was less sharp than might be assumed: *CV* official Callmann had also worked for land reclamation in Palestine through *Keren Hajesod*, while in view of political realities in Israel both Gruenewald – whose Zionism had actually been a form of pacifism<sup>175</sup> – and Leschnitzer, along

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<sup>170</sup> Braun-Vogelstein (1883–1971) came from a family of distinguished Reform rabbis. She was the second wife of the important Social Democratic politician and journalist Heinrich Braun. Following her immigration to America in 1936 she maintained contacts with the Social Democratic Party in exile (see Fred Grubel, *Schreib das auf eine Tafel, die mit ihnen bleibt. Jüdisches Leben im 20. Jahrhundert*, Vienna 1998, pp. 274f.).

<sup>171</sup> Hamburger's book based on his experiences would be published under the LBI's auspices as *Juden im öffentlichen Leben Deutschland. Regierungsmitglieder, Beamte und Parlamentarier in der monarchischen Zeit 1848–1918*, Tübingen 1968 (Schriftenreihe wissenschaftlicher Abhandlungen des Leo Baeck Instituts 19).

<sup>172</sup> On Lessing, see interview in Herlinde Koelbl, *Jüdische Portraits. Photographien und Interviews*, Frankfurt am Main 1998, pp. 236–242.

<sup>173</sup> On Gruenewald's youthful Zionism, see Koelbl, *Jüdische Portraits*, p. 133.

<sup>174</sup> Members' list in *BHDE*, vol. 3, pp. 268f.

<sup>175</sup> Koelbl, *Jüdische Portraits*, p. 133.

with Kreutzberger (see below), felt increasing distance from their earlier Zionist beliefs.

As well as itself representing a meeting-point between some of the New York board members, earlier work for the *Reichsvertretung* was also a bridge to the leadership of the two other branches: Gruenewald, Kreutzberger, Callmann, Hahn, Leschnitzer and Stein had all been part of the leadership of the *Reichsvertretung*,<sup>176</sup> working there together with Moses, Adler-Rudel, Reichmann, Lowenthal, and other later LBI members under Baeck's direction.

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Because of the large size of the New York board in the early period, one might easily assume that already at this time the American branch of the LBI was the largest and most successful of the three branches. This, however, is not the case – its present status as the largest and internationally best known of the three institutes is largely due to the vision and efforts of Max Kreutzberger. Like Max Gruenewald, Kreutzberger (1900–1978) was born in Königshütte, Upper Silesia;<sup>177</sup> during his student days in Freiburg, Munich and Breslau he had been active in the *KJV*, where he made his first contacts with the Landauer circle. In 1924, he received his doctorate from the university of Breslau for a thesis entitled “*Über einige Grundbegriffe der Geschichtsphilosophie*” (“On Some Basic Concepts in the Philosophy of History”). In 1925, he became secretary for the *Hauptstelle für jüdische Wanderfürsorge* (whose business manager, as mentioned, was Shalom Adler-Rudel), while at the same time directing several Jewish social institutions in Berlin. In 1935 he emigrated to Palestine, where he became *Hitachduth* general secretary and editor of the organization's *Mitteilungsblatt*. In 1948, following years of intensive work with Landauer, Kreutzberger moved to Munich to become Jewish Agency representative; he played an active role there in restitution negotiations. In 1955, meanwhile chairman of the Jewish Restitution Successor Organisation (JRSO), Kreutzberger decided to move to New York rather than return to Israel – a response to the frustration of his humanistic ideal of a binational state.<sup>178</sup>

Kreutzberger had remained in contact with the Jerusalem group during his absence; in light of his organizational and negotiation skills, the good contacts he enjoyed through his work at the JRSO and Jewish Agency, his basic sympathy with the Israeli LBI's perspective, and his historical know-

<sup>176</sup> Members' list in *BHDE*, vol. 3, p. 253.

<sup>177</sup> On Kreutzberger, see Grubel, *Schreib das auf eine Tafel*, pp. 267ff.

<sup>178</sup> See interview with Herbert A. Strauss in Rohrbaugh (ed.), *Experience*, New York 1986, p.171; see also Joan C. Lessing (ed.), *Guide to the Oral History Collection of the Research Foundation for Jewish Immigration*, Munich 1982, pp. 59f.



ledge, the possibility of his playing a central role in building the New York center had been raised at the founding conference. The possibility was particularly inviting against the backdrop of the LBI's dependence on funds from the Claims Conference and JRSO. In mid-July 1955, Moses asked Kreutzberger to go to work for the New York LBI; after discussions with Gruenewald he became its (at first provisional) director in August 1955. With this step the leadership of all three branches had a Zionist orientation.

Over the following nine years, Kreutzberger built the New York LBI into the institute's wealthiest and most influential branch. Due to his good contacts with the leadership of the Claims Conference and the JRSO, and above all with the highly influential Saul Kagan, executive secretary of both JRSO and the Claims Conference, Kreutzberger was initially responsible for working out the yearly budget of both the London and New York branches. Nevertheless, Kreutzberger viewed his work for the institute as far more than strictly business, and – similarly to his Jerusalem colleagues and Weltsch in London – more than the promotion of pure scholarship. He eloquently expressed his perspective in a letter to Moses written shortly before the start of his tenure:

In the cultural work of the Baeck institute and the social work of the Council I see two duties of all of those who once played a role and had responsibilities within German Jewry, and do not wish simply to accept fatalistically the extermination of German Jewry, considering remembrance and the expenditure of energy as without value.<sup>179</sup>

Kreutzberger's greatest accomplishment at the LBI was certainly his development of the important archival collection and library of German Jewry – the latter project described by Fred Grubel, the New York institute's second director, as closest to Kreutzberger's own innate ideals and values.<sup>180</sup> In expressing his values in this manner, Kreutzberger also unmistakably realized AmFed's own failed memorial library project.

Max Gruenewald (1899–1992) had studied at the Jewish Theological Seminary in Breslau. Between 1925 and 1937 he was the rabbi of Mannheim's Jewish community; in the 1930s he was the head of Mannheim's Jewish *Lehrhaus*. Between 1936 and his emigration to Palestine in 1938, he was a member of the executive of the *Reichsvertretung*. A year after his emigration he accepted an invitation to begin teaching at the Jewish Theological Seminary. In 1944 he became the rabbi of a congregation in Milburn, New Jersey. He became president of the New York LBI in 1957 and international LBI president in 1974, following Baeck and Moses.

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<sup>179</sup> Kreutzberger to Moses, July 21, 1955, Moses's papers, *Central Zionist Archives*, file A 376/85.

<sup>180</sup> "Kreutzbergers ureigenstes Kind" (Grubel, *Schreib das auf eine Tafel*, p. 272.)

Gruenewald had not been able to prevent the failure of the memorial library plans in 1949–50. From 1947 onward, he was closely involved in AmFed's cultural projects, in that together with Leo Baeck he represented the immigrants' organization within the JCR. Despite the eventual failure of these projects, he never abandoned the idea of bringing the written record of German Jewry together in one location, and would have viewed the establishing of the LBI as a chance finally to undertake such a project. It would be Kreutzberger who, along with the librarian Irmgard Foerg,<sup>181</sup> examined catalogs of used books, built up the library and catalogued it; but Gruenewald was responsible with furnishing its unique collection with suitable housing: as a board member of the Gustav Wurzweiler Foundation (founded in 1950 by the Orthodox German-Jewish banker Gustav Wurzweiler to offer support to Jewish cultural and social projects throughout the world) he was able to arrange the foundation's gift to the institute in 1962 of a mansion on 73<sup>rd</sup> Street. Over the following decades, this would be, in Kreutzberger's words, "a place of historical research and study – a memorial to German Jewry."<sup>182</sup>

Born in Beuthen and for many years a rabbi in Cologne, Adolf Kober (1879–1958)<sup>183</sup> was also a professionally trained historian, receiving his doctorate at the University of Breslau in 1903 for a thesis on Jewish property in the Rheinland.<sup>184</sup> In 1925, he participated in an exhibition examining a millennium of Rheinland history; in 1928 he founded Cologne's Jewish *Lehrhaus* together with Bruno Kisch. He fled Germany for America in 1939, writing a number of studies over the following decades on topics such as the history of Cologne's Jewish community, medieval Jewish monuments in Germany, and the educational history of German Jewry.<sup>185</sup> Two years after his emigration, Kober had already proposed the establishment of an institute of German-

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<sup>181</sup> Kreutzberger became acquainted with Irmgard Foerg at the Bavarian State Library while representing the Jewish Agency in Germany immediately after the war. On Foerg, see Grubel, *Schreib das auf eine Tafel*, pp. 269, 273. In a letter to the author dated March 7, 2004, Pauline Paucker indicates that the London group considered Foerg a "lynchpin" [*sic*] of the New York archive, although Grubel later referred to her rather patronizingly as Kreutzberger's "girl Friday."

<sup>182</sup> Max Kreutzberger, "Max Gruenewald's 70th Birthday," in *AJR Information*, vol. 24, no. 12 (December 1969), p. 7.

<sup>183</sup> On Kober, see Alwin Müller-Jerina, "Adolf Kober (1879–1958). Versuch einer Bio-Bibliographie anlässlich seines 30. Todestags," in *Menora. Jahrbuch für deutsch-jüdische Geschichte*, vol. 1 (1990), pp. 279–296; Falk Wiesemann, Introduction in *idem* (ed.), *Zur Geschichte und Kultur der Juden im Rheinland*, Düsseldorf 1985, pp. vii–xvii.

<sup>184</sup> Müller-Jerina, "Kober," p. 280.

<sup>185</sup> *Cologne* (= Jewish Communities Series, no. 6), Philadelphia 1940; "Jewish Monuments of the Middle Ages in Germany. One Hundred and Ten Tombstone Inscriptions from Speyer, Cologne, Nuremberg, and Worms (1085 – c. 1428)," Part 1, in *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research*, vol. 14 (1944), pp. 149–220; Part 2: *ibid.*, vol. 15 (1945), pp. 1–91; "Emancipation's Impact on the Education and Vocational Training of German Jewry," in *Jewish Social Studies*, vol. 16 (1954), pp. 3–32, 151–176.

Jewish history in America. A few years later, as a member of AmFed's historical committee (founded in 1948), he became engaged both in the failed memorial library project and the definitive history plan.<sup>186</sup> He became a member of the New York LBI's board in 1955, and although he died only three years after the institute's founding, he would be one of the board members who pressed most strongly for the library's creation at the New York LBI.

The jurist Nathan Stein (1881–1966)<sup>187</sup> was the son of a Worms rabbi, Alexander Stein. From 1925 until his dismissal in 1933, he taught economics at the Technical University in Karlsruhe; until 1937, he served as president of the Jewish council of Baden, and was one of the founders of the *Reichsvertretung*. In 1939 he emigrated to the USA, where he was president of AmFed between 1946 and 1952 and intermittently vice-president of the Council.

With Gruenewald and Kober, Stein was the third member of the New York LBI who had been actively engaged in an effort to create a memorial center for German Jewry in the States immediately after the war. His most important partner in this effort had been the eminent and controversial historian Eugen Täubler (1879–1953;<sup>188</sup> see below); both men focused their efforts on a suitable acknowledgment of *Wissenschaft des Judentums*, whose tradition was to be maintained after its violent destruction by Nazi Germany.<sup>189</sup>

Täubler had formulated plans for the institutionalization of German-Jewish historiography in America, in part at the behest of Stein and AmFed (where the plans had a profound impact).<sup>190</sup> Within the LBI this vision was carried forward by Täubler's wife, the historian Selma Stern (1890–1981),<sup>191</sup>

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<sup>186</sup> See his outline of a historical work *Jews and Judaism in Germany from the Beginning of Emancipation to Catastrophe* (with Max Wiener), in Hoffmann, "The Founding of the LBI," Appendix 2 (in this volume).

<sup>187</sup> On Stein, see his autobiographical article "Oberrat der Israeliten Badens, 1922–1937," in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 1 (1956), pp. 177–190.

<sup>188</sup> On Täubler, see Heike Scharbaum, *Zwischen zwei Welten. Wissenschaft und Lebenswelt am Beispiel des deutsch-jüdischen Historikers Eugen Täubler (1879–1953)*, Münster 2000; Christhard Hoffmann, *Juden und Judentum im Werk deutscher Althistoriker des 19. und 20. Jahrhunderts*, Leiden 1988, pp. 200–219; David N. Myers, "Eugen Täubler: The Personification of 'Judaism as Tragic Existence,'" in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 39 (1994), pp. 131–150; Selma Stern, "Eugen Täubler and the 'Wissenschaft des Judentums,'" in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 3 (1958), pp. 41–59; Herbert A. Strauss, "Das Ende der Wissenschaft des Judentums in Deutschland. Ismar Elbogen und Eugen Täubler," in Hartmut Walravens (ed.), *Bibliographie und Berichte. Festschrift für Werner Schochow*, Munich 1990, pp. 280–298.

<sup>189</sup> Nattermann, *Deutsch-jüdische Geschichtsschreibung*, pp. 97ff.

<sup>190</sup> On these diverse projects, see *ibid.*, pp. 51ff.

<sup>191</sup> On Selma Stern, see Marina Sassenberg, *Der andere Blick auf die Vergangenheit. Die deutsch-jüdische Historikerin Selma Stern (1890–1981)*, Frankfurt am Main 1998; *idem*, *Selma Stern (1890–1981). Das Eigene in der Geschichte. Selbstentwürfe und Geschichtsentwürfe einer Historikerin*, Tübingen 2004 (Schriftenreihe wissenschaftlicher

for whom the institute would always be tied to her husband's memory. Born into a middle-class house in Kippenheim (Baden) – her father was a physician – Stern studied between 1904 and 1914 at the universities of Heidelberg and Munich, receiving her doctorate in history for a thesis on "Anacharsis Cloots, the Orator of Mankind as Member of the National Assembly." In 1918, she joined the *Akademie für die Wissenschaft des Judentums* in Berlin, where she met her future husband. It is impossible to determine with certainty if Selma Stern was dismissed from the academy in 1933 because of the "restoration law"<sup>192</sup> or rather had to leave because of the deep financial crisis the academy had been mired in since 1930.<sup>193</sup> As late as 1941, Stern managed to flee with her husband to America. While he was immediately offered a teaching position at the HUC in Cincinnati, in 1947 Stern became the first archivist for the Cincinnati-based American Jewish Archives, where she stayed until her retirement in 1957. The LBI's leadership was interested in Stern's own work as much as Täubler's. The New York branch in fact offered her the possibility of renewed intensive scholarly labor after years of very little publishing activity as an émigré. Following Hannah Arendt's departure from the New York board in 1960, she would for some years be the LBI's only important female scholar, as well as one of its few professionally trained historians, held in high esteem despite a general skepticism regarding female board members: already in 1957 Weltsch wrote to her that her contributions to the institute were among the finest,<sup>194</sup> Ernst Simon likewise letting her know more than two decades later that her historical achievement had been "path-breaking."<sup>195</sup> Shortly after its founding, the LBI had Stern's historical

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Abhandlungen des LBI 69); Jutta Dick, "Selma Stern-Taeubler," in *idem* and Marina Sassenberg, *Jüdische Frauen im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert*, Reinbek 1992, pp. 363–365; Christhard Hoffmann, "Zerstörte Geschichte. Zum Werk der jüdischen Historikerin Selma Stern," in *Exilforschung. Ein internationales Jahrbuch*, vol. 11 (1993), pp. 203–215; Michael Schmidt, "Selma Stern: Exzentrische Bahnen," in Barbara Hahn (ed.), *Frauen in den Kulturwissenschaften. Von Lou Andreas-Salome bis Hannah Arendt*, Munich 1994, pp. 204–218.

<sup>192</sup> This is the assumption of Marina Sassenberg, in e-mail correspondence with the author, November 19, 2004. Sassenberg cites a German-language c.v. written by Stern on November 13, 1955 that contains the following information: "Between 1919 and 1933 I was a scholar with civil-service status at the research institute known as the *Akademie für die Wissenschaft des Judentums*, Berlin; I received the salary of a *Studienrat* from this work . . . . From 1933 on it was no longer possible for me to practice my vocation by its very nature" (*UB Basel*, Stern's papers, A 02/5).

<sup>193</sup> Christhard Hoffmann casts doubt on the theory of her dismissal being due to the "restoration law" in e-mail correspondence with the author, November 19, 2004: the idea of that law applying to Jewish institutions appears questionable, particularly in light of the *Hochschule's* continued existence until 1942.

<sup>194</sup> Weltsch to Stern, July 31, 1957, *UB Basel*, Stern's papers, D 12/33.

<sup>195</sup> Simon to Stern, July 14, 1980, *UB Basel*, Stern's papers, A 07/32.

study *Josel von Rosheim* published under its auspices;<sup>196</sup> the work was dedicated to Baeck's memory, and its titular figure appears in fact to owe much to Baeck, whom Stern revered: Josel "took hardship and danger upon his shoulders in order to protect his fellow Jews against the caprice of cities and princes – against accusations of ritual murder and trials for desecrating the host, not least of all against Luther's pitiless call for pogrom."<sup>197</sup>

At the same time, the institute urged her to complete her *magnum opus*, *Der Preussische Staat und die Juden*, begun in Berlin in the 1920s at the *Akademie für die Wissenschaft des Judentums* but left incomplete after her flight from Germany.<sup>198</sup> Although Stern found it anything but easy to take up the work again "under such drastically altered circumstances and with a fully transformed historical world-view,"<sup>199</sup> she succeeded in completing the eight volumes and having them published between 1962 and 1975.<sup>200</sup> For the institute, her monumental study was the most eloquent expression of a certain historical and historiographical continuity in the face of German Jewry's destruction. Although Stern left New York for Basel in 1961, this altered nothing in her sense of identification with the LBI.

Although for some time a board member, Hannah Arendt (1906–1975),<sup>201</sup> appears to have felt little such identity. Born in Hannover, she stemmed from a bourgeois and socially liberal milieu in which, according to her own account, the word "Jew" was never mentioned.<sup>202</sup> As a young woman she turned from such an assimilative ethos towards Zionism;<sup>203</sup> it would appear that at the time she joined the LBI her sentiments were closer to the institute's Zionists than its non-Zionists. Like the humanist Zionists,

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<sup>196</sup> Selma Stern, *Josel von Rosheim. Befehlshaber der Judenschaft im Heiligen Römischen Reich Deutscher Nation*, Stuttgart 1959.

<sup>197</sup> Hoffmann, "Zerstörte Geschichte," pp. 210f.

<sup>198</sup> Kreutzberger refers to a generally shared desire in the LBI for the work's completion in his letter to Stern, December 21, 1956, *UB Basel*, Stern's papers, D 14/27.

<sup>199</sup> Stern to Weltsch, February 15, 1961, *LBI Archives New York*, LBI London Coll., box 9.

<sup>200</sup> Selma Stern, *Der Preussische Staat und die Juden*, 8 vols. (incl. Index ed. by M. Kreutzberger), Tübingen 1962–75 (Schriftenreihe wissenschaftlicher Abhandlungen des Leo Baeck Instituts 7–8, 24, 32).

<sup>201</sup> The standard biography of Arendt remains Elisabeth Young-Bruehl, *Hannah Arendt: For Love of the World*, New Haven, CT 1982.

<sup>202</sup> Jürgen Wertheimer, "Hannah Arendt," in Marianne Hassler and Jürgen Wertheimer (eds.), *Der Exodus aus Nazideutschland und die Folgen. Jüdische Wissenschaftler im Exil*, Tübingen 1997, pp. 325–341, here p. 325.

<sup>203</sup> She would later indicate that she did so "only because of Hitler, of course" – something Moshe Zimmermann disputes (Moshe Zimmermann, "Hannah Arendt, the Early 'Post-Zionist,'" in Steven E. Aschheim (ed.), *Hannah Arendt in Jerusalem*, Berkeley, CA and London, 2001, pp. 181–193, here p. 181).

she had not favored the idea of a solely Jewish state but rather that of reaching an accommodation with the Arabs in Palestine. In the 1940s she had strongly identified with the *Ihud* movement, which had even envisioned her as their spokesman in America – she rejected the possibility, not seeing herself as a “political actor.”<sup>204</sup>

Arendt had a cool relationship with the most of other members of the LBI with the possible exception of Weltsch and Scholem, and was only really closely befriended by Kurt Blumenfeld. Nevertheless, because of her intellectual reputation and charm she was one of the most popular members of the early institute.<sup>205</sup> With her international reputation, her books promised success – this prompting the institute to make her biography of Rahel Varnhagen one of its first publications.<sup>206</sup> But this was Arendt's only scholarly contribution to the LBI. As her correspondence with Kurt Blumenfeld shows, she felt herself an outsider at the institute – a feeling identical with Blumenfeld's about himself.<sup>207</sup> Arendt had great difficulties empathizing with the institute's memorializing culture, centered, as she indicated with bitter sarcasm in a letter to Blumenfeld written in 1956, on preserving the “glory” of German Jewry.<sup>208</sup> In a more sober vein, Arendt herself saw research into this history as “a historical task of the first rank, and one which, of course, can be attacked only now, after the history of the German Jews has come to an end.”<sup>209</sup> But her intense skepticism regarding the “German Jewish symbiosis” was nevertheless frequently manifest, sometimes taking vehement form. Shortly after the LBI's founding she wrote to her friend Kurt Blumenfeld as follows:

We will need to speak about the Baeck Institute. There are several dangers there. German Jewry was a great thing, which we actually only know now. It is not at all easy to see wherein this greatness lay. And even if it is true that the educated *Spießer*, as represented in its best form by Baeck, was indeed representative, that does not mean the matter should be initiated from that vantage-point alone.<sup>210</sup>

And in a February 1958 letter to Blumenfeld she described the New York institute as “a very sad institution” from which she had a strong desire to

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<sup>204</sup> Richard J. Bernstein, “Hannah Arendt's Zionism?” in Aschheim (ed.), *Hannah Arendt*, pp. 194–202, here p. 200.

<sup>205</sup> Herbert A. Strauss, interview with the author, New York, November 17, 2000.

<sup>206</sup> Hannah Arendt, *Rahel Varnhagen: The Life of a Jewess*, London 1957.

<sup>207</sup> Blumenfeld to Arendt, May 24, 1957, in Arendt, Blumenfeld, *Die Korrespondenz*, p. 194.

<sup>208</sup> Arendt to Blumenfeld, August 2, 1956, in Arendt, Blumenfeld, *Die Korrespondenz*, p. 152.

<sup>209</sup> Arendt, Rahel Varnhagen, p. xii.

<sup>210</sup> Arendt to Blumenfeld, July 4, 1955, in Arendt, Blumenfeld, *Die Korrespondenz*, pp. 124f., here p. 125.

withdraw.<sup>211</sup> Her marked antipathy towards Kreutzberger<sup>212</sup> – along, to be sure, with her negative sentiments towards Baeck himself – may have played a role in her actually doing so shortly afterwards.

Following Arendt's departure, which was in fact greatly regretted when it happened (Siegfried Moses trying fruitlessly to induce a change of heart),<sup>213</sup> she was made an LBI fellow as part of a program the New York institute had initiated soon after its inception. But in the aftermath of the serialization of *Eichmann in Jerusalem* in *The New Yorker* in 1961 and its appearance in book form in 1963, she found herself subject to ferocious criticism from the institute's ranks, a counterpart to the worldwide storm of indignation at, in part, her thesis that the *Reichsvertretung* and *Judenräte* collaborated with the Nazi regime. As a consequence, Arendt gave up her fellowship – her friendships with Blumenfeld, Scholem and Weltsch now facing a similar, nigh-insurmountable crisis.<sup>214</sup>

Where from the start the Jerusalem LBI had eminent scholars like Buber, Scholem and Simon at its disposal, and the London LBI personalities such as Robert Weltsch, Hans Liebeschütz and Richard Koebner, the New York branch needed some time to bring together constructively a distinguished group of its own. The several scholars listed below are the most important of those not already mentioned.

Adolf Leschnitzer (1899–1980)<sup>215</sup> was born in Posen and received his doctorate from the University of Heidelberg in 1923 for a thesis on “Studies of the Song of Songs in *Minnelieder*. A Contribution to *Historienbibel* Research.” Starting in 1925 he taught general history and German at various gymnasia in Berlin; he was dismissed in 1933. Until his emigration to England in 1939, Leschnitzer participated in the leadership of the *Reichsvertretung*; he was also the editor of the *Jüdische Lesehefte*. In England, he worked for one year at the Cambridge University Library, moving to New York in 1940, where he initially headed the American Institute for Modern Languages, a private language school for new immigrants. Three years later he started teaching at Rutgers University and became counselor on German educational issues for the US War Department in 1944.

Like Kreutzberger, Leschnitzer had been proposed for the New York board at the Jerusalem founding conference. As the former head of the schools divi-

<sup>211</sup> Arendt to Blumenfeld, February 19, 1958, in Arendt, Blumenfeld, *Die Korrespondenz*, pp. 205f., here p. 205.

<sup>212</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>213</sup> Blumenfeld to Arendt, August 4, 1959, in Arendt, Blumenfeld, *Die Korrespondenz*, p. 240.

<sup>214</sup> On the Arendt controversy within the institute, see Nattermann, *Deutsch-jüdische Geschichtsschreibung*, pp. 229ff.

<sup>215</sup> On Leschnitzer, see Erich Fromm and Kurt R. Grossmann (with Hans Herzfeld) (eds.), *Der Friede: Idee und Verwirklichung. The Search for Peace. Festgabe für Adolf Leschnitzer*, Heidelberg 1961.

sion of the *Reichsvertretung*, he belonged to the LBI's inner circle, as well as being one of the few individuals at the institute who participated with Baeck in the unsuccessful effort to transfer the *Hochschule* to Cambridge.<sup>216</sup> In 1948, together with Kober, Callmann, Gruenewald and Kaufmann, he helped form AmFed's committee on history, which would be involved in both the library and German-Jewish *Gesamtgeschichte* projects.<sup>217</sup>

Leschnitzer began to teach in City College's German department in 1946; in 1952 he took up a guest professorship at Berlin's Free University, thus being the first Jewish scholar to lecture on problems of German-Jewish history in Germany after the war. In 1955, he was appointed Honorary Professor of Jewish History at the Free University. In his ties to Germany, Leschnitzer was basically alone at the New York LBI at the beginning; over the following years he would work hard to strengthen contacts – especially those with German scholars. In a period when the "symbiosis" question was avoided as much as possible in the institute,<sup>218</sup> he confronted it head-on in his study *Saul und David. Die Problematik der deutsch-jüdischen Lebensgemeinschaft* (Berlin 1954). Robert Weltsch's comment on the book was that "nobody epitomizes the attachment both to German culture and Jewish tradition better than the author."<sup>219</sup> Characteristically, already in 1968 Leschnitzer began arguing for the establishment of an LBI branch in West Germany – the aim being to supplement research on German-Jewish relations with a non-Jewish German perspective.

Through his studies at the Berlin *Hochschule* and ties to the *Akademie für die Wissenschaft des Judentums*, Fritz Bamberger (1902–1984) had been close to the circle around Baeck. Having received his doctorate in 1923 at the university of Berlin for a thesis entitled "Studies of the Origin of the Problem of Values in Nineteenth-Century Philosophy," he prepared the *Jubiläumsausgabe* of Moses Mendelssohn's philosophical writings together with Leo Strauss. In January 1939, Bamberger emigrated to the USA, where he had been offered a philosophy professorship at Chicago's College of Jewish Studies; he moved to New York in 1945. At the time of the New York institute's founding, he was mainly active as a journalist, but would be appointed to a professorship in intellectual history at the Hebrew Union College – Jewish Institute of Religion (HUC–JIR) in New York in 1962, becoming assistant to its president at the same time. For the early New York LBI, Bamberger served as an embodiment of *Wissenschaft des Judentums*; he would be appointed vice-president

<sup>216</sup> Christhard Hoffmann and Daniel R. Schwartz, "Early but opposed – supported but late: Two Berlin Seminaries which attempted to move abroad," in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 36 (1991), pp. 267–304, here p. 287; Nattermann, *Deutsch-jüdische Geschichtsschreibung*, pp. 26ff.

<sup>217</sup> Stein to Kober, December 27, 1948, *ZfA Archives*, AmFed Coll. 17/17.

<sup>218</sup> Bennathan, interview.

<sup>219</sup> Robert Weltsch, "Adolf Leschnitzer 70," in *AJR Information*, vol. 24, no. 2 (February 1969), p. 11.



of the New York branch in 1957. Because of his experience as manager of the library at the *Hochschule*, he worked together with Ernest Hamburger – following Kreutzberger’s withdrawal – as the two-man New York LBI library committee.<sup>220</sup> He also contributed to a number of institute publications,<sup>221</sup> and in 1958 presented the first Leo Baeck Memorial Lecture, on “Leo Baeck – the Man and the Idea.”<sup>222</sup>

Guido Kisch (1889–1985)<sup>223</sup> was born in Prague as the son of the well-known rabbi and scholar Alexander Kisch. Until his forced retirement in 1934, he held a chair in the history of law at the university of Halle; he was also one of the editors of the *Zeitschrift für die Geschichte der Juden in Deutschland*. After emigrating to the States in 1935, he worked entirely in the realm of Jewish history, becoming a lecturer in the subject at the New York HUC–JIR in 1937. A short time later he initiated the founding of *Historia Judaica* – the first academic journal in the English-speaking world offering exiled German-Jewish historians in particular, a possibility of publishing their research.<sup>224</sup> Kisch did not participate in the LBI’s diverse projects, being more focused on the question of scholarly production than on the establishment of a monument for German Jewry in the form of a library and archives. He even had reservations regarding the *Year Book*, viewing it as “more journalistic than scientific” in nature.<sup>225</sup> In 1959, together with Kurt Roepke he published a bibliography in the *Schriftenreihe* concerned with dissertations appearing between 1922 and 1955 in Germany and Switzerland on the history of the Jews.<sup>226</sup> He had little sympathy with Kreutzberger’s material ambitions for the New York LBI, remaining an outsider in an environment do-

<sup>220</sup> Grubel, *Schreib das auf eine Tafel*, p. 272.

<sup>221</sup> See his articles “Julius Guttman – Philosopher of Judaism,” in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 5 (1960), pp. 3–34; “Mendelssohns Begriff vom Judentum,” in Kurt Wilhelm (ed.), *Wissenschaft des Judentums im deutschen Sprachbereich I/II*, Tübingen 1967 (*Schriftenreihe wissenschaftlicher Abhandlungen des Leo Baeck Instituts* 16), pp. 521–537; “Exploring a Typology of German Jewry,” in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 19 (1974), pp. 3–10.

<sup>222</sup> Fritz Bamberger, “Leo Baeck – the Man and the Idea,” *Leo Baeck Memorial Lecture* 1, New York 1958.

<sup>223</sup> On Kisch, see his memoirs *Der Lebensweg eines Rechtshistorikers. Erinnerungen*, Sigmaringen 1975; Horst Göppinger, *Juristen jüdischer Abstammung im “Dritten Reich.” Entrechtung und Verfolgung*, [2<sup>nd</sup> ed.], Munich 1990, p. 209; Karl P. Bader, “Guido Kisch zum 70. Geburtstag,” in *Juristenzeitung* 14 (1959), pp. 100f.

<sup>224</sup> Christhard Hoffmann, “Deutsch-jüdische Geschichtswissenschaft in der Emigration. Das Leo-Baeck-Institut,” in Herbert A. Strauss, Klaus Fischer, Christhard Hoffmann and Alfons Söllner (eds.), *Die Emigration der Wissenschaften nach 1933. Disziplingeschichtliche Studien*, Munich, London, New York and Paris 1991, pp. 257–279, here p. 265; Werner Schochow, *Deutsch-jüdische Geschichtswissenschaft. Eine Geschichte ihrer Organisationsformen unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Fachbibliographie*, Berlin 1969, pp. 198–201.

<sup>225</sup> Kisch to Stern, January 10, 1956, *UB Basel*, Stern’s papers, D11/53.

<sup>226</sup> Guido Kisch and Kurt Roepke, *Schriften zur Geschichte der Juden. Eine Bibliographie der in Deutschland und der Schweiz 1922 bis 1955 erschienenen Dissertationen*, Tü-

minated by former party officials and *Reichsvertretung* members. After his first resignation in 1962, Kisch returned to the board at Nathan Stein's entreaty, before leaving it again a few years later.<sup>227</sup>

As problematic as Kreutzberger's institutional ambitions may have seemed to scholars like Kisch, it was precisely such ambitions, attracting wealthy and influential persons to the New York institute, that formed the basis for its enduring success. The early establishment of a fellowship program indicates that the New York branch was not only interested in material aggrandizement but in an expansion of its scholarly network as well. At the same time, it is clear that through an intense focus on scholarly programs and publications, the London branch eventually overtook its New York counterpart, becoming mainly responsible for the greater scholarly refinement of the LBI's publications starting in the mid-1960s.<sup>228</sup>

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The LBI "founders' community" was largely based on private, professional and organizational networks that had already existed before 1933. The fact that the selection of early institute members was essentially limited to a circle stemming from the Council and their friends and colleagues determined the LBI's social locus *a priori*: German-Jewish *Bildungsbürgertum*. The institute's initiators naturally turned to the same milieu in which they had moved before emigration. Significantly, in its totality the institute did not represent a continuation of *Wissenschaft des Judentums*, few of its members having been active in Germany in that scholarly domain.

Nevertheless, despite the milieu shared by its members, the early LBI was not homogeneous, a similar ideological split being manifest as that which had emerged within German Jewry during the Weimar Republic, between what in the earlier context had been considered Liberal Judaism and proponents of one or another form of Zionism.<sup>229</sup> Other groups that had played a role then – German nationalists, cosmopolitans, leftists – hardly had a role in the

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bingen 1959 (Schriftenreihe wissenschaftlicher Abhandlungen des Leo Baeck Instituts 4).

<sup>227</sup> Kisch to Stern, March 13, 1962, *UB Basel*, Stern's papers, D11/82. In his memoirs he depicts dissatisfaction with his time at the LBI and differences with Kreutzberger: Kisch, *Lebensweg*, pp. 164f.

<sup>228</sup> Nattermann, *Deutsch-jüdische Geschichtsschreibung*, pp. 284ff.

<sup>229</sup> On the ideological and social complexity of German Jewry, see Esra Ben-nathan, "Demographische und wirtschaftliche Struktur der Juden," in Werner E. Mosse (with Arnold Paucker) (eds.), *Entscheidungsjahr 1932. Zur Judenfrage in der Endphase der Weimarer Republik*, Tübingen 1965 (Schriftenreihe wissenschaftlicher Abhandlungen des Leo Baeck Instituts 13), pp. 88–131; Monika Richarz (ed.), *Jüdisches Leben in Deutschland. Selbstzeugnisse zur Sozialgeschichte 1918–1945*, Stuttgart 1982, pp. 14–24; Gershom Scholem, "Zur Sozialpsychologie," pp. 229–261.

early institute: Alfred Wiener, once a member of the *Reichsbund jüdischer Frontsoldaten*, might be considered a former nationalist; despite her own ambivalent Zionism, from another perspective Arendt might be considered a leftist. But a central characteristic of the LBI in its first decades was certainly the great number of former members of the *CV* and *ZVfD* in its ranks.

But again, despite intermittently emerging disagreements, the “founding community” maintained a great deal of unity when it came to what mattered. The question “what must we not forget?” motivated and legitimated the institute’s founding; it remained central for its first generation.<sup>230</sup> Outsiders such as Arendt, Blumenfeld, Kisch and Scholem, not being able to identify themselves with the institute’s particular culture of remembrance, either quickly abandoned the LBI or distanced themselves markedly from its activities. In the case of Ernst Simon and Martin Buber, a gradually diminished sense of engagement resulted from the institute representing only one of their many scholarly projects.

In the mid-1960s, a second generation began to replace the founders. A general weakening of the institute’s originally strong Zionist tenets together with the first generation’s ageing meant greater influence for a small circle of younger scholars including Werner Mosse, Arnold Paucker, Esra Bennathan and Fred Grubel. Almost all members of the LBI’s second generation were professional historians; most had left Germany as children or adolescents and had either little or no share at all in the founders’ memories. For this reason, the “memorial function” of the institute’s historiography now lost significance. In its place came more strictly scholarly aspirations.

The “founding community” had been convinced that the Leo Baeck Institute would not survive the lifetime of its members. At first it was difficult for them to open this community to younger historians from the “outside.” But in the end they did not want to abandon everything they had created over the decades. The institute’s long-term success would be largely due to a process of renewal, promoted above all by Max Kreuzberger and Robert Weltsch starting in the mid-1960s. In July 1966 Kreuzberger wrote to his old friend as follows:

I don’t know if our work for the LBI was futile and meaningless – if this is true, the situation with our [i.e. German Jewry’s] life isn’t any better. But I still believe that a life stretching over many hundreds of years cannot have been entirely meaningless ... . Naturally everything remains quite problematic. Especially our future. But we must come to terms with the fact that it will be different than we imagined. But it will somehow *be* – of that I’m certain.<sup>231</sup>

<sup>230</sup> Jan Assmann, *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis. Schrift, Erinnerung und politische Identität in frühen Hochkulturen*, Munich 1992, p. 30.

<sup>231</sup> Kreuzberger to Weltsch, July 30, 1966, *LBI Archives New York*, Weltsch Coll. MF 491.

# From Memorial Community to Research Center: The Leo Baeck Institute in Jerusalem<sup>1</sup>

Guy Miron

*Das deutsche Judentum ist ein Toter, der nicht bestattet and beklagt wurde. Es liegt uns ob, diese Pflichten nachzuholen.*

(German Jewry is like a deceased person who has neither been buried nor mourned. It has fallen to us to discharge this duty.)<sup>2</sup>

These were the opening words of Ernst Simon's lecture at the founding conference of the Jerusalem Leo Baeck Institute on May 31, 1955. Continuing the mourning metaphor, Simon pointed out that according to Jewish tradition, a person who has died should be honored by recital of *Kaddish de-Rabbanan* (the *Lernkaddisch*) after a study session in his or her memory. His implication was that the institute was essentially conducting a symbolic study session in memory of the dead, and that the participants would go their own ways after discharging this debt of honor. As we shall see, that was not what happened.

The Leo Baeck Institute in Jerusalem was founded by some of the most active representatives and prominent intellectuals of the German Zionist movement. When the Institute was established, German Jewry as they had known it no longer existed, but they themselves embodied a living remnant of its heritage, creativity and memory, preserved for a far longer time than the one-year ritual Jewish memory of a beloved relative. While working together to establish the institute and promote its activity, such personalities as Ernst Simon, Martin Buber and Gershom Scholem, Siegfried Moses, Hans Tramer and Kurt Blumenfeld, continued to harbor differing conceptions of the heritage they wished to study and perpetuate. Moreover, frequent contact

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<sup>1</sup> I am indebted to Dr. Avraham Barkai, Dr. Michael Heymann, Prof. Robert Liberles and Mr. Shlomo Mayer, who read earlier drafts of this article and contributed to its improvement.

<sup>2</sup> Ernst Simon, "Das geistige Erbe des deutschen Judentums, Vortrag zur Eröffnung des Leo-Baeck-Instituts, am 31. Mai 1955 in Jerusalem," in *idem, Brücken*, Heidelberg 1965, p. 47.

with the New York and London branches of the LBI revived issues and conflicts – for example, the conflict between Zionists and non-Zionists – that had always been central in the political world of German Jewry.

In his 1955 lecture, Ernst Simon referred repeatedly to the historical achievements of the eminent nineteenth-century German-Jewish scholar Leopold Zunz, who had striven “to vindicate the honor of the French-German type of medieval Jew” (“*die Ehrenrettung des mittelalterlichen Juden deutsch-französisch Typus*”).<sup>3</sup> In that connection, it is interesting to compare the work of Zunz and his contemporaries, the founders of modern Jewish studies, with the work of the LBI. Just as *Wissenschaft des Judentums* intended among other things to help the newly emancipated Jews find their place in German society, the founders of the Jerusalem LBI hoped “to vindicate the honor” of the modern type of German Jew – a goal that included helping Jews of German origin find their place in Israeli society. Their increasing awareness of the process of generational change, coupled with the wish to raise a generation of Israelis who would continue their work, also heightened the tension between their sense of particularism and their desire for integration. As graduates of the German Zionist movement, it was important for them to weave the German-Jewish heritage into the fabric of emerging Israeli-Jewish society. Despite this shared concern, some of them considered the arguments between the Zionists and their opponents in German Jewry to be a thing of the past. Others, most prominently Kurt Blumenfeld, were strongly opposed to a non-Zionist account of Jewish history in Germany. Quite naturally, this position was an ingredient in the institutional tension between LBI Jerusalem and the New York and London branches of the institute.

By the early 1960s, a new generation was emerging in the Jerusalem institute, with several younger historians of German-Jewish origin joining its ranks. We will see below that the gradual transition from the institute’s founders, who although scholars in their own right had also been witnesses to and victims of Nazi persecution, to a new generation composed mainly of academics, was central to the evolution of the institute’s portrayal of the past, to the broadening of its historical horizons, and to its “Israelization.” The last section of the article will examine the recent decades of the institute’s activities, characterized by a gradual decline in the number of members acquainted at first hand with German Jewry, by increasing participation of second- and third-generation Israeli historians in the institute’s projects, and by an “academization” of its activities.

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<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 49.

## I

In August 1954, Ernst Simon drew up a plan for the Jerusalem LBI Institute's work.<sup>4</sup> The document, which would form the basis of the institute board's deliberations in the coming years, reflected a division between two aspects of German Jewry's past: its imprint and influence on world Jewry, on the one hand, and its inner development, on the other. Thus the core problems of emancipation, assimilation and the history of religious and ideological movements in German Jewry, as well as its attitude to Zionism, were discussed in the context of its influence on world Jewry, while social, economic and cultural issues were presented as part of its inner development. Such a division continued to characterize the efforts of the Jerusalem LBI to create a "master narrative" of German Jewry in the modern era.

From the 1950s through the 1970s, the idea of shaping a single, integrative historical representation of German Jewry in the modern era was manifest as one of the institute's main goals – a goal that would, however, never be fully realized.<sup>5</sup> While the members of the Jerusalem LBI insisted on the critical, scholarly nature of such a narrative, the goal's very formulation seemed to reflect a desire to canonize the German-Jewish past and pass on that canonization to a generation not directly acquainted with it. Inevitably, this canonizing tendency reflected a desire to invest the German-Jewish past with an emotively charged meaning and to transplant its values to the new Israeli world; accordingly, the founders saw the institute not only as an instrument for historical research but also as the central body for consolidating the cultural memory of German Jewry for future generations.

In a letter to Siegfried Moses written in July 1956, Hans Tramer summarized the institute's first year of activity as follows:

We were imbued with the awareness that this great and good thing, the Jewish creativity of German Jewry, had to be preserved in the future as well ... . This awareness was born of a Jewish feeling of responsibility ... . To our mind, the elements that German Jewry has created for the Jew in the modern world belong to the progressive development of modern Jewry – in the state of Israel as well as in the *Galuth* [exile]!<sup>6</sup>

This feeling of responsibility and commitment to the entire Jewish people should, Tramer indicated, dictate the institute's policy regarding historical documentation and point the way to the publication of classical works from the heritage of German Jewry. Such works, he believed, should be translated, mainly into Hebrew. In keeping with this perception, Tramer suggested that

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<sup>4</sup> Ernst Simon, August 18, 1954, *LBI Jerusalem*, file 1072.

<sup>5</sup> See various documents in *LBI Jerusalem*, file 1075.

<sup>6</sup> Hans Tramer to Siegfried Moses, July 10, 1956, *LBI Jerusalem*, file 1004 (IV).

the institute should concentrate on the post-emancipatory period: the last 150 years of German-Jewish history.

This desire to view the history of German Jewry in the broader context of world Jewish history reflects the influence of the young Israeli state's dominant school of Jewish historical research – the so-called Jerusalem school, its leading proponents being Benzion Dinur and Yitzhak Baer. The central item in the Jerusalem school's agenda was, in fact, constructing a national “master narrative” rather than documenting Jewish life in individual Jewish communities. As dedicated Zionists, Dinur, Baer, and their followers considered their scholarly work to be an essential element in the process of building the new Israeli nation.<sup>7</sup> The importance placed by the Jerusalem LBI on locating German Jewry within the broader context of Jewish history seems to have resulted, at least in part, from concern that their plans might otherwise be viewed as running against the normative position of the Jerusalem school. As we shall see, the institute's members also tried to secure the support of Israel's leading historians for their efforts; in the first years of the institute's activity this effort failed.

In December 1968, a meeting of the Jerusalem LBI board was held to discuss that branch's approach to the writing of *Gemeindeggeschichte* – the history of the various Jewish communities located throughout Germany. In this venue, Siegfried Moses argued that such history was inconsistent with the institute's scientific standards; Gershom Scholem maintained that the LBI should concentrate on the post-Mendelssohnian period in order to clarify the central historical problem tied to German-Jewish history (i.e. the problem of assimilation); the earlier periods of that history were simply “uninteresting” in that respect, their contribution to a general understanding of Jewish history doubtful.<sup>8</sup> Scholem was the only active member of the Jerusalem LBI who was also a prominent representative of the Jerusalem school. The institute's purpose, he argued, was to clarify the historical principles underlying various phenomena in Jewish history.

An even more radical position regarding the Jerusalem LBI's goals was formulated by the veteran Zionist leader Kurt Blumenfeld. At the founding conference in May 1955, Blumenfeld had already proposed that the issue of assimilation – its problems and scope, as well as the dangers it presented – should take center stage in the institute's activity. The systematic treatment of that issue, he suggested, was bound up with the need to create a single, broad Jewish historical narrative.<sup>9</sup> A few months later he laid out his position more

<sup>7</sup> On the Jerusalem school see David N. Myers, *Re-Inventing the Jewish Past: European Jewish Intellectuals and the Zionist Return to History*, New York and Oxford 1995.

<sup>8</sup> Minutes of the LBI Jerusalem board meeting, December 11, 1968, pp. 3–4, *LBI Jerusalem*, file 1086A.

<sup>9</sup> Minutes of the Programmtagung des Leo Baeck Instituts, May 25, 1955, p. 1, *LBI Jerusalem*, file 1075.

systematically in a letter describing the emancipation and assimilation of the German Jews as a process involving repeated attempts on their part to obscure their identity and become “true Germans.” Zionism, Blumenfeld added, had comprised the first effort to block assimilation; since 1912, when German Zionism had taken a radical turn under Blumenfeld’s leadership and begun to call for immigration to Palestine, it had in effect prepared the only hopeful option that would be available to the German Jews under the Nazis.<sup>10</sup> In his view, the role of the LBI was thus educational: to write a history allowing German Jewry to critically examine its conduct in the era of assimilation, not merely “a description ... that would mask the real life of the Jews.”<sup>11</sup>

Most members of the Jerusalem LBI refused to accept Blumenfeld’s guiding ideological principles as the basis for the institute’s policies – something evident in a disagreement in late 1959 over Jacob Toury’s dissertation on the political orientation of the German Jews. Put briefly, most board members considered the dissertation important and favored its publication by the LBI; for his part, Blumenfeld described it as a collection of facts with footnotes, lacking any real significance because it did not throw any light on the issues of principle with which the institute was supposed to be concerned.<sup>12</sup> As this dispute makes clear, most board members recoiled from Blumenfeld’s approach both because they valued close attention to documentary sources and because they understood that this approach would have a deleterious effect on any dialogue with the LBI’s other branches. Indeed, from the late 1950s to the mid-1960s, Blumenfeld would be at the center of ideological friction between the Jerusalem branch and both London and, especially, New York.

In the 1950s and 1960s, the Jerusalem LBI’s activities proceeded mainly along lines laid down by Hans Tramer, who together with Shalom Adler-Rudel was responsible for the institute’s daily administration. Siegfried Moses, president of the international LBI and chairman of the Jerusalem branch’s board, did his best to avoid ideological confrontation, encouraging the compilation of documents and the publication of research. And in fact, despite the considerable stress laid in Jerusalem on an integrative concept of

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<sup>10</sup> On the radicalization of the German Zionist Federation in 1912, after an increase in the power of its younger members, led by Blumenfeld, and their appeal to all German Zionists to consider immigration to Palestine, see Jehuda Reinharz, *Fatherland or Promised Land: The Dilemma of the German Jew, 1893–1914*, Ann Arbor 1975, pp. 144–170.

<sup>11</sup> Kurt Blumenfeld to Siegfried Moses, March 2, 1956, *LBI Jerusalem*, file 1085.

<sup>12</sup> For the various, generally positive, evaluations of Toury’s study, see *LBI Jerusalem*, file 1027; for Blumenfeld’s view see Blumenfeld to Tramer, December 12, 1959, *LBI Jerusalem*, file 1014. The study was published several years later by the institute: Jacob Toury, *Die politischen Orientierungen der Juden in Deutschland. Von Jena bis Weimar*, Tübingen 1966 (Schriftenreihe wissenschaftlicher Abhandlungen des Leo Baeck Instituts 15)



German-Jewish history, most of the institute's work was invested in several historical projects with different, self-sufficient goals. A brief examination of these projects will offer further insight into how the Jerusalem directors envisaged their institute's objectives in practice.

One project on which the Jerusalem LBI was focusing in 1956 was the compiling of memoirs by German-born Jews in Israel. The project, which was coordinated by Eva Michaelis, involved appeals in the press by the institute's leaders for former German Jews to submit their family histories, interviews with emigrants (many elderly) in their homes, and library searches for documentary material.<sup>13</sup> Although in the late 1950s the project's headquarters were moved from Jerusalem to New York, the Jerusalem executive persisted in its documentation efforts, encouraging prospective subjects to commit their memoirs to writing for future readers. Another Jerusalem project, supported until the mid-1960s, was the publication of the volumes of *Germania Judaica* – the continuation of an ambitious German-Jewish historical enterprise that had been disrupted by the political realities of the late 1930s. Renewed work on the *Germania Judaica* project – specifically, completion of the second volume, mainly documenting the communal life of German Jews from 1350 to 1500 – was in effect a departure from the institute's original goals, but even Scholem, despite his objections to what he considered “uninteresting” topics, described this as a “debt of honor” the institute owed previous generations.<sup>14</sup>

A third project was dedicated to the history of the Zionist youth movements in Germany. The Jerusalem executive entrusted the project to Gerhard Holdheim, who worked on it for more than a year. In 1957 his manuscript was sent to several readers who concluded that it should not be published. It is clear from the readers' reports that their assessments were not based solely on the scholarly merits of Holdheim's work: one reader relied on his personal memories to raise objections; another accused Holdheim of giving insufficient space to the realization of Zionist values (i.e. Jewish settlement in Palestine) by graduates of the various Zionist movements, while others with the same Zionist orientation attributed some of what they viewed as the manuscript's failings to Holdheim's personal animosity towards some of the persons about whom he was writing. Holdheim was also accused of putting undue emphasis on controversial subjects (such as the erotic dimension of youth movement activities) and of inadequately treating key issues and central figures in some of the movements.<sup>15</sup> Nearly a decade later, the Jerusalem LBI's board asked another scholar to take up the subject: this time it was

<sup>13</sup> Report by Eva Michaelis April 12, 1956, *LBI Jerusalem*, file 1099.

<sup>14</sup> Minutes of the LBI London board meeting, October 16, 1955, pp. 2–3, *LBI Jerusalem*, file 1077.

<sup>15</sup> See A. P. Michaelis' evaluation, July 30, 1957, *LBI Jerusalem*, file 1099; Benno Cohn, December 18, 1957, *ibid.*; Blumenfeld to Tramer, January 1, 1958, *ibid.*

Chaim Schatzker, a young scholar of non-German origin, hence not personally acquainted with the German-Jewish youth movements.

## II

The Jerusalem LBI's understanding of its own nature and modes of operation largely depended on a clear conception of the prospective audience for its activities: was it an organization of and for German-speaking emigrants, working to preserve their culture and heritage? Should it rather aim for integration into Hebrew-speaking Israeli life? Or should it in fact direct its activities into wider, international channels? Each of these possibilities had its own implications regarding the language to be chosen for the institute's publications, the research topics to be considered worthy of support, and the values to be embraced as central to its activities. Statements by leaders of the institute over the years reveal an effort to avoid an unequivocal choice of prospective audience, apparently reflecting the desire for a balance between the different possibilities.

The question of prospective audience was already raised by the Jerusalem scholars involved in planning the May 1955 founding conference. At a preparatory meeting in April 1955, Adler-Rudel expressed his concern that German speakers might become isolated in Israeli society. Speaking of the growing "Israelization" of many former German Jews, he suggested that the conference appeal to a wider group among them and not limit itself to former members of the German-Zionist leadership. Curt Wormann, director of the National Library and member of the Jerusalem LBI's board, argued that in order to reach people other than former German Jews, the opening session of the conference should include a major public event featuring both Hebrew and English speakers. In addition, he suggested inviting prominent scholars and public figures of non-German origin such as Benzion Dinur. Other participants in the meeting argued, however, that the institute should indeed confine its activities to the German-Jewish circle – a program in Hebrew might even play to empty halls.<sup>16</sup> The founding conference, concluding with Ernst Simon's address, would be held in German, with no Israeli public figure of non-German origin participating. Still, a reluctance to ignore the wider Israeli public was evident in the institute's Hebrew announcement to the press, which described its activities in a spirit consistent with Zionist discourse. The Jerusalem institute's paramount goal was thus described as the collection and preservation of the cultural values and treasures of the Jews in Germany "as a possession of the entire Jewish people," the text then speaking

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<sup>16</sup> Minutes of the Israel Section of the Council of Jews from Germany, April 21, 1955, pp. 2–3; May 8, 1955, pp. 3–4; both in *LBI Jerusalem*, file 1018.

of the need “to gather together the scattered remnants of this immeasurably rich heritage for the sake of our children and for the sake of the House of Israel.”<sup>17</sup>

Several weeks after the founding conference, a suggestion was made at a meeting held at Ernst Simon’s house to draw Yitzhak Baer closer to the institute. Although of German origin, Baer had had little contact with the LBI’s German-Jewish circle, and the intent behind the suggestion was gaining greater recognition from the Israeli academic establishment.<sup>18</sup> But Baer, invited by Siegfried Moses to join the institute’s advisory committee, refused the invitation. It is striking that while Moses’s invitation to Baer was written in German, Baer chose to write his answer in Hebrew, explaining his refusal as follows:

As you know, I have much sympathy for some of the topics present in your plan of activities. On the other hand, I have reason to fear that your plan will ultimately lead – whether because of its content or because of the people involved – to conclusions with which I shall not be able to agree. I would therefore prefer not to join the advisory committee of your institute.<sup>19</sup>

As indicated, Baer represented a school advocating an integrative approach to Jewish history based on Jewish nationalist ideology. Speaking on behalf of the new Israeli historiography, he consequently refused to legitimize the only body in Israel doing historical research based on locus of origin.

In the Jerusalem LBI’s first decades of existence, the main channel for activities aimed at a prospective Israeli audience was its Hebrew publications. The issue of Hebrew had been raised in May 1955 at the very first meetings, and the first task the institute undertook in this area was a translation of Leo Baeck’s *Wesen des Judentums* into Hebrew. This book, as Ernst Simon argued, might interest the young, and its translation and publication were thus of great importance.<sup>20</sup> Already in 1956, a broader initiative was discussed involving cooperation between the institute and the Mossad Bialik publishing house in the translation and publication of classical works by German-Jewish authors such as Hermann Cohen, Franz Rosenzweig and Max Wiener.<sup>21</sup> Tramer, in a document outlining the initiative’s goals, presented a trilingual working plan attesting to the reading audience envisaged by the institute’s

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<sup>17</sup> *LBI Jerusalem*, file 1085.

<sup>18</sup> For a summary of the meeting, held at Simon’s home on June 18, 1955, see *LBI Jerusalem*, file 1031, p. 2.

<sup>19</sup> Moses to Baer (German), December 1955, Baer to Moses (Hebrew), January 11, 1956, *LBI Jerusalem*, file 1085.

<sup>20</sup> Minutes of the LBI Planning Committee, May 26, 1955, p. 2, *LBI Jerusalem*, file 1075.

<sup>21</sup> Minutes of the LBI Jerusalem board meeting, May 28, 1956, p. 2, *LBI Jerusalem*, file 1086A.

leaders.<sup>22</sup> Besides suggesting that English be given priority and that publication of scholarly material in German should be sustained, Tramer stressed that when it came to translations of classical German-Jewish literature, Hebrew should be given preferred status. These translations were finally undertaken starting in the late 1960s.

The question of how to reach young Israelis, primarily through translation, seemed increasingly urgent as the Jerusalem institute's founders became ever more aware of approaching generational change. From time to time, the question of accessibility of the institute's publications to a German reading audience was now also being raised. In 1963, in the context of a discussion of the difficulties involved in finding a young German-reading audience in Israel, Siegfried Moses argued that the institute should begin publishing in English and Hebrew, as well as in Spanish and Portuguese – all more important languages than German for younger Jewish readers. During a more general discussion of the institute's future, when doubts were raised regarding the possibility of generating any interest in the institute whatsoever on the part of younger Israelis, Curt Wormann observed that the heart of the problem seemed to lie as much in the institute as in the Israelis: the institute, he suggested, had not managed either to convey its basic tenets in Hebrew or promote Hebrew-language work in German-Jewish history, but persistence with Hebrew and greater attention paid to an Israeli audience might nevertheless lead to the emergence of a new generation of Israeli scholars.<sup>23</sup>

One person convinced of the importance of Hebrew translation and publication was Hugo Bergman – former close friend of Kafka and Kafka's friend Max Brod in Prague, now president of the Hebrew University and, since 1959, a member of the institute's board – who had initiated a project of translating the classical works of European philosophy into Hebrew<sup>24</sup>; he envisioned a similar project for German literary works, this time supported by the institute. In 1959, he thus suggested that translation of a novel by Brod entitled *Diesseits und Jenseits* would be “particularly timely” in a period “when our youth in Israel, which is supposed to continue our work, is devoured by nihilism and cynicism.”<sup>25</sup> Considerably later (1972), he would argue in a let-

<sup>22</sup> Tramer to Moses, July 10, 1956, *LBI Jerusalem*, file 1004 (IV).

<sup>23</sup> Minutes of the LBI Gesamtboard, October 21, 1963, pp. 8–10, *LBI Jerusalem*, file 159.

<sup>24</sup> Two of his most significant contributions in this context were the translation into Hebrew, together with Nathan Rotenstreich, of Kant's three critiques (Jerusalem 1954–1973) and a multivolume Hebrew history of philosophy (Jerusalem 1970–1979). See also Baruch Shohetman and Shlomo Shunami, *The Writings of Shmuel Hugo Bergman: A Bibliography 1903–1967*, Jerusalem 1968.

<sup>25</sup> Hugo Bergman to Hans Tramer, May 25, 1959, *LBI Jerusalem*, file 1004 (IV). See also Bergman's similar stand as to the importance of translating Felix Weltsch's *Gnade und Freiheit* into Hebrew: Minutes of the LBI Jerusalem board meeting, January 13, 1965, pp. 4–5, *LBI Jerusalem*, file 1086A.

ter to Siegfried Moses that the efforts of the Jerusalem LBI on behalf of German-language scholarship were contrary to the institute's underlying ideals, its policies thus being steered in the wrong direction. For Bergman, a concerned observer of Israeli political culture of the early 1970s, the distance between German Jews and other Israelis was one symptom of an increasing militarism and general decline in culture imperiling Israel's spiritual future – a development he termed “the Nimrod movement.”<sup>26</sup> Consequently, he saw the institute's primary task as instilling the basic values of German Jewry within Israeli society, and this not only for the sake of remembering a past heritage, but for that of reinforcing a vital element of its future self-image. Nevertheless, despite such policies and initiatives, the institute in effect continued to act – at least up until the early 1970s – chiefly as an emigrants' association. The meetings of the board and administrative correspondence were conducted in German; both the LBI's series of scholarly publications entitled the *Schriftenreihe*, published since 1959 by Mohr Siebeck in Tübingen but edited out of Jerusalem,<sup>27</sup> and the quarterly LBI *Bulletin* published in Tel Aviv (see below) appeared in German as well. The general influence of the Leo Baeck Institute on Israeli historiography was marginal. Things began to change in the early 1970s, but before we consider that development, let us examine the different aspects of LBI Jerusalem's activities in the 1950s and 1960s, as a cultural association serving a group of German-speaking emigrants in Israel, on the one hand, and as a branch of the international LBI representing the Zionist-Israeli portion of the world's German-Jewish emigrants, on the other.

### III

In 1956, the members of the London LBI board met to discuss the establishment of a “friends' association” for the institution.<sup>28</sup> At this point, the idea was to establish such associations for each of the three centers; in practice, the only real efforts in that direction would be undertaken by the Jerusalem branch, mainly with the support of Jews from Germany now living in Israel, headed by veteran members of the Zionist student organization known as the *Kartell jüdischer Verbindungen*. The fact that the Jerusalem institute proceeded in such a manner, also trying to enlist members of this organization by advertising in Israel's German-language press, illustrates its essentially pa-

<sup>26</sup> Hugo Bergman to Siegfried Moses, November 17, 1972, *Central Zionist Archives* (CZA), file A 376/49.

<sup>27</sup> The bulk of material belonging to the *Schriftenreihe* began to be edited out of London starting in the 1970s.

<sup>28</sup> Minutes of the LBI London board meeting, August 20, 1956, p. 2, *LBI Jerusalem*, file 1075.

rochial identity at this point, its incapacity to reach out successfully to a wider Israeli audience.<sup>29</sup> The association began functioning in the spring of 1957; it held several meetings and initiated some activities, mainly in Tel Aviv, also opening a branch in Haifa. Towards the end of 1957 the number of registered members had reached 140.<sup>30</sup>

From the start efforts to establish the association were linked with a decision to publish a new periodical, the language question here again coming to the fore. Hans Tramer had already pointed out at the beginning of 1957 how difficult it was for German immigrants to read English, and a few months later Franz Meyer, the association's chairman, reported that some people had canceled their membership after learning that the *Year Book* was published in English.<sup>31</sup> The decision was thus made to publish the bulletin of the friends' association in German, this publication – which Tramer had agreed to edit – being envisioned as directed at those to whom the *Year Book* was inaccessible; that is, German-born Jews not living in England or the States. Here not only those in Israel but also South America – with whom, despite the geographical distance, the Jerusalem LBI had worked to maintain contact – were especially borne in mind.<sup>32</sup> Alongside original contributions, Tramer planned to include translations of selected articles from the *Year Book* in the *Bulletin*. The articles would be shorter than those in the *Year Book*, as the *Bulletin* was meant for a less scholarly readership and as a vehicle for information about the institute's current activities. It is clear from Tramer's correspondence with Kreutzberger in New York and Weltsch in London that all three men considered the *Bulletin* to be potentially very important as an organ representing the Leo Baeck Institute in its entirety, Jerusalem being seen as the most auspicious location for its editing and publication.<sup>33</sup> The *Bulletin* began to appear in August 1957, under the title of *Bulletin für die Mitglieder der Gesellschaft der Freunde des Leo Baeck Instituts*; in 1961 it both simplified and generalized its name, henceforth appearing as the *Bulletin des Leo Baeck Instituts*.

In the opening article of the *Bulletin's* first issue, Tramer described the LBI's work, raising the question – reflecting a typical perspective in Israel in the 1950s – of whether the idea of an “emancipatory era” for Judaism re-

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<sup>29</sup> See the discussion in Minutes of the LBI Jerusalem board meeting, December 10, 1956, pp. 1–2, *LBI Jerusalem*, file 1086A.

<sup>30</sup> M. Awieser, Report on the activities of Gesellschaft der Freunde des LBI, November 11, 1957 *CZA*, file A 376/03.

<sup>31</sup> Hans Tramer to Robert Weltsch, January 1, 1957, *LBI Jerusalem*, file 1004 (VIII); Minutes of the Jerusalem board meeting, June 20, 1957, pp. 4–5, *LBI Jerusalem*, file 1086A.

<sup>32</sup> Minutes of the LBI Jerusalem board meeting, June 20, 1957, p. 3, *LBI Jerusalem*, file 1086A. See also the discussion of Ernst Simon's trip to South America in summer 1958 as the Institute's representative, in his October 1958 report, *LBI Jerusalem*, file 1016.

<sup>33</sup> See various letters from June and July 1957, *LBI Jerusalem*, file 1099.

mained valid after the establishment of the state of Israel. In his description of the institute's function, he stressed both its ideally neutral non-apologetic nature as a forum for research and its potential to promote a necessary re-evaluation of the heritage of emancipation-era Jewry. The LBI, he indicated, would examine the past with an eye to its underlying significance thus distinguishing itself from the universities, where research systematically dealt with details.<sup>34</sup> It is here striking that Tramer, although a self-confessed disciple of Blumenfeld, hence unquestionably a committed Zionist, made no reference to the fact that the *Bulletin* was appearing in Jerusalem: it would seem a reflection of his wish to further its acceptance as the international organ of the friends' association.

A second article in that first issue of the *Bulletin*, written by Franz Meyer, dealt with more topical problems.<sup>35</sup> In line with what has been indicated above, Meyer described the association as a "book community" that through the *Bulletin* would help maintain contact between the different communities of German Jews, particularly those in Israel, Europe, and South America. At this point Meyer took up the question of why the Israeli friend's society was not using Hebrew as its main language: immigrants to Israel from Central Europe had been actively involved in many aspects of the consolidation of the Israeli state; at the same time, the country's geopolitical situation, the tensions resulting from a hostile environment, as well as what he viewed as the inferior starting point of its cultural development due to mass immigration from the Oriental countries, all made it difficult for the society to recognize the meaning of the German-Jewish heritage. The problem, Meyer argued, could not be solved through Hebrew translations alone, and for that reason the Jerusalem LBI and friends' association were active primarily in German.<sup>36</sup>

Meyer's position reveals a tension, widely shared by the Jerusalem LBI's founders, between, on the one hand, faith in Zionism and a perceived need to lessen intercommunal differences and, on the other, a desire to preserve cultural uniqueness, often expressed in what from our perspective was, in Israel's demographic-political context, an arrogant and patronizing manner. While Meyer attributed the linguistic seclusion of the friends' association to demographic developments in Israel, such isolation was by no means new. Even before the establishment of the state, many Central European immigrants had been frustrated by their inability to regain their wide cultural horizons in a Hebrew-language context.<sup>37</sup> Future development within the Je-

<sup>34</sup> Hans Tramer, "Die geschichtliche Aufgabe," in *Bulletin für die Mitglieder der Gesellschaft der Freunde des Leo Baeck Instituts*, no. 1 (1957), pp. 1–6.

<sup>35</sup> Franz Meyer, "Die Gesellschaft der Freunde des Leo Baeck Institute," *Bulletin für die Mitglieder der Gesellschaft der Freunde des Leo Baeck Institute*, no. 1 (1957), pp. 6–9.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 8.

<sup>37</sup> Agnes Viest, *Identität und Integration. Dargestellt am Beispiel mitteleuropäischer Ein-*

Jerusalem LBI would show that there was truth in the positions taken by both Meyer and Bergman: Israel's Hebrew-language culture was indeed enriched by increased contact, in translation, of the values brought over by the German-Jewish immigrants; at the same time, it was only in the 1970s, and more so in the following decades, that any significant number of "sabras" became strongly and directly interested in the heritage offered Israel by German Jewry.

Among the items published in the *Bulletin* were articles translated from the *Year Book*, original articles, memoirs, and news about the institute's activities. From time to time, issues were devoted to specific topics such as Austrian Jewry (no. 10 [no vol.]), the history of antisemitism (vol. 4, no. 16), and the period of the Third Reich (vol. 6, no. 24). The quarterly's editorial policies reflected a broad definition of the LBI's activities, and an effort to clarify basic questions tied to German Judaism by presenting a broad range of views.<sup>38</sup> Most of the contributions were written by Israelis, some (including Simon, Scholem and Blumenfeld) belonging to the group that had directed the Jerusalem institute, others (including Jacob Toury and Mordechai Eliav), being younger German-born Israeli historians. The *Bulletin's* most prolific author was Tramer himself; he contributed several dozen articles, some of them introductions to topical issues, others exploring issues related to art and literature.

In two of the earliest issues (no. 8 [no vol.] and vol. 4, no. 15), Tramer publicized the LBI's efforts to collect unpublished letters, memoirs, and other subjective documentation, which Tramer argued in the introduction to no. 8 was crucial for historical understanding.<sup>39</sup> In his role as editor of the *Bulletin*, as one of those responsible for maintaining the routine operation of the Jerusalem LBI, and as editor of the *Schriftenreihe*, Tramer tried to realize his belief in the institute's mission while coping with pressures from different directions. A committed Zionist, he nevertheless tried, together with Siegfried Moses, to mold the institute in such a way that every Jew from Germany could feel an affinity with it. The difficulty he had in achieving a balance between his Zionism and pluralistic aspirations was addressed in rather harsh comments made about him in a pair of letters written by colleagues in the early 1960s. In late November 1961, Max Kreutzberger, the director of the

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*wanderer in Israel*, Frankfurt am Main 1977, pp. 97–98; Curt D. Wormann, "German Jews in Israel: Their Cultural Situation since 1933," in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 15 (1970), p. 76.

<sup>38</sup> Hans Tramer to Elmar Wernar, September 9, 1963, *LBI Jerusalem*, file 1004 (VIII).

<sup>39</sup> Hans Tramer, "Lebenszeugnisse," in *Bulletin für die Mitglieder der Gesellschaft der Freunde des Leo Baeck Instituts*, no. 8 (1959), pp. 173–179. See also Hans Tramer, "Briefsammlungen und ihre Bedeutung für die historische Forschung," in *Bulletin des Leo Baeck Instituts*, no. 15 (1961), pp. 169–170.



New York LBI, wrote to Hans Liebeschütz in Britain, outlining his views on objectivity in historical research.<sup>40</sup> Kreutzberger, who advocated a historiographical approach rejecting value judgments made *a posteriori*, described Tramer in his letter as embracing precisely that, in other words believing that an account of German Jewry's past should be based on an assessment of its national behavior. For Kreutzberger, such a position revealed unacceptable prejudice regarding Jewish assimilation into German society, which was by no means inevitably headed towards failure and catastrophe. He thus viewed Tramer as personifying a Zionist outlook that distorted objective historical judgment, producing in hindsight condemnation of post-emancipation German Jewry.

Less than a year later, Tramer was the target of even harsher comments in a personal letter to Siegfried Moses from a veteran Zionist leader and former member of the Revisionist movement, Richard Lichtheim.<sup>41</sup> Lichtheim claimed that the *Bulletin* represented "post-Zionist assimilation" – thus coining an adjective that would become part of Israeli historiographical discourse some thirty years later. "What is now going on in the Baeck Institute under the mask of pretended historical research," he indicated, "is a spiritual return to assimilation, a homecoming, full of longing, to the world of *petit-bourgeois* German synagogue-Judaism and German-Jewish quasi-intellectual coffee-house Judaism, totally ignoring Zionism." Proceeding to condemn the institute's publications which, Lichtheim suggested, made it seem as if those in the *Centralverein* had displayed the same good faith as the Zionists, he then identified Tramer as a prime representative of this trend, commenting that "Mr Tramer ... was obviously born a century too late. He should have been chairman of the association for Jewish history and literature in Krotoschin or Zabrze." Hence where Kreutzberger had indicated that Zionism had inspired Tramer to pronounce an unjustifiably critical verdict on assimilation, Lichtheim accused him of the very opposite, namely, of having adopted an overly tolerant approach to the assimilatory German-Jewish heritage. Tramer's efforts to bridge the gap between his Zionist faith and his desire to keep the Jerusalem LBI open to both the major German-Jewish positions were thus censured on both sides: non-Zionists felt that Zionism was distorting his sense of judgment, while a committed Zionist like Lichtheim considered his position, in its legitimizing of other historical approaches, as tantamount to a rejection of Zionism. The contrast between these two critiques demonstrates the complex nature of the task Tramer had undertaken. A letter he sent to Scholem in the summer of 1960 sheds light

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<sup>40</sup> Max Kreutzberger to Hans Liebeschütz, November 2, 1961, CZA, file A 376/94.

<sup>41</sup> Richard Lichtheim to Siegfried Moses, September 7, 1962, *Jewish National and University Library*, Jerusalem, Scholem Archive, Arc. 40 1599/252.

on his personal perspective.<sup>42</sup> Tramer here distinguished between the historical approach of the German-Jewish tradition of liberalism, identified with the *Centralverein*, which tended to treat the Nazi catastrophe as a kind of irrational outburst, a hiatus in German history, and the approach of, as he put it, “we Zionists,” tending to view that catastrophe as demolishing an erroneous historical construct. Tramer was convinced that the Jewish past in Germany should be examined “without the famous self-delusions of the Jews”; he correspondingly spoke of the need to release the history of the Jews in Germany from the bonds of German historiography.<sup>43</sup>

One aspect of Tramer’s sense of the LBI’s purpose, as revealed in his letter to Scholem, involved an awareness of the problematic nature of the transition from a direct *memory* of past events to their *historical portrayal*.<sup>44</sup> Historical writing, he argued, dictates a measure of distance that cannot be found in memoirs, which are more subjective in nature, their authors inclined to look at the past in a judgmental fashion; the historian’s work involved both a measure of identification with the research object and a measure of objective distance from it – a stance clearly not corresponding to Kreutzberger’s criticism of Tramer.

#### IV

From the start, both the LBI’s activities in its three centers and cooperation between veterans of the *CV* and the *ZVfD* were marked by an inherent ideological tension. Aware of the problem, the institute’s founders had tried to neutralize it. At the conclusion of a meeting held in London in October 1955, at which representatives from each of the centers were present, Leo Baeck himself insisted that the LBI’s role should be research – not that of “an arena for ideological disputes.”<sup>45</sup> Such declarations notwithstanding, heightened tension between the centers was almost inevitable, on both ideological and organizational levels. During the LBI’s first years it had been understood that Jerusalem, where everything had started, should serve as the institute’s main center. However, the growing dominance of the New York branch

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<sup>42</sup> Hans Tramer to Gershom Scholem, August 3, 1960, *Ibid*.

<sup>43</sup> In this regard there is a striking parallel between Tramer’s position and that of Shulamit Volkov thirty years later, as presented in her article “Reflections on German-Jewish Historiography: A Dead End or a New Beginning?” in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 15 (1996), pp. 309–320.

<sup>44</sup> On this distinction see Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, Chicago and London 1992. For a more contemporary expression of the distinction see Jan Assmann, *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis*, Munich 1992, p. 64.

<sup>45</sup> Minutes of the LBI London board meeting, October 16, 1955, p. 5, *LBI Jerusalem*, file 1075.

could not be ignored; in June 1957 Moses reported as much to the Jerusalem board – patterns of cooperation had to be redefined.<sup>46</sup> For its part the New York LBI resisted efforts by the Jerusalem scholars, above all Gershom Scholem, to interfere in their work; to this end they did their best to avoid meetings of the New York executive when Scholem was in town.<sup>47</sup> Toward the end of 1958, after the New York institute had directly proposed a policy of decentralization, the Jerusalem board held a tense meeting. Despite objections by Buber, Wormann and Scholem, the pragmatists led by Siegfried Moses won the day, the policy shift thus being accepted.<sup>48</sup>

The connection between organizational relations on the one hand and ideological tension between former *ZVfD* and *CV* members on the other hand was particularly evident in various statements by Kurt Blumenfeld, who was vehemently opposed to Siegfried Moses's tendency to compromise. In June 1958 he informed Tramer of his resignation from the board for reasons of health, sarcastically noting that "the Baeck Institute will lose nothing if I do not continue to participate. My resignation will leave a good impression on Reichmann, Kreutzberger and Gruenewald. Moses's position will tactically improve. You and Rudel will no longer have to go to the trouble of eliminating my unfriendly remarks about Kreutzberger, Gruenewald and Reichmann from the minutes."<sup>49</sup>

Blumenfeld added that while he was aware of the LBI's dependence on Siegfried Moses's organizational skills and appreciated his efforts, he nevertheless felt strongly that a real interest in the LBI's development was only present in Jerusalem. About six months later he informed Tramer that he was also resigning from the LBI's advisory board, at the same time denouncing Eva Reichmann's theses – he referred to her as an "apologist for Jew-hatred" – and sharply criticizing Robert Weltsch for his choice of articles for the third *Year Book*: Weltsch, he explained, had deferred to the anti-Zionist *Kartell-Convent deutscher Studenten jüdischen Glaubens* at the expense of German Zionism.<sup>50</sup> Blumenfeld felt that his colleagues in the German Zionist movement had abandoned him, leaving him virtually alone to struggle for

<sup>46</sup> Minutes of the LBI Jerusalem board meeting, June 20, 1957, *LBI Jerusalem*, file 1086A, pp. 2–3.

<sup>47</sup> Dr. Spier to Hans Tramer, January 16, 1957, *LBI Jerusalem*, file 1004 (VIII); Max Kreutzberger to Heinz Gerling, August 7, 1958, *LBI Jerusalem*, file 1018.

<sup>48</sup> Minutes of the LBI Jerusalem board meeting, November 27, 1958, *LBI Jerusalem*, file 1086A, pp. 1–5.

<sup>49</sup> Kurt Blumenfeld to Hans Tramer, June 27, 1958, *LBI Jerusalem*, file 1085.

<sup>50</sup> Blumenfeld to Tramer, January 6, 1959, *LBI Jerusalem*, file 1014; Blumenfeld to Tramer, January 11, 1959 and January 14, 1959, *LBI Jerusalem*, file 1085. Blumenfeld's predisposition towards judging historical writing by its treatment of Zionism was also manifest in his evaluation of a manuscript by Werner Mosse: see "Bemerkungen von Kurt Blumenfeld zu dem Entwurf das deutsche Judentum vor der Katastrophe 1930–1932," June 12, 1960, *LBI Jerusalem*, file 1010.

Zionism's proper place in the history of German Jewry. Faced with what he believed was a characteristic trend within the LBI to treat prominent figures with assimilatory tendencies as the symbols of German Jewry, he would now devote himself to his memoirs which, he maintained, would provide a true picture of assimilation and Zionism in Germany.<sup>51</sup>

The fact that Blumenfeld's memoirs were published a few years later by the Jerusalem institute annoyed members of the New York LBI. The ensuing dispute, which broke out too late for Blumenfeld to be involved himself (he would die in 1963) in a sense realized his desire to place Zionist criticism of German-Jewish assimilation on the agenda, even at the cost of disturbing the delicate web of relationships between the LBI's branches. The dispute was inaugurated with an appeal by George Manasse of the New York LBI to the institute's international board in September 1964.<sup>52</sup> It was doubtful, he indicated, that in publishing the memoirs and distributing them for pedagogic use in Germany, the LBI had chosen a text worthy of its ideals and purpose. "Whoever reads the Blumenfeld book," he indicated, "even without prejudice, must deny that it meets even the minimal prerequisites." Blumenfeld had accused German Jews of self-satisfaction and political blindness – a distorted portrayal. In a tone typical of the earlier *CV* criticism of the Zionists, Manasse suggested that Blumenfeld's ideas were in harmony with those held by antisemites – even that his denunciation of Walther Rathenau would remind German readers of Joseph Goebbels. Indeed, Manasse insisted, the Blumenfeld memoirs were dangerous: Blumenfeld's insistence that Jews in the Weimar Republic ought to have voluntarily accepted the status of second-class citizens in order to avoid the (for him otherwise inevitable) assimilation process might be understood to imply that on similar grounds the Jews in 1960s America should themselves willingly waive their civil rights. As an American Jew who believed in Jewish integration into American society, Manasse was thus accusing the LBI executive of disseminating a message undermining the American Jewish position and, in the process, the LBI's central goal of commemorating the German Jews.

Responding to Manasse's letter, Tramer tried to come to grips with the complexity of his own standpoint: as indicated, that of an Israeli, a Zionist, a former friend of Blumenfeld and editor of his memoirs; but also that of an LBI official, hence of someone desiring to maintain a dialogue between Jews from Germany now living in various countries.<sup>53</sup> Despite the new geographical and other circumstances, he indicated, the historical disputes char-

<sup>51</sup> Blumenfeld to Tramer, February 21, 1960, *LBI Jerusalem*, file 1014. Edited by Tramer, the memoirs were published two years later: Kurt Blumenfeld, *Erlebte Judenfrage. Ein Vierteljahrhundert deutscher Zionismus*, Stuttgart 1962.

<sup>52</sup> George Manasse to the LBI Jerusalem – London – New York – board and international committee, September 28, 1964, *CZA*, file A 376/222.

<sup>53</sup> Hans Tramer to George Manasse, February 20, 1965, *CZA*, file A 376/222.

acteristic of German Jewry since the emancipation seemed once again in play – disputes basically centered on the question of Jewish self-identity. Jews in Germany, and in fact all countries other than Israel, were confronted with a basic dilemma *vis-à-vis* the non-Jewish world: should they actively identify themselves as Jews, or was it preferable to fade anonymously into the host society? Blumenfeld's book, Tramer added, was an important historical document, recording the answer his own circle had proposed to this dilemma.

One might, to be sure, debate the specifics of Blumenfeld's account of pre-1933 German Jewry, but his conviction that as a whole it was living in error was shared by an important segment within it. It was, Tramer emphasized, the LBI's duty to publish any material important for the history of the German Jews, hence to reconstruct a "chorus of [German-Jewish] voices," including those of both the Zionists and the *CV*, and to do so on a solid historiographical basis:

Of course, most esteemed Herr Manasse, we are surely agreed that we should not resist an analysis of German Jewry before 1933 . . . . We surely do not want to write history as we would have liked it to be, as we wish to see it, but we must write history just as it happened! [*sondern wir müssen doch die Geschichte so schreiben, wie sie gewesen ist!*] We are not engaged in apologetics! I know perfectly well that there is much about and in our past that is less [than] pleasant, but writing history means seeing the whole, omitting nothing, concealing nothing, not suppressing or evading anything, not falsifying it!<sup>54</sup>

In the same letter, Tramer pointed to Blumenfeld's idea of *Distanz*, his reservations about German Jews rising to political and cultural power in Germany, as suggesting that the increasing prominence of Jews in American society seemed to harbor certain dangers: an argument for the timeliness of Blumenfeld's memoirs that – despite an accompanying acknowledgment of the differences between Germany and America – demonstrates how the debate about them had assumed the dimensions of an ideological confrontation.<sup>55</sup>

At one point, the New York LBI suggested publishing the exchange between Manasse and Tramer in the *Bulletin*, but Siegfried Moses rejected the idea, apprehensive that such a step might clash with the spirit of mutual tolerance meant to underly the institute's work, promising instead to include a report on the discussion in that same venue.<sup>56</sup> In his ensuing article, he ob-

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<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>55</sup> Manasse did not respond directly to Tramer's letter, but referred to it briefly in another letter to the executive a few months later, accusing Tramer of engaging in political propaganda: see George Manasse to Leo Baeck Institute, September 28, 1965, *CZA*, file A 376/222.

<sup>56</sup> Siegfried Moses to Max Kreutzberger, April 26, 1965; Max Kreutzberger to Siegfried Moses, December 17, 1965; Max Kreutzberger to George Manasse, December 17, 1965, all three in *CZA*, file A 376/222.

served that the Jews in Israel, as well as in the USA and England, were now firmly enough established to be able to resume the polemics that had taken up so much of their time in the past. He then outlined his own belief that the disparate views held by former German Jews were of central interest to the LBI.<sup>57</sup>

## V

As mentioned earlier, the Leo Baeck Institute had always intended to make the emancipation and post-emancipation eras of German Jewry its primary point of focus. While this placed a *terminus a quo* in the eighteenth century, there was no definite *terminus ad quem*. In May 1955 Tramer touched upon the question when he suggested that the institute simply disregard the post-1933 period, but Buber expressed his disapproval of the suggestion from the start, and it never became official LBI policy.<sup>58</sup>

Although two of the first publications in the Jerusalem institute's *Schriftenreihe* series were concerned directly with the post-1933 period,<sup>59</sup> until the early 1960s there were no discussions in this LBI branch of the approach to be taken to the years 1933–1939, during which many board members had been active in the German-Jewish leadership.<sup>60</sup> The issue was first raised by the veteran Zionist leader Benno Cohn in a meeting held on March 16, 1961; Cohn had served as co-chairman of the *ZVfD* from 1936 until immigrating to Palestine in 1939; he had been a member of the Jerusalem LBI board since 1959.<sup>61</sup> The timing of this development was not accidental. On the eve of the Eichmann trial, the Holocaust had begun to figure prominently in Israeli public discourse; the theme had been more or less marginalized in the 1950s.<sup>62</sup> A few weeks after the meeting, on April 25, 1961, Cohn himself testified as one of the first witnesses at the trial; in doing so he basically took on

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<sup>57</sup> Siegfried Moses, "Weltanschauliche Unterschiede im deutschen Judentum," in *Bulletin des Leo Baeck Instituts*, vol. 8, no. 32, (1965), pp. 346–351.

<sup>58</sup> Minutes of the Arbeitsplanungskommission des Leo Baeck Instituts, May 26, 1955, p. 2, *LBI Jerusalem*, file 1075, pp. 3–4.

<sup>59</sup> Ernst Simon, *Aufbau im Untergang. Jüdische Erwachsenenbildung im nationalsozialistischen Deutschland als geistiger Widerstand*, Tübingen 1959 (Schriftenreihe wissenschaftlicher Abhandlungen des Leo Baeck Instituts 2); Herbert Freedman, *Jüdisches Theater in Nazideutschland*, Tübingen 1964.

<sup>60</sup> For the delayed confrontation with the Nazi period by the LBI as a whole, see the article by Jürgen Matthäus in this volume.

<sup>61</sup> See Minutes of a talk to the LBI Jerusalem board members, March 16, 1961, *LBI Jerusalem*, file 159.

<sup>62</sup> The public atmosphere in Israel while the Eichmann trial was in progress is discussed by Hanna Yablonka, *The State of Israel vs. Adolf Eichmann* (Hebrew), Tel Aviv 2001. See also Tom Segev's controversial book *The Seventh Million: The Israelis and the Holocaust*, New York 1993.

the role within the trial as representative of German Jewry. Quite probably, his preparation for taking the stand and the experience itself spurred his desire to promote research by the LBI into the Nazi period.

Most members of the Jerusalem board supported Cohn's initiative, some even stressing that it was the LBI's duty to sponsor such research.<sup>63</sup> Shalom Adler-Rudel pointed out that since German scholars would most probably soon take an interest in the period, the institute should aim to publish relevant material from a standpoint other than what could be expected from the Germans.<sup>64</sup> Most of those who spoke up at the May 1961 meeting agreed on the advisability of concentrating on the activities of the Jewish leadership in the 1930s, although some felt it might also be necessary to treat the background to the persecution of the Jews. Blumenfeld's arguments deviated from the consensus – he did not want the LBI to deal with the Nazi period, for fear that pre-1933 events might be forgotten. As he saw things, the fate of the German Jews and their unheroic behavior under the Nazis, as opposed to the heroic behavior of the Warsaw ghetto fighters, could be explained by considering Jewish life in Germany before Nazi oppression became a reality. Blumenfeld denied that the German-Jewish leadership of the 1930s had produced any significant achievements; accordingly, he thought it was pointless to consider its activities.<sup>65</sup> This viewpoint was roundly condemned by Ernst Simon, calling on his own first-hand memories: already living in Palestine, he had returned to Germany in 1933 to work for the *Mittelstelle für jüdische Erwachsenenbildung*. German Jewry, that “ostensibly dry branch of the Jewish people,” had drawn upon surprisingly vital reserves, its conduct in the 1930s embodying the best in German and general European culture.<sup>66</sup>

Despite Blumenfeld's objections, the May discussion ended with a clear-cut decision to support research on the 1930s; the Jerusalem institute now issued an appeal to the general public to provide documents and evidence.<sup>67</sup> This, however, by no means marked the end to heated debates over German-Jewish leadership during the Nazi period; less than two years later, such debates intensified as a response to the theses presented in Hannah Arendt's series of articles on the Eichmann trial, first published in the *New Yorker* in 1961 and appearing in book form in 1963. In Jerusalem, the reaction to Arendt's theses – her direct attack on Leo Baeck and on the leaders of German Zion-

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<sup>63</sup> A. P. Michaelis, Curt Wormann, Ernst Simon and Hans Tramer, in S. Adler-Rudel's report to LBI Jerusalem board members, May 5, 1961, *LBI Jerusalem*, file 1086A.

<sup>64</sup> S. Adler-Rudel's report to LBI Jerusalem board members, May 5, 1961, *LBI Jerusalem*, file 1086A.

<sup>65</sup> Minutes of the LBI Jerusalem board meeting, May 14, 1961, pp. 5–6, *LBI Jerusalem*, file 1086A.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 8.

<sup>67</sup> *Verpflichtung zur Geschichtsschreibung* (no date), *LBI Jerusalem*, file 1038.

ism, some of them members of the *Reichsvertretung*, for putative collaboration with the Nazis – was particularly indignant. Siegfried Moses contacted Arendt directly, warning her that the LBI would “declare war” on her ideas.<sup>68</sup> The two met in Basel on March 20 1963 for a long talk, Moses presenting Arendt with his objections; he could persuade her only to moderate some of her phraseology in the future German version of her book.<sup>69</sup>

In May 1963, following publication of Arendt’s book, the institute decided to publish a booklet opposing her arguments – an initiative criticized by the New York LBI, with members of the LBI’s friends’ association in Germany (see below) objecting to plans to distribute the pamphlet there.<sup>70</sup> In Jerusalem, Moses and Tramer set about enlisting the help of Buber, whose international prestige, they believed, would help disseminate the booklet outside Israel. Buber, however, was reluctant to align himself with its outspoken tenor, preferring to contribute a brief afterword in a personal vein, gently chiding Arendt.<sup>71</sup> The booklet was published in 3,000 copies by Bitan Publishers, Tel Aviv, after a German publishing house, Piper, declined to publish it.<sup>72</sup> Four articles followed Siegfried Moses’s introduction, three of the articles written by Israelis (Kurt Loewenstein, Hans Tramer and Ernst Simon), the longest being Simon’s.<sup>73</sup> Both Moses and Tramer noted the publication of Gershom Scholem’s open letter to Arendt, which Scholem had preferred publishing in the press.<sup>74</sup>

Though the institute would not be able to persuade Hannah Arendt to change her approach, its participation in the controversy was important inso-

<sup>68</sup> For the term “declaration of war,” see Hannah Arendt to Siegfried Moses, March 12, 1963, *LBI Jerusalem*, file 1011B.

<sup>69</sup> Memo from Siegfried Moses, Jerusalem, March 24, 1963, *LBI Jerusalem*, file 1074. For a discussion of the controversy over both Raul Hilberg and Hannah Arendt in the context of the New York LBI, see the following article by Mitchell Hart. For the controversy’s wider ramifications in the context of the international LBI, see the article by Jürgen Matthäus later in this volume.

<sup>70</sup> Fritz Bamberger to Max Kreuzberger, May 17, 1963; Max Kreuzberger to Hans Tramer, May 21, 1963, both in *LBI Jerusalem*, file 1074; Ernst Noam to Hans Tramer, May 24, 1963, file 1004 (VIII).

<sup>71</sup> Telefonische Unterredung zwischen Prof. Buber und Dr. Moses, June 20, 1963, *LBI Jerusalem*, file 1011B; Martin Buber, “Nachbemerkung,” in *Nach dem Eichmann Prozess. Zu einer Kontroverse über die Haltung der Juden*, Council of Jews from Germany, Tel Aviv 1963, pp. 99–101.

<sup>72</sup> Siegfried Moses to Hans Tramer, July 14, 1963, *LBI Jerusalem*, file 1004 (VIII); H. Gerling to Mrs. Alro’i, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, August 21, 1963, *LBI Jerusalem*, file 1011 B.

<sup>73</sup> Ernst Simon, “Hannah Arendt – eine Analyse,” in *Nach dem Eichmann Prozess*, pp. 51–97.

<sup>74</sup> For an English translation of the letter, which was written on June 23, 1963, see Anthony Skinner (ed.), *Gershom Scholem: A Life in Letters, 1914–1982*, Cambridge MA and London 2002, pp. 394–398.



far as it solidified a distinct position regarding German-Jewish conduct in the Nazi period. A few months later, Tramer devoted a whole issue of the *Bulletin* to the period of the Third Reich, emphasizing in his introductory article that 1933 should not signify the end-point of the institute's historical research.<sup>75</sup> Toward the end of 1963, the issue of systematic documentation of and research on the 1930s again surfaced strongly in the Jerusalem institute, with a focus on Jewish life in Germany and the Jewish reaction to Nazi policies.<sup>76</sup> While the initiative for this came from the institute's founding generation, its implementation, as we shall see below, was the fruit of a group of younger Israeli historians – among them Shaul Esh, Avraham Margalio, Joseph Walk and Otto Dov Kulka.

## VI

In its early years, the Jerusalem LBI's founders had been acutely aware of their particular historical role – an awareness manifest in the following statement of Buber at a board meeting held in Jerusalem in April 1959:

The point is that today there are still people who not only approach the subject of "German Jewry" from the outside but are still inside, thus being capable of depicting the specific qualities that the coming historian will never be able to grasp. The question thus arises of whether, with the help of these people, who still exist – we should indeed take an "inventory" of them – people who really know about the German Jewry of our time, a work can emerge capable of grasping the particularity of the nature [Art], fate, relationships and contexts of German Jewry.<sup>77</sup>

As Jan Assmann has suggested, the imminent and actual death of witnesses is a basis for the emergence of cultural memory.<sup>78</sup> In their own reference to the approaching death of witnesses, Buber's words pointed to his own experience and that of his contemporaries as building blocks for German Jewry's long-term cultural memory. A few years after this pronouncement, Buber had an opportunity to advance his own vision. In July 1963, he decided to donate most of his Erasmus Prize money to the Jerusalem LBI for a research project meant to present European Jewry in general and German Jewry in particular in a broad historical context, with a discussion of the universal significance of the Jewish catastrophe. There was agreement with-

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<sup>75</sup> Hans Tramer, "Rückblick und Vergegenwärtigung," in *Bulletin des Leo Baeck Instituts*, no. 24 (1963), pp. 293–294.

<sup>76</sup> Minutes of a talk about archival questions at the Library of Leo Baeck Institute, October 17, 1963, *LBI Jerusalem*, file 1086A.

<sup>77</sup> Minutes of the LBI Jerusalem board meeting, April 8, 1959, p. 1, *LBI Jerusalem*, file 159.

<sup>78</sup> Assmann, *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis*, p. 33.

in the institute that the resulting book would be co-authored by Robert Weltsch and Ernst Simon,<sup>79</sup> but after Buber's death in 1965, his prize-money was put to other uses.

Buber's vision of a comprehensive, one-volume description of the German-Jewish heritage by those who had experienced its end was thus never realized. Nevertheless, a look at the titles published by the Jerusalem LBI in its first two decades illustrates the biographical affinities between the various writers and their topics. Among these titles were autobiographical memoirs like those of Blumenfeld, but also the volumes of the *Schriftenreihe* – mention has already been made of Simon's account of Jewish education and culture and Herbert Freeden's book about Jewish theater in Nazi Germany.<sup>80</sup> Also worth mentioning in this connection is a study of the Jewish community of Danzig in the 1930s by Erwin Lichtenstein, who had himself been a Jewish communal leader in that city.<sup>81</sup> Likewise, Shalom Adler-Rudel, who had assisted Jewish emigrants to Germany from Eastern Europe before the Nazi advent to power and had served in the *Reichsvertretung* in the 1930s, published two books in the *Schriftenreihe* concerned with his activities.<sup>82</sup> In any event, the Jerusalem LBI could not have continued functioning for any length of time relying solely on authors who were privileged with such direct experience. In the course of the 1960s, meetings frequently opened with an announcement of the death of one of the founding members or one or another of their associates, with ensuing discussions of the need to locate younger scholars interested in continuing the institute's work. In 1968, Siegfried Moses observed that "the number of available people from our generation is becoming gradually smaller, and we lack reinforcements to whom our task can be entrusted. We shall have to resign ourselves to the fact that in the near or far future people will be sitting in the executive of the institute who will no longer have a well-grounded, intuitive feeling for what actually happened [*für das, was wirklich geschehen ist*]."<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> For the awarding of the Erasmus Prize and the plans for the project see various documents in *LBI Jerusalem*, file 1009; see also discussion of Martin's Buber suggestion concerning the Erasmus Prize, October 21, 1963, *LBI Jerusalem*, file 159.

<sup>80</sup> See above, n. 59.

<sup>81</sup> Erwin Lichtenstein, *Die Juden der freien Stadt Danzig unter der Herrschaft des Nationalsozialismus*, Tübingen 1973 (*Schriftenreihe wissenschaftlicher Abhandlungen des Leo Baeck Instituts* 27).

<sup>82</sup> S. Adler-Rudel, *Ostjuden in Deutschland 1880–1940. Zugleich eine Geschichte der Organisationen die sie betreuten*, Tübingen 1959 (*Schriftenreihe wissenschaftlicher Abhandlungen des Leo Baeck Instituts* 1); S. Adler-Rudel, *Jüdische Selbsthilfe unter dem Naziregime 1933–1939. Im Spiegel der Berichte der Reichsvertretung der Juden in Deutschland*, Tübingen 1974 (*Schriftenreihe wissenschaftlicher Abhandlungen des Leo Baeck Instituts* 29).

<sup>83</sup> Minutes of the LBI Jerusalem board meeting, February 25, 1968, p. 2, *LBI Jerusalem*, file 1086A.

An overview of the Jerusalem LBI's development from the late 1960s to the 1990s points to mainly younger historians of German-Jewish origin as being the ones who ensured the institute's continuity. The concerns of these historians were not identical with the concerns of their predecessors; their primary affiliation was with the academic institutions where they worked and had studied. Nevertheless, their research did shore up the institute in an important manner, and eventually some of them were willing to take on the burden of its administration.

These historians had been part and parcel of German Jewry during its downfall, but were of course too young to have occupied leadership positions at the time. Among them, Jacob Toury, much of whose important work would be published by the institute, had been a member of the *Werkleute* youth group before arriving in Palestine at the age of twenty, and Uriel Tal – another prolific historian and the son of Israel Taubes, an old friend and contemporary of the Jerusalem LBI's founders – had arrived in Israel at the age of eleven and would serve in the Haganah.<sup>84</sup> Another prominent representative of this younger generation was the German-born Shaul Esh, who had come to Israel with Youth Aliyah in the late 1930s. With a focus of interest on antisemitism and the Holocaust, Esh maintained good contacts with the institute, becoming a member of its board in 1968; his tragic death in a traffic accident a few months later was a significant loss to the world of historical scholarship.<sup>85</sup>

Avraham Margalioṭ was a contemporary of Esh; in 1971 he completed a doctoral dissertation on Jewish organizations in Germany in the 1930s; he was in contact with the Jerusalem institute from the mid-1960s onwards. Institute director Yochanan Ginat (formerly Hans Gärtner) commented on Margalioṭ's dissertation in a long letter that serves as a compelling example of dialogue between the two generations of German-born Jews then active in the institute. The age difference between Ginat, born in 1908, and Margalioṭ, born in 1920, was only twelve years, but these years were important: Ginat had taught in the Zionist "Theodor Herzl School" in Berlin in the 1930s, while Margalioṭ had left Germany in 1938 as a high-school student in Chemnitz. Ginat's reaction to Margalioṭ's "complaint" (Ginat's term) that the

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<sup>84</sup> For Toury's book, see Jacob Toury, *Die politischen Orientierungen der Juden in Deutschland. Von Jena bis Weimar*, Tübingen 1966 (Schriftenreihe wissenschaftlicher Abhandlungen des Leo Baeck Instituts 15). For discussions and diverging views of Tal's work, see various documents in *LBI Jerusalem*, file 1013.

<sup>85</sup> See Simon's eulogy for Esh at an LBI executive meeting: Minutes of the LBI Jerusalem board meeting, December 11, 1968, pp. 1–2, *LBI Jerusalem*, file 1086A. A selection of Esh's articles was published as a joint venture of the Hebrew University, *Yad Vashem*, and the Leo Baeck Institute: Shaul Esh, *Studies in the Holocaust and Contemporary Jewry* (Hebrew), Jerusalem 1973.

German Jews had not reacted more militantly to the Nazis' rise to power is telling evidence of the generation gap at work here:

It is not sufficiently clear to me what you mean by the expression "militant reaction," and what you think were the possible avenues for such a reaction ... . I do not suppose that by "militant" you mean armed resistance. Possibly, then, you are referring to a militant reaction in the political arena; but again, I ask, how could such a war have been waged? Indeed, from the very first day of the new regime all political action and any political struggle were halted, except for the struggle among the rulers themselves ... . Possibly you mean an appeal to the international public, Jewish and non-Jewish alike. Such an appeal might have been a two-edged sword, and it would hardly have yielded any positive result.<sup>86</sup>

Another issue that Ginat thought should be presented from his generation's perspective was the attitude of German Jews, including Zionists, to German culture and the German language:

The Zionists of Germany never understood the return to Judaism as something that might clash with their devotion to European and German culture. Ideally speaking, they worked for a fusion of those two elements ... . For the Zionists of Germany, National Socialism did not successfully create an identity between German culture and Nazi culture ... . The question of severing ties with German culture in the Hitler years and later is one that can be viewed in different ways, but not necessarily as something astonishing.

Although Ginat had had a Zionist background in Germany and was the first director of the Jerusalem LBI to carry on much of his correspondence in Hebrew, he nonetheless considered it self-evident that German Jews across the ideological spectrum would adhere to their language and culture of birth. As a member of an emigrant group under pressure to renounce its linguistic and cultural uniqueness in favor of integration into the Israeli melting pot, he clearly had a good grasp of this issue's wider social and political implications. He was also well aware of the gap in perspective between himself and Margaliot. "You have written a scientific study," he pointed out towards the end of his letter, "and my comments are no more than an expression of opinion by someone who actually lived through that period. I am somewhat acquainted with the history of the Jews of Germany and of Zionism in that period, but I have not delved deeply into the sources as you have. My comments are merely a spontaneous reaction to questions that you have raised."<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> Yochanan Ginat to Avraham Margaliot, undated (early 1970s), *LBI Jerusalem*, 1056.

<sup>87</sup> Margaliot's dissertation was published by the institute together with the Hebrew University: Avraham Margaliot, *Between Rescue and Annihilation: Studies in the History of German Jewry, 1932-1938* (Hebrew), Jerusalem 1990.

Another younger historian who came into contact with the institute in the mid-1960s was Otto Dov Kulka, whose dissertation at the Hebrew University included an attempt to reconstruct the history of the Jewish leadership in Germany during the Nazi period. Kulka kept the institute informed about the progress of his research, in particular regarding the archival material that he had found in Germany.<sup>88</sup> We do not have a great deal of material documenting the discussion at the institute, towards the end of the 1970s, regarding possible publication of some of the material Kulka had discovered, as well as his interpretation of it, but the discussion appears to have once again revealed the disparate perspectives of older and younger scholars.<sup>89</sup> Although the publication did not go through, towards the end of the 1990s Kulka's systematic, annotated documentation of the history of the *Reichsvertretung* did appear as part of the *Schriftenreihe*.<sup>90</sup>

## VII

In June 1970 the LBI held an international conference in Jerusalem to celebrate its fifteenth anniversary. Through the decision to conduct the proceedings in Hebrew and English, hence to reach beyond an audience of aging, German-born immigrants, the conference represented an important step for the Jerusalem institute. Awareness of this was evident in Siegfried Moses's opening address (in Hebrew), in the course of which he observed that "We are only appearing before a large Israeli public today, fifteen years later."<sup>91</sup> Emphasizing that the institute was "known less in Israel than in the scholarly world," Moses proceeded to outline the reasons for the interest that the institute "was entitled to demand for its activity": both because of German Jewry's achievements and its tragic end, its history in the post Mendelssohn period had a significant meaning for the development of Jewry as a whole.

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<sup>88</sup> Otto Dov Kulka to Adler-Rudel, July 11, 1965; Adler-Rudel to Kreutzberger, July 15, 1965, both in *LBI Jerusalem*, file 1002.

<sup>89</sup> For the discussion see Kreutzberger to Ginat, January 27, 1978 (against Kulka's proposal to publish a documentary collection on the *Reichsvereinigung*); Ginat to Kreutzberger, February 24, 1978; Kreutzberger to Ginat, March 7, 1978, all in *LBI Jerusalem*, file 1001. Kreuzberger suggested that Kulka did not understand that the *Reichsvereinigung* was "a purely Nazi organization"; Kulka's attitude towards the *Reichsvereinigung* is still disputed today, in Israel and elsewhere.

<sup>90</sup> Otto Dov Kulka with Anne Birkenhauer and Esriel Hildesheimer (eds.), *Deutsches Judentum unter dem Nationalsozialismus*, vol. 1; *Dokumente zur Geschichte der Reichsvertretung der deutschen Juden 1933–1939*, Tübingen 1997 (*Schriftenreihe wissenschaftlicher Abhandlungen des Leo Baeck Instituts* 54).

<sup>91</sup> Siegfried Moses, Introductory Remarks at the Leo Baeck Institute Conference in Jerusalem, June 21, 1970 (Hebrew), *LBI Jerusalem*, file 1012.

The conference's keynote address was then delivered by Ernst Simon, who focused on the basis for the "Jewishness" of the German Jews. Simon's emphasis on the element of voluntary choice involved when Jews from assimilated families returned to Judaism perhaps reflected the increasing interest of Israel's secular Jewish society in the question of Jewish identity shortly after the Six-Day War.<sup>92</sup>

The desire to move beyond a narrow German-Jewish framework was also evident in a symposium held during the June 1970 conference on basic problems of German-Jewish history.<sup>93</sup> The symposium's Israeli speakers offered starkly contrasting visions of German Jewry. Jochanan Bloch of Ben Gurion University, whose views were close to those of the Herut (Revisionist) party, outlined a Zionist doctrine similar to Blumenfeld's, drawing an analogy between the assimilatory tendencies of the German Jews and those of the Jews of Spain before the 1492 expulsion. In his view, the tragic downfall of both communities was no accident. The price paid for emancipation was in both cases Jewish agreement to the self-destruction of Jewish existence; both in Spain and later in Germany, this dynamic had aroused "the environment's fear of the Jews, to the extent of a desire to get rid of them." Bloch portrayed German Jewry as an exemplary case of emancipated Jewry's "wretched will to compromise"; the main historical lesson it offered was the failure of its vision of integration.

Representing a completely different approach, the religious Zionist educator Pinchas Rosenblüth spoke mainly about the Orthodox sector of German Jewry. There was indeed a German-Jewish symbiosis, he insisted, but it was manifest chiefly among those Jews who had preserved their own roots. The key concept in his characterization of German Jewry was not "emancipation" but "post-emancipation" – the bulk of German Jews, Orthodox and others, had withstood the test of emancipation and evolved a rich and original communal life, under the new conditions. Rosenblüth vigorously contradicted the images of detachment, coldness and alienation sometimes associated with German Jews:

The German-Jewish community exerted a profound spiritual influence on its members, especially on the youth. I can speak for myself – and I know that a good many of these seated here can say the same of themselves, that their youthful lives would have been unconceivable without that daily molding influence of the Jewish community. The central synagogues, unlike the *shtiblakh* we know in other countries ... were not closed cells, though at times they impressed one, as they still do, as rather

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<sup>92</sup> Ernst A. Simon, "How Jewish was German Jewry," in *idem, Perspectives of German-Jewish History in the 19th and 20th Century*, Jerusalem 1971, pp. 16–19.

<sup>93</sup> The following lines are based on the Minutes of the symposium, held on June 22, 1970, *LBI Jerusalem*, file 1012.

artificial. They maintained exemplary decorum, beauty, strictness, precision in the observance of the commandments ... This was no coolness. It was rather a kind of spiritual restraint.

While Rosenblüth did criticize certain phenomena such as exaggerated apologetics and excessive strictness, he essentially drew a very positive portrait of the community, arguing that Israelis and American Jews had much to learn from the way it worked to bridge the gap between tradition and secular culture. Zionism alone could not solve the social and cultural ills of Israeli society – it could not by itself develop a meaningful, Jewish identity, he concluded. “Here, of all places, we need the way of the Jews of Germany ... [which can be followed] under more favorable conditions.”

The June 1970 conference’s organizers wished to expand its perspective beyond the horizons of German-Jewish history and to create a dialogue with Israeli historians not part of the circle of Jews from Germany. The most prominent such historian present was the Hebrew University’s Shmuel Ettinger, the leading representative of the Jerusalem school’s second generation; contradicting the thesis of Ernst Simon and others that the manner in which the German Jews had met the challenges of emancipation and returned to Judaism was unique, Ettinger presented examples of similar processes in other Jewish communities. The institute had to decide whether or not it wished to deal with the more general problems presented by German-Jewish history; if the answer was in the affirmative, it would surely have to extend its interest to Jews of other countries. Ettinger’s observation was backed up by Werner Mosse from the London LBI, who expressly welcomed the idea of introducing a comparative approach to history.

Judging from reports in the Israeli press, the symposium’s audience included young people from all over the country – they “sat on the steps in the aisles and even stood.”<sup>94</sup> A report by Amos Elon for *Haaretz* was of particular interest: German Jews in Israel, he wrote, particularly of the older generation, had long been characterized by a lack of self-confidence and a feeling of inferiority, owing to the East-European values (“Russian norms”) that largely shaped Israeli society. Now, however, that domination was fading. With the change of generations and perhaps also an increasing sense of affinity with U.S. Jewry, there was a growing appreciation in Israel of German Jewry’s heritage and its contribution to Israel. Nevertheless, Elon indicated, the older German-born Israelis, including the organizers of the conference, had not internalized these changes. The tension between their lack of self-confidence and the interest of younger Israelis in their heritage was reflected in the apologetic tone taken by some of the former and the matter-of-fact approach of

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<sup>94</sup> Gabriel Stern, ‘German Jewry: Eulogy, Research and Continuity’ (Hebrew), in *Al ha-Mishmar*, July 3, 1970.

many of the latter, and also in the fact that fearing public indifference, the conference's organizers had rented lecture spaces too small to accommodate an audience that had come from all over the country.<sup>95</sup>

Beginning in the 1970s, cooperation between the Jerusalem LBI and Israeli universities increased; with time the institute was in fact becoming increasingly dependent on them to produce the scholars needed to continue its functioning. In November 1970, the leaders of the institute met with Ettinger to gain a sense of the work being done by his graduate students in various areas relevant to the LBI's activities.<sup>96</sup> There was also a noticeable change in the composition of the institute's administrative staff, with scholars such as Joseph Walk, Jacob Katz and Uriel Tal moving over to the board in the course of the 1970s. (Katz and Walk would later serve as chairmen of the institute's executive.)

During the 1970s the older generation – including, above all, Yochanan Ginat and Hans Tramer – continued to have a strong influence on the institute's policies. In 1974 the *Bulletin* reappeared after a roughly four-year break (forty-eight issues had appeared before the publishing hiatus). It now became an annual instead of a quarterly, but until the end of the 1970s continuity was evident in both its outward appearance and Tramer's resumption of its editorship. Introducing the second issue of its new annual series, Tramer referred to the death of Siegfried Moses (in 1974) and Bergman (in 1975), observing that twenty years after the LBI's foundation, its very activity was becoming a part of history.<sup>97</sup> He also stressed the importance of collecting sources for the sake of future research and underscored the as yet unrealized goal of writing a comprehensive history of the Jews of Germany. In any event, by the end of the 1970s most members of the founding generation had passed away. Perhaps the 1979 issue of the *Bulletin* served as a sort of symbolic chord announcing the end of their work – it was a slender booklet, naming no editor and opening with a brief announcement of Tramer's death and his request not to publish any obituary.

From the late 1970s through the 1980s, Joseph Walk of Bar-Ilan University, in his role as Ginat's successor at the institute, was a central figure in its activities. Although born in 1914 and thus only six years younger than Ginat, Walk may nevertheless be considered representative of the new generation, in that he was not a founding member and was associated with the institute largely as a result of his academic achievements in Israel. One focus of Walk's scholarship was the history of Jewish education in its modern European

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<sup>95</sup> Amos Elon, 'The *Yekkim* Analyze Themselves' (Hebrew), in *Haaretz*, June 26, 1970.

<sup>96</sup> Meeting with Prof. S. Ettinger, November 25, 1970, CZA, file A 376/81.

<sup>97</sup> Hans Tramer, "Zum vierzehnten Jahrgang," in *Bulletin des Leo Baeck Instituts*, no. 51, 1975 (new series), pp. 1–6.



framework; in the mid-1970s he published a study of Jewish children's education in Nazi Germany as a co-publication of the LBI and *Yad Vashem*.<sup>98</sup>

One notable aspect of Joseph Walk's biography was his Orthodox religious background; in Germany he had already been a member of the Miz-rachi movement. In effect, he was not the first board member with such a background, Siegfried Moses having emphasized the need for Orthodox representation even before the founding conference of 1955.<sup>99</sup> The first such representative was Jeshayahu Aviad (Oskar Wolfsberg), who worked to promote research on the history of Orthodox Jewry in Germany, but these efforts were interrupted by his premature death.<sup>100</sup> Other Orthodox board members were Joseph Burg and Moshe Unna, but they were not academics and thus could not devote themselves to the institute's routine activities. Walk was subsequently the first Orthodox board member to devote most of his time to research and organizational work within the institute. In the early 1970s he and Mordechai Breuer submitted a research proposal concerning traditional religious nineteenth- and twentieth-century German Jewry.<sup>101</sup> In the end, the proposal would be realized as a book by Breuer alone, published by the LBI in 1986 – one of the pioneering contributions of the Jerusalem institute to research into the social history of Germany Jewry.<sup>102</sup>

One of Walk's notable achievement during his years as the institute's director was the establishment in the early 1980s of an LBI study circle. Dozens of Israelis, including both younger scholars – among these, David Bankier, Yoav Gelber, Jakob Hessing, Hagit Lavsky, Robert Liberles, Shulamit Volkov, Henry Wassermann, Robert Wistrich, and Moshe Zimmermann – and people from various non-academic professions joined the circle, which met regularly for lectures and discussions.<sup>103</sup> Although many of its younger members had themselves come from German-Jewish families, meetings were mainly conducted in Hebrew. The circle was the first initiative in a series that has continued until the present – lectures, study groups, colloquia and fellowships in memory of various founding figures in the Jerusalem LBI.<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> Joseph Walk, *The Education of the Jewish Child in Nazi Germany: The Law and its Execution* (Hebrew), Jerusalem 1975.

<sup>99</sup> Minutes of Israel Section of the Council of Jews from Germany, May 8, 1955, p. 6, *LBI Jerusalem*, file 1018.

<sup>100</sup> For the discussion initiated by Wolfsberg at the last board meeting in which he participated, a few weeks before his death, see Minutes of the LBI Jerusalem board meeting, July 17, 1956, p. 3, *LBI Jerusalem*, file 1086A.

<sup>101</sup> See M. Breuer & J. Walk, "Das traditionell-religiöse Judentum in Deutschland. Ein Forschungsprogramm," *LBI Jerusalem*, file 1044 (no date).

<sup>102</sup> Mordechai Breuer, *Jüdische Orthodoxie im deutschen Reich 1871–1918. Sozialgeschichte einer religiösen Minderheit*, Frankfurt am Main 1986.

<sup>103</sup> For the activity and organization of the study circle see *LBI Jerusalem*, file 1005.

<sup>104</sup> See *LBI Jerusalem*, file 1077.

## VIII

The institute's "academization" was essentially completed by the 1980s, when historian Jacob Katz, mentor of a whole generation of Israeli historians, became executive chairman after completing a term as Hebrew University rector. Katz placed great emphasis on comparative approaches to historical questions, thus working to broaden the institute's perspective beyond its traditional Central Europe confines – a development evident in the March 1983 conference he organized on the influence of nineteenth-century German Jewry on the Jewish world in general. This was the first conference organized by the Jerusalem institute in which scholars participated who were investigating Jewish communities throughout Eastern and Western Europe as well as the United States. The proceedings were published in a volume that, it can fairly be said, has become a basic text for anyone interested in modern Jewish history.<sup>105</sup>

One important project promoted by the institute in the 1980s was a systematic study of the immigration of Central European Jews to British Mandate Palestine and to the state of Israel and their absorption. The first effort to launch this project had been in the early 1970s; after several attempts to entrust the work to various scholars, the board finally assigned the project to Yoav Gelber of Haifa University.<sup>106</sup> Although the research was not completed, as the board had hoped, by the fiftieth anniversary of the large-scale immigration of Jews from Germany, Gelber published a detailed study a few years later.<sup>107</sup>

The *Bulletin* continued to appear during the 1980s, now in yet another format of three issues per year and published by the Jüdischer Verlag in Germany. It was edited by Joseph Walk with the help of various assistant editors: Daniel Cil Brecher (who would direct the institute for about two years following Walk's retirement from that position in 1984), Sarah Fraiman and Itta Shedletzky. In the early 1990s the *Bulletin* was replaced by the *Jüdischer Almanach*, whose first editor was Jacob Hessing, a specialist in German literature. As the years elapsed, the *Bulletin* had increasingly addressed itself to a popular German reading audience; this tendency has been even more pronounced in

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<sup>105</sup> Jacob Katz (ed.), *Toward Modernity: The European Jewish Model*, New Brunswick and Oxford 1987.

<sup>106</sup> For the Minutes from the LBI Jerusalem board meeting, December 23, 1981, see *LBI Jerusalem*, file 1068.

<sup>107</sup> Yoav Gelber, *New Homeland: Immigration and Absorption of Central European Jews 1933–1948* (Hebrew), Jerusalem 1990. For a review of the book arguing that Gelber devoted insufficient attention to the identity problems of the German immigrants, see Henry Wassermann, "Zur Einwanderung mitteleuropäischer Juden in Palästina 1933 bis 1940," in *Aschkenas*, vol. 2 (1992) pp. 285–292.

the case of the *Almanach*, which occasionally presents sources and articles translated from the Hebrew.

Also towards the end of the 1980s and start of the 1990s, the institute began publishing posthumous documentary material by its founders who, as noted, had been prominent Zionist leaders in Germany. The first such project involved excerpts from the diaries and letters of Hugo Bergman, edited by Miriam Sambursky.<sup>108</sup> Other publications were Gershom Scholem's letters, edited by Itta Shedletzky and Thomas Sparr; a selection of Ernst Simon's letters and diary-entries;<sup>109</sup> the letters and memoirs of Arthur Ruppin;<sup>110</sup> and a lexicon furnishing some four thousand brief biographies of prominent figures from the last generation of German Jewry before the Holocaust, compiled by Joseph Walk.<sup>111</sup>

Once most of the Jerusalem institute's founders had passed away, the importance of its board gradually decreased, until it was dissolved in the late 1990s. Since the 1980s, the central body responsible for the institute's routine administration has been the executive, a smaller body headed by a chairman and convening far more frequently than did the board. Its work is assisted by the institute's director, who since late 1986 has been Shlomo Mayer. A significant landmark in the institute's organizational history was its official separation from the Association of Immigrants from Central Europe (*IOME*) and its registration in 1992 as an independent non-profit organization.

After the retirements of Katz and Walk as chairmen of the LBI's executive (in 1992 and 1994, respectively), the position was assumed by Avraham Barkai, who had joined the institute in the 1970s and published a study of the economic and social history of German Jewry as part of the *Schriftenreihe* in 1988;<sup>112</sup> Barkai's most significant work to date has been a comprehensive history of the *Centralverein*; he has also edited a collection of Hebrew translations of articles written by Leo Baeck in the 1930s – one of the institute's most important Hebrew projects.<sup>113</sup> In 1999 Barkai was replaced by Robert Liberles; during his term Hebrew finally became the main language for the Jerusalem institute's publications, with new full-length and shorter studies appearing since 1998 under the heading "New Developments in the Study of

<sup>108</sup> Schmuël Hugo Bergmann, *Tagebücher und Briefe* (2 vols.), Königstein/Ts. 1985.

<sup>109</sup> Betty Scholem & Gershom Scholem, *Mutter und Sohn im Briefwechsel 1917–1946*, Munich 1989; Gershom Scholem, *Briefe*, 3 vols., Munich 1994–1999; Ernst A. Simon, *Sechzig Jahre gegen den Strom. Briefe von 1917–1984*, Tübingen 1998.

<sup>110</sup> Arthur Ruppin, *Tagebücher, Briefe, Erinnerungen*, Königstein/Ts. 1985.

<sup>111</sup> Joseph Walk, *Kurzbiographien zur Geschichte der Juden 1918–1945*, Munich, New York, London and Paris 1988.

<sup>112</sup> Avraham Barkai, *Jüdische Minderheit und Industrialisierung*, Tübingen 1988 (*Schriftenreihe wissenschaftlicher Abhandlungen des Leo Baeck Instituts* 46).

<sup>113</sup> Avraham Barkai (ed.), *Leo Baeck: Leadership and Thought 1933–1945* (Hebrew), Jerusalem 2000; Avraham Barkai, "Wehr Dich!" *Der Centralverein deutscher Staatsbürger jüdischen Glaubens (C.V.) 1893–1938*, Munich 2002.

the History of German Jewry.”<sup>114</sup> Liberles in turn retired in 2003, being replaced by Zvi Bacharach.

In the spirit established by Jacob Katz, an orientation towards the broader historical perspective and comparative research was characteristic of several conferences held by the Jerusalem LBI during the 1990s. Accordingly, in a conference organized in March 1995 to mark the fortieth anniversary of the institute’s activity, conference chair Shulamit Volkov defined the institute’s aim as “to break away from the Jewish/German context and extend our view towards the larger inner-Jewish one.” The conference concentrated mainly on peripheral communities within German Jewry and the relationship between that Jewry and the surrounding Jewish communities.<sup>115</sup> Another conference organized with the institute’s participation was devoted to the relations between Ashkenazi and Sephardi Jewry throughout the world in various periods – a topic again moving past previous geographical and chronological limits at the institute.<sup>116</sup> During the 1990s, the institute continued to translate various documents and classical works from the history of German Jewry into Hebrew; these included a volume of memoirs edited by Monika Richarz and selected writings of Leo Strauss.<sup>117</sup>

Questions have been raised in recent years regarding the Jerusalem LBI’s future as an independent organization. Various alternative arrangements have been proposed since the second half of the 1990s: integrating the institute into *Yad Vashem*, the Hebrew University, the Schocken Institute, or the Van Leer Institute; integrating its library into the Jewish National and Hebrew University Library.<sup>118</sup> Until now, none of these ideas has been implemented. During the first years of the 21st century, the institute’s premises were renovated, the ensuing improvement in external appearance also having some symbolic significance: the premises, located until then in the rear of a home for elderly Central European immigrants, has now been provided with a separate entrance.

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<sup>114</sup> On Liberles’s perception of his activity at the Institute see Robert Liberles, “Das Leo Baeck Institut Jerusalem, von Generation zu Generation,” in *LBI Information*, vol. 10 (2003), pp. 12–15.

<sup>115</sup> *Inside & Outside Central European Jewry: Borderlines & Interactions*, An International Conference of the Leo Baeck Institute Celebrating its 40th Anniversary, March 6–8, 1995. For the Conference program and its rationale see *LBI Jerusalem*, file 1088.

<sup>116</sup> *Ashkenazi and Sephardi Jewries in Europe through the Ages: Historical Connections and Mutual Perceptions*, May 24–26, 1999.

<sup>117</sup> Monika Richarz (ed.), *Bürger auf Widerruf. Lebenszeugnisse deutscher Juden 1780–1945* (Hebrew; German title on cover page printed in Latin lettering), Jerusalem 1993; Leo Strauss, *Jerusalem and Athens: Selected Writings*, ed. by Ehud Luz (Hebrew), Jerusalem 2001

<sup>118</sup> See, for example, Minutes of the LBI Jerusalem executive meeting, June 11, 1998; July 9, 1998; August 27, 2000.

Within Jewish tradition, only the sons and brothers of a deceased person are meant to recite the prayer for the dead, the *Kaddish*, or the prayer that follows Torah study on the anniversary of the death, the *Kaddish de-Rabbanan*. The grandchildren and great-grandchildren have no such obligation. It would seem that according to the inner logic of Ernst Simon's words, quoted at the beginning of this article, the Jerusalem LBI's activities should have been completed by the founding generation – some of whom in fact expected that to happen. With the passing years, a perceived need in Israeli society to rehabilitate German Jewry has also gradually dissipated; the public image of the "Yekkes," the Jewish immigrants to Israel from Germany, has considerably improved, in part because many of their children and all of their grandchildren have been Israelis by birth.

As we have seen in these pages, the Jerusalem LBI's continued existence fifty years after its founding is a result of a significant change in its internal constitution and sense of purpose. As manifest in the institute's publications, this change has left its imprint on the perspective through which the institute views Germany's Jewish past, particularly the last, tragic chapter of that past. As suggested, the various arguments unfolding among the Jerusalem LBI's founders or between it and the LBI's other branches largely continued an ideological struggle typifying Jewish politics in Germany. In turn, the shift in emphasis from eye-witness accounts and memoirs to more contextualized historical research has spurred a more systematic and less ideological approach to topics such as the conduct of the Jewish leadership in the Germany of the 1930s. It is the case that the ideological passion revealed by many of the institute's founders could hardly have been carried forward by their successors in a similar manner. Nevertheless, it is perhaps justified to see that passion's heritage as present in their desire to move beyond a mere reconstruction of details to capture a sense of German Jewry's wider significance for Jewish and European culture.

# “Here it is, to an Astounding Degree, Saved”: The Leo Baeck Institute in New York, 1956–2000<sup>1</sup>

Mitchell B. Hart

## Introduction

In June 1958, Theodor Heuss, the president of the Federal Republic of Germany, paid a visit to the New York branch of the Leo Baeck Institute during a stay in New York City. In his welcoming remarks, Fritz Bamberger, a founding member of the New York institute, chose to frame Heuss’s visit in terms of reconciliation and reconstruction. “We are not mistaken, we believe, in seeing this as a reunion ... of two traditions – the German and the Jewish – whose creative encounter in the past bore rich and beautiful fruit.” The German Jews were no more, he said, but the idea they represented lived on. Bamberger quoted Ernest Hemingway’s *The Old Man and the Sea*: “A man can be destroyed, but not defeated.”

Bamberger invoked the Holocaust, but within the context of reconciliation: the New York LBI was the site of such a reconciliation – a symbolic and actual gathering of the remnants of what had been destroyed, buried or scattered:

On the shelves and in the cabinets of these rooms are housed the books of professors and poets, the memoirs of important men and women, the manuscripts and letters of writers and publicists; family trees, family histories, business archives; the finely wrought prose of many of the greats of German intellectual life in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries as well as the occasional jottings and utterances of obscure German Jews who were known only to their friends.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The author wishes to thank Ismar Schorsch, Yosef Yerushalmi, Michael Bamberger, Gay Bamberger, Herbert Strauss and Carol Kahn Strauss for kindly granting interviews that are cited throughout this article. My thanks go as well to Dennis Rohrbaugh for facilitating access to the Oral History Collection of the Research Foundation for Jewish Immigration, New York, and to Frank Mecklenburg for his generous assistance and advice.

<sup>2</sup> Fritz Bamberger, “Welcome Speech for Theodor Heuss,” June 1958, *LBI New York*, Office Records.

Invoking Hegel (Heuss's "great Swabian *Landsman*"), Bamberger identified the New York LBI as the guardian of a German-Jewish world that had disappeared, yet was nonetheless still present. "The evidence of an epoch of Jewish history, which no longer exists, which has been *aufgehoben*, is now lovingly preserved for the future in this institute."<sup>3</sup>

Bamberger, of course, was not alone in viewing the New York LBI as a central site of German-Jewish historical memory, as the guardian of the German-Jewish legacy, and as a place for German and Jewish reconciliation. Leaders of the New York LBI routinely spoke in such terms, as did many members of the exiled German-Jewish community in the United States.<sup>4</sup> The LBI's work might be "limited in scope," the New York institute president Max Gruenewald declared in 1962, "but even in its limitation it is monumental – the redemption of a past, often neglected part of Jewish history."<sup>5</sup> When Walter Scheel, the West German president, visited the institute in June 1975, Gruenewald referred to it as a place where "we look for what threatens to be lost."<sup>6</sup> And Guy Stern, in an essay on the German-Jewish legacy in America, identified the institute as, more than any other similar institution, the repository and disseminator of the German-Jewish "spirit."<sup>7</sup>

Clearly, the story of the LBI in New York, like the story of the LBI in general, is in large part a history of ideas and of a specific ideal, one nurtured by German Jews exiled from the German-speaking lands during the 1930s and 1940s: that of preserving the memory of the Jews in Germany and transmitting this memory to following generations. The research and publishing agenda of the Leo Baeck Institute thus has been, and remains, the history of the Jews in German-speaking lands. At the same time, the history of the New York LBI constitutes part of American Jewish history in the last half of the twentieth century. It is part of the larger story of the German intellectual émigrés who fled Hitler's *Reich* to the United States and then spent the rest of their lives trying to comprehend and explain the Nazi catastrophe. It is part of the story of Jewish cultural and intellectual life in New York City in the last half of the twentieth century. And it is an important part of the story of how the history of German Jewry became increasingly central to the definition of both Jewish and German history as it is studied and taught at

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<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> See, for example, the essays collected in Abraham J. Peck (ed. and intr.), *The German-Jewish Legacy in America, 1938–1988: from Bildung to the Bill of Rights*, Detroit 1989.

<sup>5</sup> Max Gruenewald, "Dedication Address," January 7, 1962, *LBI Archives New York*, AR 230, A20/3.

<sup>6</sup> "President of the Federal Republic of Germany Visits LBI," *LBI News*, vol. 16, Winter 1975/76, p. 5.

<sup>7</sup> Guy Stern, "German Culture, Jewish Ethics," in *The German-Jewish Legacy in America*, p. 32.

American universities. More prosaically, the history of the New York LBI is the history of an institution, of the more mundane administrative, financial and interpersonal issues and problems that challenge and plague every institution. This essay will address itself largely to these institutional matters, while also trying to convey a sense of the larger ideas and issues that gave spirit to the enterprise.

### Origins and Early Years

The New York LBI was incorporated in the State of New York on May 16, 1957.<sup>8</sup> The board of directors included Max Gruenewald, rabbi of Congregation B’nai Israel in Millburn, New Jersey and the first president of the institute, and Max Kreutzberger, its first executive director, who had been hand-picked for the job by Siegfried Moses. Fritz Bamberger, Frederick Brunner and Herman Muller were the other board members.

The by-laws stated that there were to be no fewer than five directors and no more than twenty, and that at least one of the directors had to be both a United States citizen and a resident of New York. (Already in 1957, the number of directors was raised to sixteen;<sup>9</sup> this number would continue to rise over the coming years.) No director could receive a salary or any monetary compensation, save for reimbursement for travel expenses. There would be a president, one or more vice-presidents, a secretary, and a treasurer; only the president would be required to be a member of the board of directors. An executive committee was to be created by the board. At the board’s discretion, the handling of all of the institute’s business could be delegated to the executive committee.

Kreutzberger and Gruenewald were both from Mannheim, Germany, and knew each other since childhood. However, according to Gruenewald they only developed “personal and business relations” after arriving in the United States.<sup>10</sup> Kreutzberger, in Gruenewald’s estimation, “was not an easy person. He could be critical to the point of being harsh,” demanding a great deal of others and of himself.<sup>11</sup> Nonetheless, it was Kreutzberger who was universally credited with building up the New York LBI into a serious scholarly institution in the first ten years of its existence. In the words of Fritz Bamberger,

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<sup>8</sup> Auxiliary chapters were also formed in Los Angeles, Chicago and Cleveland, with smaller groups and individuals in San Francisco and Philadelphia.

<sup>9</sup> The new directors included Nathan Glatzer, Hannah Arendt, Selma Stern-Täubler, Adolf Leschnitzer and Guido Kisch.

<sup>10</sup> Max Gruenewald, interview with Joan Lessing, New York, February 9, 1977, p. 2, Oral History Collection of the Research Foundation for Jewish Immigration, New York (OHC).

<sup>11</sup> Eulogy for Kreutzberger, January 11, 1979, *LBI New York*, Office Records.



“the fact that we have archives and the library in the house here is greatly due to Kreutzberger. He was a man who really felt that there should be that kind of visibility and that kind of presence. In London there was no such person.”<sup>12</sup>

Kreutzberger’s chief assistant was Irmgard Foerg (“Irmchen”), whom Fred Grubel referred to as Kreutzberger’s “girl Friday.”<sup>13</sup> Kreutzberger encountered Foerg, a German non-Jew, in Bavaria immediately after the war. She was a librarian at the Bavarian National Library, he a representative of the Jewish Agency traveling around Germany. According to Kreutzberger, she was one of the “exceptionally good Germans,” who possessed a “deep and honest understanding for the Jewish cause.” “Irmchen does penance,” according to Grubel, “for all [the] sins of the German people by devoted and untiring work for LBI.”<sup>14</sup>

The other New York LBI employees were refugees whom Kreutzberger had known in Berlin. Grubel, who inherited the LBI staff as the *de facto* director of the institute after Kreutzberger’s departure in 1967, refused to label them “employees” or “staff”; he insisted instead on “co-workers” as a way of recognizing that in their past lives, in Germany, they had been extremely accomplished and successful professionals. One of the most impressive of these individuals was Margaret (Grete) Mühsam, who edited *LBI News*, the institute’s newsletter, between 1954 and 1974.<sup>15</sup>

In Germany Mühsam had earned a doctorate of law from the University of Erlangen while working in the legal office of the *Berliner Morgenpost*. She then worked for the Ullstein Verlag (the publishers of the *Morgenpost*) and became involved in various aspects of public life, serving as both chairwomen of the *Deutschen Juristinnen Verein* and, between 1934 and 1938, deputy editor of the *C. V.-Zeitung*. In 1932, Mühsam was elected to the Berlin City Council, but she never had the chance to take up the position. She fled Germany for America in 1938. During the war she worked for the U.S. Office of War Information, and in 1955 joined the New York LBI. After retiring as a staff member in 1974, she was elected to the institute’s board of directors.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Bamberger, interview with Joan Lessing, New York, February 11, 1976, p. 33, (OHC).

<sup>13</sup> Fred Grubel, “Lest We Forget: Leo Baeck International New York,” unpublished memoir, *LBI Archives New York*, AR 3695, box 1, B35/3, p. 3.

<sup>14</sup> Grubel, “Lest We Forget,” p. 3.

<sup>15</sup> Other employees in the early years of the LBI included Ilse Blumenthal, who worked on unpublished memoirs, Ilse Turnheim, who worked on historical archives, and Dora Ziegellaub and Ilse Stolzenberg, who worked on correspondence. Stolzenberg later became Fred Grubel’s secretary; Helmut Galliner was Irmchen Foerg’s assistant in the library, Sally Marx the accountant, and Vera Rubin the receptionist.

<sup>16</sup> *LBI News*, vol. 15, Spring 1974, p. 6; Grubel, “Lest We Forget,” pp. 3–4.

Under the editorship of Mühsam and her successor Gay Bamberger, the newsletter was more engaging than might perhaps be expected. It was often wry and funny, even quirky. And Mühsam was not reluctant to voice concerns and complaints about the relationship of the LBI to the larger New York Jewish and academic communities. She was often quite direct, for example, when it came to matters of money and patronage of the New York LBI. Although it was “almost embarrassing to speak of such mundane matters in connection with the scientific work of the Institute,”<sup>17</sup> she reminded her readers repeatedly that the institute depended on contributions and memberships.

*LBI News* served first and foremost as a source of information about the institute’s library and archival holdings and its academic activities. It updated its readers about recent gifts and acquisitions, as well as recent LBI publications; it summarized the lectures, conferences, and art exhibits sponsored by the LBI, both in the States and abroad; and it kept its readers informed about the scholars, students, and staff involved with the LBI. Over the years the aim and ambitions of the newsletter grew. It published brief articles, accompanied by photographs or illustrations, on various German-Jewish themes. Thus, after half a century, *LBI News* not only constitutes a source of information about the history of the institute and the professional development of German-Jewish studies in the United States but is also an important resource in the domain of German-Jewish history and culture.

From time to time external events made their way into the newsletter. The spring 1963 issue contains an indirect reference to Hannah Arendt and *Eichmann in Jerusalem* – as is well known the book’s negative portrayal of Leo Baeck and attack upon the conduct of the German-Jewish and general European-Jewish leadership produced widespread outrage in the American Jewish community and quickly made her a *persona non grata* in many New York Jewish circles.<sup>18</sup> *LBI News* thus reproduced a statement, issued in the name of the Council of Jews from Germany and signed by Siegfried Moses, that denounced “these allegations and distortions” regarding the German-Jewish leadership.<sup>19</sup> The New York institute was now involved in efforts to repudiate both Arendt’s charges regarding the German-Jewish leadership and Raul Hilberg’s thesis of widespread Jewish passivity and compliance in the face of Nazi persecution in his monumental *The Destruction of European Jewry*; these efforts culminated in the publication in 1963 by the Council of Jews from Germany of a booklet entitled *Nach dem Eichmann Prozess*, containing articles rebutting Arendt’s representation of what the editors called “reactions

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<sup>17</sup> *LBI News*, vol. 3, no. 1, 1961, p. 5

<sup>18</sup> For the similar response in Jerusalem, see the previous essay by Guy Miron in this volume.

<sup>19</sup> *LBI News*, vol. 4, no. 1, Spring, 1963, p. 4.

of the Jews to persecution during the Nazi era.” The volume also included an extended discussion of Arendt by Ernst Simon. The efforts were reported in the *LBI News*.<sup>20</sup>

By 1962, Arendt’s name had vanished from the list of board members. Her involvement with the institute had in any event been minimal for the most part, and already by 1958 she was expressing her desire to distance herself from the “sorry institution” (*traurige Institution*), as she called it.<sup>21</sup> By the time of the Eichmann affair, Arendt seems to have removed herself altogether. Nonetheless, her work on Eichmann’s trial surely made her as direct an enemy for the New York LBI as for the American Jewish community in general. In his book on German exiles in the United States, Anthony Heilbut writes that the “German-Jewish scholars of the Leo Baeck Institute were so upset over her tactless description of the man for whom the institute had been named that they expelled her from their board.”<sup>22</sup> There is no evidence in the minutes of Arendt’s official removal from the board (despite the requirement of the by-laws that the removal of a board member must be voted on officially). And there is no evidence of any discussions about her and the Eichmann Affair in the official minutes. She simply vanished from the official records.

Understandably, Mühsam did feel it necessary to register profound sadness at the assassination of President Kennedy in 1963. In her brief remark looking back on the event, speaking for the LBI and all German-Jewish refugees, she managed to reaffirm their sense of Americanness while also recalling their status as exiles: “At that moment we all felt ashamed as human beings and as Americans. The deep shock which we experienced made us even more aware of how much we belong to this great country which gave us a haven when we were in need of it.”<sup>23</sup> And in fall 1973, the newsletter expressed the institute’s solidarity and sympathy with Israel during the Yom Kippur War.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> *Nach dem Eichmann Prozess. Zu einer Kontroverse über die Haltung der Juden*, Tel Aviv 1963. For examples of comments in the newsletter regarding the controversy, see *LBI News*, vol. 4, no. 2, Fall 1963; vol. 5, no. 2, 1964. For a more detailed discussion of this booklet and the debate over Arendt and Hilberg, see the article by Jürgen Matthäus later in this volume; on the controversy in an LBI Jerusalem context, see the the previous article by Guy Miron.

<sup>21</sup> Hannah Arendt to Kurt Blumenfeld, February 19, 1958, in Hannah Arendt, Kurt Blumenfeld, “...in keinem Besitz verwurzelt.” *Die Korrespondenz*, ed. by Ingeborg Nordmann and Iris Pilling, Hamburg 1995, p. 205. See also the following letters between Arendt and Blumenfeld: April 29, 1958, p. 214; October 27, 1958, p. 222; August 10, 1959, pp. 240–242.

<sup>22</sup> Anthony Heilbut, *Exiled in Paradise*, New York 1983, p. 425.

<sup>23</sup> *LBI News*, vol. 5, no. 1, 1964, p. 1.

<sup>24</sup> *LBI News*, vol. 14, 1973.

Usually, though, the newsletter focused on internal LBI matters. One of Mühsam’s ongoing concerns was the seeming lack of interest in the LBI’s activities within New York City’s Jewish community or by New Yorkers in general. On a number of occasions she expressed surprise in the newsletter that LBI-sponsored lectures and seminars did not attract more people, especially students and younger scholars. At times she scolded the younger generation for not attending such functions. Yet she recognized that it was difficult for the LBI to compete with everything that was happening in New York City on any given day: Given New York’s “great number of universities, innumerable lectures, seminars and other intellectual and artistic entertainments,” even Columbia University had its problems getting enough attendees for many of its functions. Perhaps the New York LBI would need to develop alternative modes of cultural activity.<sup>25</sup> In writing about problems of fundraising, about the overall interest of the larger New York community in the LBI’s activities, and about the ability of the institute to survive into the coming generation, Mühsam was giving voice to deep-seated concerns held by all those who had been involved over the years in the New York LBI’s administration. One such concern was a perceived lack of interest and engagement from the larger New York Jewish community. A 1964 newsletter article contained a complaint from Gruenewald about all the German Jews who were uninterested, even hostile to the LBI’s goals.<sup>26</sup> In an interview in 1977, Gruenewald was asked whether there had been opposition to the founding of the New York institute – had some people felt it was unnecessary? His response was affirmative – there had been little enthusiasm, for instance, in the circles around Congregation Habonim, a midtown Manhattan German-Jewish synagogue that Steven Lowenstein has called “the citywide refugee congregation.”<sup>27</sup> The rabbi of the congregation, Hugo Hahn, had been on the institute’s board, but this reflected merely nominal interest. According to Gruenewald, the only rabbi who had been really interested was Leo Baerwald, originally from Munich and then the rabbi of Beth Hillel in Washington Heights.<sup>28</sup>

In Gruenewald’s words, “ours is a race against time.”<sup>29</sup> In the end, *LBI News* provides ample evidence for the pessimism of the LBI’s founding generation regarding its long-term prospects; but it also demonstrates the very real success the institute would have over the decades in generating precisely the sort of profound engagement they wished for.

<sup>25</sup> *LBI News*, vol. 5, no. 1, 1964, p. 2.

<sup>26</sup> *LBI News*, vol. 5, no. 2, Fall 1964, p. 2.

<sup>27</sup> Steven M. Lowenstein, *Frankfurt on the Hudson: The German-Jewish Community of Washington Heights, 1933–1983*, Detroit, 1989, p. 112.

<sup>28</sup> Gruenewald, interview with Joan Lessing, New York, February 9, 1977, pp. 4–6, (OHC).

<sup>29</sup> September 14, 1976, *LBI New York*, Office Records.

## The Townhouse

In 1955, with a three thousand dollar loan from Herman Muller, vice-president of the American Federation of Jews from Central Europe, the New York LBI rented two small rooms on the Upper West Side of Manhattan and set about acquiring books and manuscripts. Kreutzberger and others began by purchasing books from local New York booksellers. Soon, the collection was being augmented by donations of books and private papers. Between 1957 and 1961, the institute was housed in a rented attic in lower Manhattan, at 1239 Broadway. (Kreutzberger describes these premises as a “penthouse” previously occupied by the composer and conductor Leonard Bernstein.)<sup>30</sup> In 1960, the institute borrowed \$ 150,000 from the Gustav Wurzweiler Foundation to purchase a townhouse at 129 East 73<sup>rd</sup> Street on the Upper East Side.

Gustav Wurzweiler was a banker and a German-Jewish refugee originally from Mannheim.<sup>31</sup> He and his family fled Nazi Germany, first to Brussels, then to France, and finally to the United States. In America, Wurzweiler became a stockbroker, living in the Hotel Pierre on Fifth Avenue. He and Gruenewald knew one another from Mannheim. According to Gruenewald, Wurzweiler’s family had belonged to the city’s Orthodox synagogue, but Wurzweiler himself attended services at the Liberal synagogue presided over by Gruenewald, who would be instrumental in Wurzweiler becoming an official of the Mannheim Jewish community. Their relationship continued in New York, Gruenewald being one of the principle executives of the Wurzweiler Foundation, and had rewards for the New York LBI: in 1964, the Wurzweiler Foundation cancelled the mortgage on the townhouse as a gift to the institute.

The new space represented a vast practical improvement over the old one. The institute’s collection – approximately 30,000 books, 250 unpublished memoirs, and a large archival collection – could now be more rapidly cataloged and prepared for use by scholars. But at least for members of the institute’s first generation, the townhouse also served a symbolic function. Frank Mecklenburg has pointed out that the New York LBI was more than just an archive and library for the German Jews who established and supported it. It was also

... a communal and social institution for the emigrants, akin to *Habonim*, which was founded on the Upper West Side of Manhattan a year after the “*Kristallnacht*,” or the

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<sup>30</sup> Max Kreutzberger, “The Fruit of Twenty Years,” in *LBI News*, vol. 16, Spring/Summer 1975, p. 2.

<sup>31</sup> Will Schaber, “Das New Yorker Leo Baeck Institute,” in Joseph Spalek and John M. Strelka (eds.), *Deutschsprachige Exilliteratur seit 1933*, vol. 2, New York, Bern 1989, p. 1404.

*Aufbau*, the newspaper founded in New York in the mid-1930s, which so rapidly became the central, universally recognized mouthpiece for emigrants from Central Europe. The LBI was unequivocally the scholarly center for this group.<sup>32</sup>

The townhouse thus quite clearly offered this first generation of German-Jewish exiles a space within which to reproduce (albeit naturally only in microcosm) some of the cultural and social elegance and refinement they associated with German-Jewish life in Germany. It played a role in the broader task of saving and transmitting the German-Jewish legacy of *Bildung* and *Kultur*, one of the motivating ideas behind the Leo Baeck Institute in the first place.

In the general press and even in some of the LBI's own publications, the townhouse has been referred to as once belonging to the Guggenheim family.<sup>33</sup> This, however, was not the case. In fact, as the *LBI News* informed its readers in 1961, the structure had been built for a Mr. Charles Guggenheimer. Nonetheless, linking, or allowing the house to be linked, to the aristocratic Guggenheims established a nice sort of cultural patrimony for the New York LBI. The newsletter aimed at the same sort of effect when it reproduced Mrs. Charles Guggenheimer's description of the salon-like atmosphere the house possessed in earlier times. Mrs. Guggenheimer's mother in law, Eliza Guggenheimer, was a famous “*salonnière* in the grand manner.” Every Sunday afternoon she would preside over luncheon of stuffed squab, and then guests would proceed to the music room. Guests included Caruso, Prokofiev, Rachmaninov, Fritz Kreisler and Marcella Sembrich. “And now the house is ours and yours,” Mühsam told readers of the *LBI News* in 1961.<sup>34</sup> (This egalitarian sentiment was accompanied by an appeal for financial donations to help support the new building.) In the following issue, the newsletter called attention, not for the first time, to the building's “old-fashioned elegance,” and quoted from a letter from Dr. Guido Schoenberger, the assistant curator of the Jewish Museum in New York: “I cannot convey to you the deep impression created by the LBI upon myself and my life: gratifying spiritually and esthetically – beautiful and important.”<sup>35</sup>

The aesthetic quality of the LBI townhouse was emphasized in the press reports. The author and journalist Manfred George, writing in the *Stuttgarter Zeitung* in 1962, juxtaposed images of death and life in his discussion of the meaning of the building, and cast the townhouse itself as an actor in the redemption of the German-Jewish past. The Nazis had banished and killed

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<sup>32</sup> Frank Mecklenburg, “Deutsch-jüdische Archive in New York und Berlin. Drei Generationen nach dem Holocaust,” in *Menora. Jahrbuch für deutsch-jüdische Geschichte*, vol. 12 (2001), p. 312.

<sup>33</sup> See, for example, *LBI News*, vol. 1, no. 2, October 1960, p. 3.

<sup>34</sup> *LBI News*, vol. 2, no. 1, April 1961, p. 3.

<sup>35</sup> *LBI News*, vol. 3, no. 1, 1962, p. 1.

German-Jewish life and culture, he wrote. Now on the east side of New York there existed “a slender and tall building, architecturally distinguished, inviting as a sanctuary of quiet and thoughtfulness.” The inside of the house was even more powerful, as a place where the memories and achievements of German Jewry were gathered. “The abundance is astounding, the richness of quality enthralling . . . . One wanders through the [five] storeys and plunges . . . into the past, a past that has been hopelessly destroyed, buried beneath rubble and ash. But note: here it is, to an astounding degree – saved.”<sup>36</sup>

Some employees of the New York LBI admitted that the institute served a communal and nostalgic purpose for them. For instance, Charlotte Elsas, who joined the institute in 1961 and became the president of the women’s auxiliary, admitted that working there – indeed, just being at the LBI – filled a need to maintain contact with other German Jews. Yes, “it could possibly be that I’m most at home with the German-Jewish people . . . . The only other people I feel almost as close to are black people.”<sup>37</sup>

According to Fred Grubel, the New York LBI was also much more significant for Germans – representatives of the German government and members of New York’s German elite – than for Americans, including most American Jews. For these elite Germans, the LBI was “a symbol of the most glorious time of German culture before it was submerged by the brown flood.” By way of illustration Grubel recounts a visit to the institute by Axel Springer, a prominent (and notoriously conservative) West German publisher whose foundation was for decades one of the New York LBI’s most important financial supporters. “I am all shaken seeing what we Germans have lost,” Springer exclaimed, sitting down in Grubel’s office after taking the full tour of the townhouse.<sup>38</sup>

Understandably, the New York LBI functioned as a powerful symbolic site for both Jewish and non-Jewish Germans, and no doubt for others as well. Yet at the same time members of the New York institute resisted identifying the institute as a place of nostalgia for German-Jewish refugees. “We don’t want to be a monument and we don’t want to be a *Landsmannschaft*,” Grubel insisted in 1977. The institute served academic purposes; it was not a matter of nostalgia, not a matter of acculturating German Jews to America. Grubel admitted there was a stratum of German Jews who attended the LBI lectures mainly for “nostalgic purposes.” But there was another stratum drawn from university circles, and this was always the focus of the institute’s activities, from Kreutzberger’s time onwards.<sup>39</sup>

<sup>36</sup> Manfred George, “Das Gerettete,” in *Stuttgarter Zeitung*, no. 61, March 14, 1962.

<sup>37</sup> Charlotte Elsas, interview with Jack Wertheimer, New York, June 17, 1971, p. 19, (OHC).

<sup>38</sup> Grubel, “Lest We Forget,” p. 18.

<sup>39</sup> Fred Grubel, interview with Jack Wertheimer and Michael Tietz, New York, June 11, 1971, pp. 28–31, (OHC).

Like their colleagues in the London and Jerusalem branches, members of the New York LBI were highly sensitive to the accusation that the LBI existed mainly to serve apologetic, nostalgic, or even communal needs. “A scholarly institute does not have the function of a mission,” Fritz Bamberger told an interviewer in 1976. He had been asked whether or not the institute had over-emphasized “the harmonious, the good points” of German-Jewish history. “The word ‘mission’ does not sit right for me. It is not necessary. German Jewry will survive in books about German Jewry; it will survive in German museums.” Bamberger distinguished between speeches and scholarly books and articles. “Save the praise for speeches,” he said. Books on German Jewry had to conform to the “criteria of critical historical scholarship.”<sup>40</sup>

### Fred Grubel and the Expansion of the LBI

In late 1967, Max Kreutzberger announced his retirement. He and his wife would move to Switzerland, where he would assume the position of general consultant for the international LBI. (The New York institute honored Kreutzberger by naming the boardroom after him.) Fred Grubel was named as Kreutzberger’s successor.<sup>41</sup> Born in Leipzig in 1908, Fritz Grubel studied law and political economy at the University of Freiburg and the University of Leipzig. He received his law degree in 1930 and two years later took a position as an assistant to a *Justizrat* in Leipzig. He held this position until his dismissal in summer 1933, remaining employed at a Leipzig law firm until his departure from Germany in 1939. Grubel also served as an administrator for the Leipzig Jewish community between 1934 and 1939.

Grubel was introduced to the LBI, and invited to join, by Max Kreutzberger. Over a glass of tea at the Kreutzberger home, Grubel was assured that he was being groomed to take over the administration of the institute.<sup>42</sup> After conversations with the five leading LBI officials (Gruenewald, Bamberger, Ernst Hamburger and Fred Lessing, along with Kreutzberger), Grubel was hired to assist Kreutzberger. In March 1966, he was appointed secretary and member of the executive committee.

Grubel directed the New York LBI for nearly thirty years. Some found him a difficult man to deal with at times, but almost everyone agreed that he did more than anyone else to advance the cause of the institute. Grubel was certainly not shy about his own accomplishments: “In good cooperation

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<sup>40</sup> Fritz Bamberger, interview with Joan Lessing, New York, February 11, 1976, pp. 34–35, (OHC).

<sup>41</sup> *LBI News*, vol. 8, Fall 1967, p. xxi.

<sup>42</sup> Grubel, “Lest we forget,” p. 17; see also Grubel’s autobiography, *Schreib das auf eine Tafel die mit ihnen Bleibt*, Vienna 1998, pp. 265–305.



with Fred Lessing I succeeded to guide the institute through all vicissitudes, to improve its work in every respect and to enrich its collections.” Grubel made the institute known to America’s Jewish and academic communities by securing exhibits for the LBI at conferences such as those of the Council of Jewish Federations and Welfare Funds and the American Historical Association. (He counted the LBI-sponsored events and exhibits at the annual meetings of the AHA as the most successful.) He secured grants from numerous foundations, including the National Endowment for the Humanities and the National Endowment for the Arts.

Grubel also insisted that the New York LBI develop and maintain a close working relationship with Germany. He worked on the assumption that the LBI was far more significant for Germans than for Americans, including American Jews. And he knew how to take advantage of this. The fact that the New York institute had very little official contact with Israeli government officials never seemed to bother him; he took enormous pride in his and the institute’s relationship with Germany. At one point he proudly confirmed that “all Federal Presidents starting with Dr. Heuss up to the Grandseigneur von Weizsäcker and the great lawyer Roman Herzog honored the LBI New York with their official visits.”<sup>43</sup>

German Chancellor Helmut Kohl was “an especially good friend.”<sup>44</sup> When Kohl was visiting the United States as a member of the opposition, it was Grubel who was contacted and asked to set up a meeting for Kohl with the significant members of the German-Jewish refugee community. Since that point, Kohl passed as “our good friend” – seeking advice from Grubel and the LBI regarding his concerns about the plethora of Holocaust memorials in the United States, which he feared would “eternalize” hatred against Germany and Germans. Kohl took an active interest in the doings of New York LBI, according to Grubel, and even appointed assistant ministerial director Michael Mertes as his “personal ambassador to the LBI.” This, Grubel observed emphatically, would never happen with the American, British, or Israeli governments.<sup>45</sup>

Grubel traveled back to Germany often; even late in life, with his health failing, he was intimately involved in building up the New York LBI with the help of his connections within the German cultural and economic elite. In the 1990s, in the wake of German unification, the New York institute focused on securing materials from archives in the former East German state. In 1991, an international LBI conference on problems regarding Jewish archives and the study of Jewish history in the “new” (i.e. former East German) states was held in Leipzig, and Grubel, who as mentioned had grown up in that city,

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<sup>43</sup> Grubel, “Lest We Forget,” p. 18.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 19.

made his way there to track archival materials that had survived the Nazi and Communist regimes. Hundreds of archivists attended the symposium on Jewish archival materials, and subsequently the institute and the Berlin *Historische Kommission* worked in tandem to take an inventory of the surviving archival material in eastern Germany.<sup>46</sup> “I was able to convince the German Ministry of the Interior in Bonn ... [to] finance the cost of this very ambitious project,” explained Grubel.<sup>47</sup> In 1994, after a heart operation, he traveled to Leipzig once again to participate in the festivities celebrating the installation of the electronic LBI catalog in the *Deutsche Bücherei* in Leipzig. The LBI had put its catalog on-line with financial help from the Volkswagen Foundation, and the Leipzig Library was the first to receive it.

Grubel certainly tended in his memoirs to exaggerate or overestimate his influence with German officials and cultural elites. Nonetheless, from the perspective of both sides the relationship was undoubtedly important. From the German establishment’s perspective, the LBI surely served as a highly visible example of the emergence of what Frank Stern has defined as instrumental or functional philosemitism: “The public avowal of a new attitude toward Jews was one of key importance for what was termed the ‘credibility of the Federal Republic,’ and was utilized as a symbol and served as a surrogate for fundamental domestic and attitudinal changes.”<sup>48</sup> Certainly, the visits to the New York LBI by Federal Republic presidents, chancellors and members of parliament were rather minor events in the political life of Germany. But they did occur on a fairly regular basis, and they were covered widely in the German press.

Not surprisingly, such visits meant much more to those at the New York LBI. Together with the intangible gratification that came with representatives of Germany acknowledging, through their very presence, the vital role that Jews had played in the history of their country, there were of course the tangible benefits of continued financial support. And, as Ismar Schorsch has said, no one did more than Grubel to maintain the relationship and secure continued funding from the Germans.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> This cooperative project resulted in the publication of a multivolume work, *Quellen zur Geschichte der Juden in den Archiven der neuen Bundesländer*, ed. by Stefi Jersch-Wenzel and Reinhard Rürup, Munich and Providence, RI 1996.

<sup>47</sup> Grubel, “Lest We Forget,” p. 27.

<sup>48</sup> Frank Stern, *The Whitewashing of the Yellow Badge: Antisemitism and Philosemitism in Postwar Germany*, transl. by William Templer, Oxford 1992, p. xxi.

<sup>49</sup> Schorsch, interview with the author, New York, July 8, 2003.

### Generational Change, 1985–2000

Grubel would remain the *de facto* head of the New York institute well into the 1990s, deeply engaged in the day-to-day business of the organization. Although his retirement was announced in the summer of 1990 – Robert Jacobs, who had served since 1989 as deputy director, now assuming the position of executive director – Grubel was not one to relinquish power and involvement. His feeling was that Jacobs was not, in the end, up to the job of director,<sup>50</sup> and Jacobs' tenure did not last long. In 1994 he was replaced by Carol Kahn Strauss, the current executive director of the New York LBI. In September 1997, Grubel finally fully resigned, after a four-month stay in the hospital for kidney and heart ailments. He died in 1998.

Max Gruenewald remained president of the New York LBI until 1985, his retirement signaling – as the new president Ismar Schorsch remarked at the time – the institute's first great generational transition: a “transmission of responsibility from the generation that knew Leo Baeck and was part and parcel of Germany and the unique form of Judaism, to a generation that knows that German Judaism only vicariously.” (This transition would also be evident in the appointment of Robert Jacobs, who was born in Brooklyn.)

The new generation, Schorsch insisted, had to work strenuously to maintain the “German-Jewish legacy.” He set forth the legacy that was to be appropriated and maintained by recalling that German Jewry had, first, forged modern Judaism; second, shown that as a collective entity the Jews could survive emancipation – that individual freedom and opportunity did not necessarily mean their disappearance (a vital point, Schorsch indicated, for the American Jews); and third, offered a powerful reminder of the precariousness of Jewish existence: “There is no permanent security for any Jewish community.”<sup>51</sup>

Schorsch's first spell as the New York LBI president did not last long, since he was soon appointed chancellor of the Jewish Theological Seminary, Yosef Yerushalmi assuming the institute's presidency in May 1986. In 1982, Yerushalmi had delivered the annual Leo Baeck Memorial Lecture on the topic of racial antisemitism. According to Yerushalmi, it was this lecture that made Grubel approach him and offer him the presidency.<sup>52</sup> But certainly, more was at work here than this. Yerushalmi was one of the most distinguished Jewish historians in the United States and, together with Schorsch, certainly the most distinguished in the New York area. He had succeeded Salo Baron at Columbia University. His status as a first-rate scholar and Co-

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<sup>50</sup> Grubel, “Lest We Forget,” p. 34.

<sup>51</sup> Schorsch's remarks marking Gruenewald's farewell, May 23, 1985, *LBI New York*, Office Records.

<sup>52</sup> Yerushalmi, interview with the author, New York, June 23, 2003.

lumbia professor made him the logical choice, even though, as Grubel indicated to him directly, he was an *Ostjude*.<sup>53</sup>

In his own estimation, Yerushalmi’s major accomplishment while president was that, speaking fluent Hebrew and having close ties with scholars in Israel, he was able at least to help bridge the gap between the LBI in New York and the LBI in Jerusalem. Although some of the tensions between the two branches were indeed lessened during his tenure, we shall see that they would grow again in the 1990s. During his tenure, Yerushalmi helped the LBI embark on its four-volume synthetic history of German Jewry, though the initiative for and execution of the project owed more to the efforts of Michael Meyer than to Yerushalmi himself. Such a synthetic history had been one of the original motivations for the founding of the LBI in the early 1950s, so the New York branch could hardly take credit for the idea, and all three branches had a role in this undertaking. In any event, the New York LBI was instrumental in getting it started and seeing to its administration.

In April 1991, Yerushalmi wrote to Fred Grubel to indicate that he intended to resign as president of the New York LBI because of time constraints and familial commitments. He suggested that Ismar Schorsch return as his successor. Schorsch, he insisted, was the only other person who could meet the job qualifications: first-rate scholarship, a distinguished academic profile, and residency in New York City.<sup>54</sup> For his part, Schorsch voiced strong skepticism about being both Jewish Theological Seminary chancellor and president of the New York LBI: there would be a possible conflict of interest when it came to his time commitments, fundraising, and so forth, and the well-being of the seminary was his first priority.

“What if we don’t have a president for a while?” Max Gruenewald asked at a meeting of the executive committee to discuss the problem. A quite frank and direct discussion ensued.<sup>55</sup> Michael Meyer brought up the issue of fundraising. Cyrus Adler, he noted, had been president of numerous Jewish organizations at the start of the twentieth century, and especially with regard to fundraising there had been problems. Yerushalmi had not been able to raise money and the New York LBI could not afford to continue in this manner. Guy Stern pointed out that he was the only committee member to have held posts in two universities at the same time, and that inevitably one indeed faced a problem of conflict of interest.

At one point in the discussion Gruenewald announced that he was ready to vote for Schorsch, but raised another issue in passing: Schorsch had promised for years to deliver a social history of *Wissenschaft des Judentums*; he had

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<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>54</sup> Yosef Yerushalmi to Fred Grubel, April 22, 1991, *LBI New York*, Office Records.

<sup>55</sup> Minutes of the LBI New York executive committee, May 9, 1991, *LBI New York*, Office Records.

never completed the project.<sup>56</sup> In the end, despite the board's concerns and his commitment to the seminary, Schorsch was reappointed president of the New York LBI in 1991. In that capacity, he oversaw two major developments within the institute: the creation of an LBI-center in Berlin, and the institute's move from the 73<sup>rd</sup> Street townhouse into the Center for Jewish History in downtown Manhattan. Both of these will be discussed in greater detail towards the end of this essay.

### The Collection

In 1971, an internal New York LBI report indicated that "in the considered judgment of many experts, the archives of the Leo Baeck Institute represent the largest documentation center of German-Jewish history in the Western World."<sup>57</sup> Some five years earlier, Fred Grubel had indicated in a "progress report" that "the 40,000 volume library represents a gigantic effort of reconstruction of the once overwhelming wealth of literature published and collected by German speaking Jewry in Central Europe. The books underwent the same fate as the Jews themselves: destruction and dispersion." During the first decade of the New York institute's existence, under Kreuzberger's direction, the collection grew by 10,000 volumes. According to Grubel, "the entire library is Kreuzberger's very own child."<sup>58</sup>

Initially, a substantial part of the library was made up of books that had been stolen from Jewish libraries and collectors by the Nazis during World War II. After the war, these books were redistributed by the U.S. Army, mainly to libraries belonging to Jewish institutions in the *Yishuv* (pre-State Jewish Palestine) and the United States.<sup>59</sup> Refugees coming to the U.S. from Europe also deposited their books and materials with the LBI.<sup>60</sup> After a while, the institute itself began purchasing books; archival material was either donated or purchased.

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<sup>56</sup> It should be noted, however, that Schorsch published his study later: Ismar Schorsch, *From Text to Context: The Turn to History in Modern Judaism*, Hannover and London 1994.

<sup>57</sup> LBI data sheet, December 28, 1971, p. 3. *LBI Archives New York*, AR 230 A/20/3. For an overview of where the library and archive stood in the early 1970s, see Max Kreuzberger, "The Library and Archives of the Leo Baeck Institute in New York," in *Jewish Book Annual*, vol. 29 (1971/72), pp. 47–54.

<sup>58</sup> Grubel, "Lest We Forget," p. 5.

<sup>59</sup> Ernest Hamburger, "Das Leo-Baeck Institut," in *Geschichte in Wissenschaft und Unterricht*, vol. 21, no. 3 (1970), p. 137.

<sup>60</sup> Nachum Glatzer, interview with Chaim Potok, New York, Oral History Project, New York Public Library, Jewish Division, box 27, folder 1, "Interview with Chaim Potok," p. 107.

For example, at the behest of the Rosenzweig family, Nachum Glatzer donated the papers of Franz Rosenzweig that had been moved from Berlin to South Africa and then to Palestine. Likewise, Grubel had received Joseph Roth's papers from an otherwise unnamed Mme Gideon, who had been given the papers by Mrs. Stefan Zweig.<sup>61</sup> Some of the stories about how particular archival collections found their way to the LBI are rather engaging. The December 1969 issue of the *New Yorker* magazine contained a short piece written by John Updike on the institute's Kafka exhibit. Franz J. Biermann, who worked in the Pentagon, read the piece, and it reminded him that he still possessed a cache of letters written by Leopold Zunz. In the 1930s, Biermann had been a student at the *Lehranstalt für die Wissenschaft des Judentums* in Berlin. He had the task there of cataloging the letters of both Zunz and Moritz Lazarus. He wanted to study the letters, so he was given permission to take five large bundles home with him. As Biermann was getting ready to emigrate to England, Leo Baeck instructed him to take all the letters he had with him, for safety's sake; when he migrated from England to America, the letters came with him. Biermann fought in the Second World War as an American soldier, holding a prominent position with the American military government in Germany after the war. He held on to the letters for a quarter of a century, until he read the *New Yorker* article and learned of the existence of the LBI. He then donated the Zunz letters to the institute.<sup>62</sup>

Members of the New York LBI made a concerted effort to obtain new material, and their regular trips to Europe often resulted in additions to the collection. In late 1961, Max Kreutzberger took an extensive trip to Europe, where he met with the other LBI directors, and with authors and scholars who might be interested in publishing their work under LBI auspices. While there he convinced Margarete Susman to donate her own memoirs as well as unpublished letters to her from Georg Simmel and Gertrud Kantorowitz (who had perished in Theresienstadt). In Holland, Kreutzberger met with Magdalene Kasch, custodian of the literary estate of the philosopher Constantin Brunner. Kasch had buried thousands of Brunner's letters, manuscripts and photos, thus preventing them from falling into the hands of the Nazis. She then recovered them after the Nazis left Holland. Kreutzberger convinced her to donate some of this material to the institute.<sup>63</sup>

Kreutzberger's assistant and LBI librarian Irmgard Foerg also traveled to Europe to secure materials for the archive on a number of occasions in the mid-1960s. She was responsible for bringing the Fritz Mauthner archives to New York. After the death of Mauthner's widow, his thousands of letters,

<sup>61</sup> Grubel, "Lest We Forget," pp. 7–8.

<sup>62</sup> See "Leo Baeck-Institut erhält Zunz-Briefe," in *Aufbau*, June 26, 1970. Fred Grubel also briefly tells this story, putting the number of letters at 300 or so. Grubel, "Lest We Forget," pp. 8–9.

<sup>63</sup> *LBI News*, vol. 3, Fall 1962, p. 3.

manuscripts and papers were given to the parish priest of the town of Meersburg, Wilhelm Restle (Mauthner had built his dream house just outside of Meersburg). Foerg made two extensive trips to Germany to acquire the collection. With financial support from the *Stiftung Volkswagenwerk* she also helped secure large collections of German-Jewish newspapers and magazines, including communal Jewish-community newspapers that had been confiscated by the Nazis and transported to Czechoslovakia for research purposes during the war. After the war, a Bavarian book dealer had acquired them and brought them back to Germany. Foerg obtained them and brought them to the New York LBI.<sup>64</sup>

Grubel told the story of how he managed to secure a rather eclectic collection of Judaica in Frankfurt (what is now the Sally Bodenheimer Collection):

I had received word that a valuable collection was saleable in Frankfurt. A Jewish businessman who had saved himself and his wife by emigrating to Palestine, had returned to Frankfurt. His wife was fatally sick and was given no chance by the Palestinian physicians. The man thought that the medical men in Frankfurt may know better and could still help her. She really lived there another year under local treatment. After she died he was all alone and looked for a livelihood. He did not want to return to Israel. He found out that the City of Frankfurt, which had taken over the responsibility for the maintenance of its Jewish cemeteries, was looking for a warden for the second oldest – then already closed – very large cemetery. He applied for this macabre job and was successful. He moved into the warden's cottage and took care conscientiously and piously of the graves and the tombstones that were entrusted to him. He proudly showed me the result of his labor. It had been very necessary since most of his quiet community had nobody who remembered them and their last resting places. He complained that even the Rothschild families did not do anything against the decay of the once magnificent monuments on the graves of their ancestors.

From time to time he saw visitors who thought they could find Jewish collectibles in the guardhouse of the Jewish cemetery. This gave him the idea of collecting such *archivalia*. He contacted antiquarians, visited places where Jews had lived and was even successful in finding Jewish memorabilia at stamp auctions. Slyly smiling he said that these sources mostly had no idea of the value of these materials. Therefore he could get them quite often at bargain prices. His collection was ramshackle, but rather big. There was a twelfth-century written oath of future good behavior sworn by two Jews who freed themselves from the dungeon where the Count of Hanau had incarcerated them because of some "insult." He had Judeo-German and Hebrew manuscripts and prints of later times, even documents of the Congress of Vienna (1815) concerning the revision (to the worse!) of the legal position of the Jews in various German cities and states, after the downfall of Napoleon's empire . . . . He even had gathered formal invitations, seating assignments and menus reflecting

<sup>64</sup> *LBI News*, vol. 7, Fall 1966, p. 7.

the social life of the Barons von Rothschild. Finally, autographs of Jewish and non-Jewish writers of nineteenth-century German literature and many other documents rounded out his collection, neatly preserved in the cottage of the cemetery warden. We struck a bargain and I could acquire for the LBI archives the entire collection (with the help of supporters from Montreal, Canada, of all places).<sup>65</sup>

At times the New York institute sold books considered outside the scope of its collection in order to acquire other books and archival material. Such material included, Grubel informs us, “a number of rare books from the German Middle Ages and Renaissance” containing “very little of ‘Jewish significance,’” that had been “inherited from a collector.” “New publications,” he continues, “were only acquired if they were very important or if they could not be found in the other great libraries of New York.”<sup>66</sup> Strikingly, Grubel also relates that at one point money for rare books and archival documents was earned through the sale of important holdings of the destroyed Berlin *Hochschule für die Wissenschaft des Judentums*. It is not clear from Grubel’s description where these books had been discovered and who controlled them; nor does he explain why “important holdings” of one of German Jewry’s premier institutions would have been sold. The collection was auctioned off by Sotheby’s and the proceeds divided among a number of academic Jewish institutions: the New York LBI, the Hebrew Union College, the Jewish Theological Seminary, Yeshiva University, the Hebrew University, Jerusalem, and the Leo Baeck College, London.<sup>67</sup>

Just what the institute’s library was supposed to collect and contain, what was of “Jewish significance,” was not always agreed upon. In the institute’s early years, Max Gruenewald appointed Fritz Bamberger and Ernst Hamburger to the library committee; their vision of the library’s holdings differed from Kreutzberger’s, his own vision being, at least according to Grubel, more liberal and expansive. He adored, for instance, the work of Hugo von Hofmannsthal, defining him as an “honorary Jew” on account of the fact that his father, although himself having a Catholic mother, had been an officer of the Viennese Jewish community. The New York LBI had a particularly fine collection of Hofmannsthal’s work. However, Hamburger and Bamberger would have no honorary Jews. Grubel, once he had taken over from Kreutzberger, was forbidden from adding to the Hofmannsthal collection.<sup>68</sup>

Kreutzberger believed the institute’s very special collection required a special cataloging system. So he and Irmgard Foerg developed a special system – a “hybrid between that of the Bavarian State Library of Munich and the New York Public Library.” This idiosyncratic system was in place until Gru-

<sup>65</sup> Grubel, “Lest We Forget,” p. 8.

<sup>66</sup> Grubel, “Lest We Forget,” p. 5.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 5–6

<sup>68</sup> Grubel, “Lest We Forget,” p. 5.



bel attended a crash course in library science at Columbia University and learned of the Dewey and Library of Congress systems; opting for the latter, he succeeded together with institute librarians Stephanie Stern and Yitzhak Kertesz, in newly cataloging the library.<sup>69</sup> Its collection grew dramatically in the early 1970s, due in large measure to the generosity of Julie Braun-Vogelstein, who had been a member of the New York LBI since its inception. In her will she left a substantial part of her library – close to twenty thousand books – her archive, and a cash legacy of \$ 20,000 to the LBI. (In appreciation, the institute named a special room in the library after her.)<sup>70</sup> In the 1980s, the collection substantially increased again, this time through the acquisition of the microfilmed collection of the Wiener Library in London. The New York LBI also obtained a National Endowment of the Humanities grant to purchase microfilms of about 6,000 works related to German-Jewish history unavailable elsewhere in America. Another 225 journals and 3,000 microfilmed books falling outside the institute's purview were donated to the New York Public Library.<sup>71</sup>

While the New York LBI is known chiefly for its books and archival material, it has also managed to amass a fairly sizeable art and “material culture” collection. According to Grubel, some refugees donated paintings and other artworks to the institute for a rather practical reason: “They had to accommodate themselves to smaller, more modest living spaces in America.” In some cases, their descendants no longer wanted “relics of a past time.” In addition, “Kreutzberger often asked LBI patrons and others to lend art works for display at the townhouse, and these would often end up as part of the permanent collection, donated by the lender.”<sup>72</sup>

The LBI also received direct private donations. The historian Felix Gilbert donated a portrait of his great-grandfather Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy, painted by Eduard Magnus. An Australian family donated the watercolor draft of the painting “Lager” by Felix Nussbaum, painted in the French concentration camp of St. Cyprien; works by the graphic artists Hermann Struck and Hugo Steiner-Prag and Max Liebermann's painting “The Cabbage Field” were gifts from the widow of a Mannheim banker living in Forest Hills, New York.<sup>73</sup>

Books, manuscripts, private papers, works of art and sculpture: these constitute the *raison d'être* of the New York LBI. As the newsletter has informed its readers in every issue, students and scholars traveled to New York from all over the world to use the library and archives, and the LBI is justifiably proud

<sup>69</sup> Grubel, “Lest We Forget,” p. 6.

<sup>70</sup> See announcement of May 14, 1970, *LBI New York*, Office Records.

<sup>71</sup> Joseph Duffey (chairman of the NEH) to Gruenewald, December 21, 1978, announcing the grant, *LBI New York*, Office Records.

<sup>72</sup> Grubel, “Lest We Forget,” p. 9.

<sup>73</sup> Grubel, “Lest We Forget,” p. 9.

of its role as guardian of these treasures. At the same time, the institute has also recognized the necessity of selling off pieces of its collection when money is needed. The growth of its collection has been the New York institute's greatest success, together with the scholarly work resulting from use of the collection, yet this growth has also unavoidably led to financial demands in terms of space and care profoundly affecting the institute's nature and development.

### The New York LBI and the Academic Study of German Jewry

The chief purpose of the LBI has, of course, been facilitating research into German-Jewish history, hence helping maintain and expand the postwar memory of German Jewry. The New York institute has accomplished this through its unparalleled library and archives, as well as through a sponsorship of lectures and colloquia and close cooperation with academic institutions at local, national, and international levels. It would, I think, be overstated to argue that the LBI has played an essential role in making the history of German Jewry central to modern Jewish historical writing and contemporary awareness of the modern Jewish experience. The centrality of German Jewry surely has to do with the Holocaust, with the nature of the German-Jewish experience, and with figures such as Jacob Katz who have written the history of Jewish modernity largely in terms of the history of the German Jews. Nonetheless, the New York LBI has doubtless played an important role in facilitating research into German Jewry. It has helped a great deal in the emergence of a second and third generation of historians devoted to the subject, and in calling the attention of other American academics to the scholarly study of the German-Jewish past. Shulamit Volkov has written, with regard to the general growth of ethnic studies in the United States, that “it was in this atmosphere ... that the LBI in New York, until the mid-1960s a quiet research centre run by a few devoted scholars, turned almost overnight into a vibrant, active place, organizing lectures and seminars and supporting a growing number of enthusiastic young researchers.”<sup>74</sup>

“In recent years,” Fred Grubel declared in 1975, “the history of German Jewry has increasingly attracted the attention of the scholarly and academic community. The Leo Baeck Institute has helped advance this development and at the same time substantially benefited from it.”<sup>75</sup> The New York LBI

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<sup>74</sup> See “Reflections on German-Jewish Historiography,” in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 41 (1996), p. 313.

<sup>75</sup> Fred Grubel, “The LBI and the Community of Scholars,” in *LBI News*, vol. 16, Spring/Summer 1975, p. 6.

was involved in this process in a number of ways, including publication of seminal works such as Selma Stern's multivolume work *Der Preussische Staat und der Juden*, and the volumes of memoirs by German Jews edited by Monika Richarz.<sup>76</sup> The history of the publication of Stern's work is particularly interesting. The first two volumes were published in Germany in 1925. The next volume was published by Schocken Verlag in Berlin in 1938, but "the Nazis destroyed all but a few copies which evidently escaped their attention." Stern emigrated to the United States in 1941, but could not bring herself to work on the project again until the late 1950s. "Only when in 1958," she recalled, "the New York LBI, and in particular its director Dr. Max Kreutzberger, asked me to prepare for photostatic reproduction the formerly destroyed volumes and to complete the manuscript for the final volumes, only then was I emotionally prepared to finish the work."<sup>77</sup>

Many, even most, of the leading historians of German Jewry working and teaching in the United States in the last half of the twentieth century had a long-standing connection with the New York institute, contact between them being powerfully promoted through the academic conferences it sponsored, such as its first scholars conference, held at the Arden House in New York from April 8 to 10, 1973. Its theme was "Exploring a Typology of German Jewry," and speakers included Alexander Altmann, David Landes, Werner Cahnman and Max Gruenewald. All told, forty-four scholars from Great Britain, Israel, West Germany and the United States gathered at this venue. Regular faculty seminars sponsored by the New York LBI also facilitated such contacts, as well as generational transitions, with younger scholars such as, in the late 1970s, Paula Hyman, Marsha Rozenblit, Marion Kaplan, Robert Liberles and Stephen Poppel, encouraged to attend these seminars and present their work. The first of these seminars took place in 1973; it was presided over by Ismar Schorsch, and academics from almost every major university in the wider New York area attended. Gradually, the seminars drew in participants from other east coast universities. It is not surprising that the institute drew on local sources for much of its organized intellectual activity. Figures such as Ernest Hamburger, Fritz Bamberger, Ismar Schorsch, Gerson Cohen and Herbert Strauss were available for lectures, and some – like Hamburger, Schorsch and Bamberger – would lecture quite often. But the institute also secured appearances from eminent historians of German Jewry from elsewhere in the States and around the world (among many others, Jacob Katz, Reinhard Rürup, George Mosse and Uriel Tal come to mind).

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<sup>76</sup> Selma Stern, *Der Preussische Staat und die Juden*, 8 vols. (incl. Index ed. by M. Kreutzberger), Tübingen 1962–75 (Schriftenreihe wissenschaftlicher Abhandlungen des Leo Baeck Instituts 7–8, 24, 32); Monika Richarz (ed.), *Jüdisches Leben in Deutschland. Selbstzeugnisse zur Sozialgeschichte*, Stuttgart 1976.

<sup>77</sup> *LBI News*, vol. 12, Spring 1972, p. 4.

The first major public lecture at the institute, its initial Annual Memorial Lecture, on “Leo Baeck, the Man and the Idea,” was delivered by Fritz Bamberger in December 1957 in the auditorium of the New York branch of the Hebrew Union College. Subsequent lectures were delivered by leading historians of Jewry – though not all were specialists in German-Jewish history *per se*. Thus, Salo Baron delivered the 1961 Annual Lecture on “World Dimensions of Jewish History” (before a crowd of around 400 people). The annual lectures were subsequently published, and in fact many of them are seminal pieces in German-Jewish historiography.

Beginning in the 1970s, the New York LBI made a concerted effort to establish working ties with a number of academic bodies and institutions in the United States. One such body was the American Historical Association; as an initial step, in 1971 the institute set up a booth at the bookfair held at the association’s annual meeting; at the 1973 meeting, the association sponsored a session on “German Jews: From Assimilation to Auschwitz”; in the 1974 meeting, the institute and the association jointly sponsored a special session on “Integration of Jews in Nineteenth-Century Germany.” The following year, the institute was also invited, together with the *YIVO*, to participate in the International Congress of Historical Sciences, held in San Francisco. In 1980–1981, the institute and Columbia University co-sponsored a series of academic programs on the theme “The European Scholar and the American University: Changing Patterns”; the event was organized to celebrate both the centennial of the Columbia Graduate School of Social Sciences and the New York LBI’s twenty-fifth anniversary.<sup>78</sup>

In 1985, the New York Institute organized the Leo Baeck Institute International Historical Conference, held in Berlin, on the theme of “Self-Assertion in Adversity: The Jews in National Socialist Germany, 1933–1939.” As Gabrielle Bamberger indicated in the newsletter, using the phrase of a German journalist, it was for many – herself included – an “anxious return” to Berlin and Germany. For many of the over 150 participants, this would be the first return to Germany since the Nazi years. Coinciding with the conference, the LBI sponsored, together with the *Berlinische Galerie*, an art exhibit entitled “*Jettchen Geberts Kinder*.” Based on pieces from the New York institute’s collection, the exhibit centered on the Jewish contribution to German culture.<sup>79</sup>

Exhibits were regularly held in the institute’s townhouse, making use of manuscripts, books, and art pieces from the collection. There was also sponsorship of exhibits in collaboration with other New York institutions such as

<sup>78</sup> *LBI News*, vol. 41, Winter 1981, p. 12.

<sup>79</sup> See *LBI News*, vol. 51, Winter 1986, pp. 2–3. See also material in *LBI Archives New York*, AR 230 A20/3, and the exhibition’s catalog, *Jettchen Geberts Kinder. Der Beitrag des deutschen Judentums zur Kultur des 18. bis 20. Jahrhunderts am Beispiel einer Kunstsammlung*, Berlin 1985.

the Jewish Museum, the Goethe Institute, and the New York Public Library. Large-scale exhibitions on cultural figures such as Nelly Sachs, Max Liebermann and Franz Kafka were not only covered by the *Aufbau* and *Forward* but also by the *New York Times* and, as has been indicated, the *New Yorker*. The exhibits thus played a crucial role in publicly circulating the institute's name and purpose, hence making the German-Jewish legacy part of public awareness.

"For whom is all this done and whom will it avail?" Max Gruenewald asked rhetorically in 1962.<sup>80</sup> Gruenewald, like everybody else involved with the LBI at the outset, believed that the institute's purpose was not only – perhaps even not primarily – to help his own generation remember and commemorate the German-Jewish past. Rather, what mattered most was setting the groundwork for a new generation of scholars and students who could write a fuller history of that past. It is impossible, it would seem, to measure objectively the institute's impact on the study of German-Jewish history and culture in the United States and elsewhere. And yet, in light of the intensive scholarly activity outlined in these pages, such an impact is readily apparent.

### The New York LBI and the Institute's other Branches

The history of the New York LBI – both that of its material development and that of its sense of its own mission and significance – has naturally been closely connected with New York City. In the postwar 1950s, as America's power in the world crystallized and New York confirmed its identity as a cultural force and center, the institute participated to some extent in the self-awareness of this dominant role. The sense of singularity, even superiority, that came with possessing the LBI archives and library was supplemented by being situated at the center of Jewish and American wealth and culture. Although, ironically, being located amidst what is unquestionably the wealthiest and most powerful Jewish community in the world has not mitigated the New York LBI's financial woes, the location has nonetheless proven extremely beneficial to the institution in tangible and intangible ways. But the New York LBI's dominance has also sometimes produced resentments, tensions, and arguments among all three of the LBI branches.

At the second meeting of the New York institute's board of directors in May, 1957, a number of issues were raised and discussed that would continue to preoccupy the institute over the coming decades. The discussion mainly focused on finances. The budget was an ongoing challenge and headache; the insistence that some way had to be found to raise more money would become a common refrain. At this same meeting two board members, Nathan

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<sup>80</sup> "Dedication Address," January 7, 1962, in *LBI Archives New York*, AR 230 A20/3.

Stein and Guido Kisch, raised the thorny issue of the relationship between the LBI branches, Stein arguing that a greater independence on the part of the New York branch would enhance its prospects. As president of the American Federation of Jews from Central Europe, Stein had issued an appeal in 1950 for German Jews, and especially German-Jewish historians, to take up the mantle of *Wissenschaft des Judentums* and begin recording the history of Germany’s destroyed Jewish community from the emancipatory period to the end of the Weimar Republic. This historiographical redemption, the scholarly transmission of the German-Jewish cultural achievement, would be the “gift” of the German Jews to the Jewish people. Stein’s appeal was one of the first concrete calls for a resumption of *Wissenschaft des Judentums* after the Holocaust.<sup>81</sup>

In October 1958, Siegfried Moses addressed the question of the relationship between the three branches in another board meeting. While stressing the need for cooperation, he also insisted that each branch be encouraged to develop along individual lines according to local needs. At the same time, he urged that “matters of common interest for all three institutes be brought up for common consultation so that objections to particular decisions of one institute by another may be given due consideration.”<sup>82</sup> At this time, internal tension in the Leo Baeck Institute was mainly between the Jerusalem and New York branches; like the issue of money, it would be a recurring theme over the next few decades. The chief issue was the status of the New York institute – what Frederick Brunner referred to at this 1958 meeting as its “special needs.” A “frank and friendly discussion” was needed, according to Brunner. (Thirty years later this tension could still make an appearance. Speaking at an executive committee meeting, the present director, Carol Kahn Strauss, complained that the German government’s distribution of money to the three branches was uneven. New York, “though the most important branch by far,” received less money than the other two. The German allocation first went through administrators in Israel, and Strauss wanted a reconsideration of this distribution.<sup>83</sup>)

Indeed, from the outset the New York LBI was different from the other two branches in fundamental ways. It housed the institute’s archives and library; it was designated, or at least conceived by those in New York as – in the words of Margaret Mühsam, the first editor of the LBI newsletter – the

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<sup>81</sup> See Christhard Hoffmann, “Deutsch-jüdische Geschichtswissenschaft in der Emigration. Das Leo-Baeck-Institut,” in Herbert Strauss *et al.* (eds.), *Die Emigration der Wissenschaften nach 1933. Disziplingeschichtliche Studien*, Munich and New York 1991, p. 257.

<sup>82</sup> Minutes of the LBI New York board meeting, October 1958, *LBI New York, Office Records*.

<sup>83</sup> See Minutes of the LBI New York executive committee, September 1996, *LBI New York, Office Records*.

world's "center of documentation of the history of German-speaking Jewry."<sup>84</sup> When Mühsam expressed this view in 1960, the library already contained over 30,000 volumes and 250 or more unpublished memoirs and autobiographies. Jerusalem, it was repeatedly pointed out, had the Jewish National Library and Hebrew University archives; London had the Wiener Library. It only made sense, then, that New York – as the third great center of modern Jewish life – house the institute's main collection. This also clearly reflected a widespread recognition of American Jewry's financial predominance in the Jewish world, and of New York as the single largest Jewish community.<sup>85</sup>

Arthur Hertzberg quite vividly expressed this general mid-twentieth century sense of New York as the center of the Jewish world:

In size and in freedom, the greatest Jewish community that has ever existed in all of history is the one in New York. It has also become, especially in the last century, a center of Jewish creativity and learning beyond compare. There is no aspect of Jewish life in America or in the world which has not affected New York or been shaped by it. In the modern era New York is thus par excellence a mother city for world Jewry.

At least in the United States, Hertzberg suggested, no real Jewish learning or creativity could take place without the resources of New York City. Jewish power lay in New York, he concluded. If the Jews were a "community to be reckoned with," if they had a share in national and international policy, it was due in large measure to their concentration in that city.<sup>86</sup> The first LBI newsletter called New York the natural home of the LBI in America since "it contains the greatest concentration of Jews from German-speaking countries in the new world."<sup>87</sup> The LBI was of course not the only Jewish organization to recognize the centrality of New York City to Jewish life.<sup>88</sup>

<sup>84</sup> *LBI News*, vol. 1, no. 1, 1960, p. 1.

<sup>85</sup> On the general history of the New York Jewish community during this period, see Eli Lederhendler, *New York Jews and the Decline of Urban Ethnicity, 1950–1970*, Syracuse, NY 2001.

<sup>86</sup> Arthur Hertzberg, "Jewish New York," in *L'Chaim, To Life! A View of Jewish New York*, New York 1976, n.p.

<sup>87</sup> *LBI NY Newsletter*, vol. 1, no. 1, p. 2.

<sup>88</sup> In a 1963 memo, for example, the American Jewish Historical Society – at the time, located on Fifth Avenue in Manhattan – asked its members to vote on a permanent location. They were offered three choices: the campus of Brandeis University (where the society ultimately ended up), Independence Square in Philadelphia, and New York City. The "Memorandum on New York City" presented the case to be made for New York, pointing out that almost one-third of the city's roughly ten million people were Jews, comprising the largest and most influential Jewish community in the world. It was a "strategic spot" with unparalleled library facilities and a number of superb Jewish collections housed in renowned institutions: the Jewish Theological Seminary, Hebrew Union College, Yeshiva University, the New York Public Library,

This sense of New York as the *sine qua non* of the contemporary Jewish world certainly fed a sense among some at the New York LBI that while the three LBI branches might be equal, one branch was more equal than others. At times, members of the New York staff exacerbated the tension between the branches by directly comparing the three and highlighting the exalted position of the New York branch. Thus already in a 1957 interview with the *Aufbau*, Margaret Mühsam and Eric Hirshler informed a reporter that “while the London branch concerns itself mainly with preparing the next volume of the *Year Book*, and in Tel Aviv their main task is getting out the *Bulletins in deutscher Sprache* ... we in New York have other, more far-reaching plans.” They went on to list a number of ambitious scholarly projects being planned.<sup>89</sup>

Unsurprisingly, this sort of New York-centrism, combined with a general perception that the New York institute received the lion’s share of the general LBI budget, sometimes raised the ire of the other two institutes, Jerusalem in particular: in 1968 Jerusalem and New York clashed directly at a November meeting of representatives of the three institutes held in London. At this meeting, Gruenewald proposed that the LBI change or expand its historical scope to include periods both before and after emancipation. This idea of expanding the LBI’s research time-frame had previously been floated by members of the New York LBI among themselves as one way of possibly interesting more people in the work of the institute and thus raising more revenue. According to Gruenewald,<sup>90</sup> his suggestion elicited “scorching criticism” from the Jerusalem LBI; in the end, the status quo policy was reaffirmed: LBI would concern itself mainly with the emancipatory period, although it was rather vaguely and obscurely added that other periods could and should be covered if they were of significance for understanding that period.

More seriously, Gruenewald had to respond to accusations from Jerusalem that New York had allowed anti-Israel statements to be voiced and published in their lecture series. Such accusations were leveled at least twice in the late 1960s, forcing a debate over personal opinions expressed in LBI publications and the institute’s responsibility for such opinions.<sup>91</sup> Gruenewald apologized to the Jerusalem LBI, insisting that such personal opinions in no way reflected the official thinking or policies of those in New York. At the same time, he insisted on the LBI’s right to honor the principle of freedom of expression.

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YIVO, and the LBI. Memo of the American Jewish Historical Society, December 15, 1963, regarding the permanent location of the AJHS, *LBI Archives New York*.

<sup>89</sup> Richard Dyck, “Die Schätze des Leo Baeck-Instituts,” in *Aufbau*, September 20, 1957, p. 28.

<sup>90</sup> May 8, 1969, *LBI New York*, Office Records.

<sup>91</sup> See, for example, Minutes of the LBI New York board meeting, May 8, 1968, *LBI New York*, Office Records.



Gruenewald then made a point that he and others would voice repeatedly, one that, intentionally or not, was bound to stir some resentment in the other LBI branches: the New York LBI was different from its Jerusalem and London counterparts through both its function – library and archive – and its location. “It turns and appeals to a wider circle of scholars and lay people. As a result it has grown to become a cultural address.” As such, it could not be held to the same rules and expectations; New York was not Jerusalem, the United States not Israel, and the New York LBI had to function differently if it was to succeed. But Gruenewald was quick to assert the following: “From certain remarks made at the Board meeting in Jerusalem one could easily get the impression as if the New York Institute in order to attract the public at large had altogether strayed from the avowed aims of the Leo Baeck Institute. This impression is wrong . . . .”<sup>92</sup>

Professional relations between the LBI and academics in Germany were yet another source of tension between Jerusalem and New York. In the early 1970s what were the main Israeli institutions of higher learning (the Hebrew University and Tel Aviv University) were in the process of working out a new relationship with German academics,<sup>93</sup> and the Jerusalem LBI was therefore seeking a policy in this regard that could apply to the LBI as a whole. At a meeting at the New York institute in December 1973, it was decided that the problem was Israel’s alone, and that each institute should be free to deal with the Germans in its own way.<sup>94</sup> For its part, the New York institute would forge strong connections with the German academic world. This would eventually result, it was hoped, in the creation of a branch of the LBI in Germany.

### The LBI in New York and the LBI in Berlin

In 2001, the LBI established a center in Berlin’s new Jewish Museum; the center’s main purpose was to house copies of the New York archives. The New York LBI was naturally closely involved in the negotiations to establish this center. While by the 1970s at the latest, some interest was being expressed at the institute in such a project,<sup>95</sup> an effort along these lines did not get under way until the early 1990s. In October 1991, Robert Jacobs, then executive director of the New York institute, sent a memo to Ismar Schorsch providing details of a meeting in New York with Jürgen Christian Regge of the

<sup>92</sup> Minutes of the LBI New York board meeting, August 5, 1969, p. 5, *LBI New York*, Office Records; *LBI News*, vol. 10, Spring 1969, p. 1.

<sup>93</sup> See the essay by Stefanie Schüler-Springorum in this volume.

<sup>94</sup> Record of a meeting, December 13, 1973, p. 3, *LBI New York*, Office Records.

<sup>95</sup> See, for example, the Minutes of the discussion of March 24, 1977, *LBI New York*, Office Records.

Thyssen Stiftung – Regge was very excited by the idea of a *Forschungszentrum* devoted to the history of German Jewry. Berlin, he believed, was too crowded; Leipzig would be a better location. “The project is enormous,” Jacobs wrote to Schorsch, “but so is the potential. It will not go fast or without hitches!” In November, a draft proposal was prepared and circulated within the LBI.

In the ensuing period, Regge pushed for the new research center to be located in eastern Germany, assuring Grubel that Leipzig was preferable to Berlin; Leipzig would gain in importance by being the first place of Jewish study in the German east. In a memo to Schorsch, Grubel indicated that the LBI was likely to “reap quite some institutional and financial benefits from the Sachsen state authorities.”<sup>96</sup> In the end, however, no such support from these authorities was forthcoming.

In late December 1998, W. Michael Blumenthal – former Secretary of the Treasury under Jimmy Carter and now director of Berlin’s incipient Jewish Museum – came to New York to speak to the New York LBI’s executive committee. He presented an overview of what he considered the current situation of Jews living in Germany and discussed specific problems related to the museum, questions of restitution, and ongoing debates about issues of history and memory in the German context. In this framework, he suggested that the LBI has an important role to play in contemporary Germany – and that an LBI office should be opened in the museum. This, he argued, would solve any budgetary problems a new center in Germany would otherwise pose. From its beginning, the LBI had understood itself in part as offering a basis for Jewish-German reconciliation, and Blumenthal clearly understood this as a continuing mission. He was joined in this conviction by Michael Naumann, at the time the German Minister of Culture, who, together with Blumenthal would be instrumental in opening up the LBI archival office in Berlin.

In a 1999 letter to Ismar Schorsch, Blumenthal spelled out his position in greater detail. As a resource for the study of German-Jewish history, the LBI was gradually losing its uniqueness in that other research institutions were being established, especially in Germany. Financial support from Germany to an institution located in New York was becoming ever more questionable, given that German scholars would not have to travel across the Atlantic to gain access to resources. So what, Blumenthal asked, was the long-term future of the LBI in New York? Would not the New York institute’s problems of money and space and the difficulties in generating interest among younger scholars be solved in large measure through cooperation with Berlin? Blumenthal did not only envision a branch of the New York LBI in Berlin, but

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<sup>96</sup> Memorandum, Grubel to Schorsch re Thyssen, April 27, 1992, *LBI New York*, Office Records.

the actual transfer of its archives to the German city within two years – and then a transfer of all its holdings there over a five-year period.<sup>97</sup>

It is striking that many members of the New York executive committee voiced strong support for relocating the New York LBI in Berlin,<sup>98</sup> largely, it appears, from a belief that in the not-too-distant future Germany would be the main international center for German-Jewish studies, the only place willing and able to offer adequate intellectual and financial support for the LBI's sort of research, hence the optimal center for the LBI. In any event, as we have seen, the executive committee members had always had a somewhat ambivalent sense of the institute's future, linked to skepticism about enduring interest in German-Jewish history within the United States. The institute's first generation had recognized that the future of the LBI depended, as Fred Lessing said, on the "Americanization" of the institute.<sup>99</sup> In both public and private venues, its members had given vent to concern and despair about the level of engagement on the part of the younger generation: low membership, poor attendance at the colloquia.

Yet pronounced optimism had also been expressed within the New York institute about its future. In 1973, a report on the annual meeting of the LBI international board expressed considerable hope when it came to the prospects of the New York branch. "It is absolutely essential that the LBI put into place a concrete plan for future scholarly work. This will allow us to attract younger academics who will participate in our projects." The report acknowledged that the interest in German-Jewish studies differed from country to country: in Great Britain and Germany interest seemed to be declining; in Israel it seemed to be increasing; in the United States it was "certainly on the rise." The New York institute then offered its own assessment: in American universities, the interest in modern German-Jewish history was growing precipitously. This was evident in the increasing number of people using the institute's archives and library, as well as increasing sales of LBI publications. "The relationship with the younger generation of college professors has been solidified and will in the next few years become even more intense," the report continued. "The integration of the LBI into the cultural life of the United States in general and the Jewish realm in particular is essentially already an established fact."<sup>100</sup> From the late 1970s into the 1980s, this sense of optimism would be strengthened through a heightened interest among American Jews in genealogical research – largely the product of the hugely

<sup>97</sup> Blumenthal to Schorsch, June 17, 1999, *LBI New York*, Office Records.

<sup>98</sup> Minutes of the LBI New York executive committee, January 12, 2000, *LBI New York*, Office Records.

<sup>99</sup> Fred Lessing, interview with Joan Lessing, Scarsdale, NY, November 25, 1979, p. 9, (OHC).

<sup>100</sup> Ergebnisse und Berichte der Arbeitsbesprechung des LBI in New York am 4. und 5. April, 1973, *LBI Archives New York*, AR 230 A20/3, p. 4.

popular television miniseries “Roots.” Increasing numbers of American Jews now also went looking for their “roots,” and the New York LBI became a central site for their investigations. At one point in the late 1970s Sybil Milton, the chief archivist at the time, complained that so many people were coming in to the institute to search for their roots that she could not get her own work done.<sup>101</sup>

Nevertheless, as indicated, by the mid-1990s a number of the institute’s executive committee members considered a move to Germany to be inevitable, the only real way to deal with an American decline in interest in German Jewry. In 1996 Carol Strauss forcefully expressed such a viewpoint in a meeting with Bernd Fischer, director of the Berlin mayor’s office of protocol. Arguing for the New York institute’s relocation, Fischer presented the outlined above argument: given Berlin’s role as capital of Germany, it would soon replace New York as the center of German-Jewish studies. He offered a site near the Wannsee that could serve as a new home for the LBI in Germany. (There is no comment in the records regarding the irony of this suggestion.)

Strauss agreed wholeheartedly with Fischer’s assessment. In her words,

the materials in the LBI are in German; the scholars, historians, etc. who access it are primarily (almost exclusively) German and Austrian; *this is German history* [italics in original]. The need to study and understand this history will never be the job of Americans, nor will Americans ever understand the importance of preserving and documenting and collecting and cataloging the German-Jewish past. It may be too early, but the LBI might eventually and appropriately belong where its mission naturally takes it, to the seat of Rabbi Baeck’s rabbinate, Berlin.<sup>102</sup>

In a letter to the New York LBI dated August 25, 1999, Strauss reproduced the points made by Blumenthal in his letter to Schorsch, speaking of a partnership between the institute and the Jewish Museum and of a gradual relocation of the institute’s holdings from New York to Berlin. At the same time, she emphasized, the LBI would remain independent, free to form associations with other German institutions. Strauss appended a draft resolution, to be considered by the board.

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<sup>101</sup> See the comments of Charlotte Elsas, interview with Joan Lessing, New York, 1977, pp. 39–40, (OHC). See also Frank Mecklenburg, “Deutsch-jüdische Archive,” pp. 317–318; Sybil Milton, “German-Jewish Genealogical Research: Selected Resources at the Leo Baeck Institute, New York,” in *Toledot*, Spring 1979, pp. 13–18.

<sup>102</sup> Report on a meeting between Fischer and Strauss, June 6, 1996, *LBI New York*, Office Records. Strauss still believes this. If we define German-Jewish history narrowly, she argues, then we must admit that most Americans are not interested in this past: certainly, they are interested in German (or German-speaking) Jews like Einstein, Freud or Kafka, but they are not interested in them as Jews *per se*; Germans are interested in German Jews *qua* Jews. The history of German Jewry will *always* be a crucial part of German history; the LBI, therefore, belongs in Germany. Carol Kahn Strauss, interview with the author, New York, June 23, 2004.

This generated a rather heated and protracted debate, even after the international LBI and the Jewish Museum, Berlin came to a formal agreement in late 1999. Some board members, including Peter Gay and Ernst Michel, supported Strauss's proposal. In line with her perspective, Michel stressed the centrality of Germany now for German-Jewish research, suggesting that the interested parties in New York and the United States needed to recognize that the center of gravity for research had shifted to Germany. But a number of those on the New York institute's executive committee objected to the move, especially to the idea of relocating the archives to Berlin. In a January, 2000 meeting of the committee, Arthur Hertzberg argued that the institute's library was hardly needed in Berlin since German libraries were so well developed. More than this, he insisted, the New York LBI archives "consist of Jewish history, whereas the Germans are only interested in the narrow 'why we did it' aspect of our history, which is post-1933, and therefore the LBI archives belong to New York where they are within the total context of Jewish history." Henry Feingold also spoke up, asserting that "Jewish history needs to be dealt [with] within a Jewish environment and ... Germany is not a Jewish environment."<sup>103</sup> Other skeptical committee members focused on the question of funding. The German government had made it known that it would only fund the Jewish Museum, not directly finance the LBI. The degree to which the LBI could maintain its independence in Germany was thus open to question. And a last objection had to do with who would be in charge of a Berlin LBI. Raymond Schrag pointed out that the *wissenschaftliche Arbeitsgemeinschaft* that would steer such an institute's governing body was presently made up almost entirely of non-Jews, the exception being Michael Brenner.

The issues at stake here did raise even larger, more fundamental questions about the role the LBI might play in creating, as Arthur Hertzberg insisted at one of the meetings, a new Germany, a "better future." "How," he asked, "can the institute contribute to reconciliation (*Versöhnung*)?"<sup>104</sup> Thus, even those such as Hertzberg who opposed relocating the LBI to Germany and who generally did not nurture warm feelings for the country partly understood the New York institute's role in terms of such reconciliation. These questions had of course been present, if only implicitly, within the LBI since its inception; but it was only in the late 1990s, with the proposed move to Berlin, that they were made explicit: what was the relationship between the LBI and Germany? What role did it play, and wish to play, in the process

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<sup>103</sup> Minutes of the LBI New York executive committee, January 12, 2000, p. 3, *LBI New York*, Office Records.

<sup>104</sup> Minutes of the LBI New York executive committee, September 14, 1999, *LBI New York*, Office Records. (It is unclear whether it was Hertzberg or the stenographer who added the German term.)

of reconciliation between German Jews and Germany, American Jews and Germany?<sup>105</sup>

From the start the New York LBI had indeed played some role in this larger process. All German leaders of note who made their way to New York felt the need to pay a visit to the LBI. And just as importantly, the institute served as a central destination for visiting German and Austrian scholars. On the one hand, it was a repository of source material, a place to do one’s research. On the other hand, in Frank Mecklenburg’s words it was often their “first opportunity to come into contact with ‘real’ Jews and to experience the New York ‘Jewish’ sensibility.” And as Mecklenburg suggests, this potential space for encountering Jews directly also offered a venue for confronting feelings of guilt and shame, yet doing so in a familiar, *mitteleuropäisch* setting.<sup>106</sup> The creation of a library and archive in Berlin, even if it in the end only consisted of microfilms (see below), thus meant a diminishing of the role of the New York institute, in both practical and symbolic terms. In 2000, this sense of a symbolically diminished institute was intensified – some might argue completed – through its incorporation into a new Center for Jewish History in New York City.

### The New York LBI and the Center for Jewish History

The debate within the New York LBI over an official presence of the international LBI in Berlin continued into 2000. However, late in 1999 the international body and the Jewish Museum, Berlin came to an agreement – an LBI office would indeed be opened in the museum’s landmark Daniel Libeskind building, but only to house microfilm copies of the New York archives. The New York institute thus had an important role in the agreement, but the involvement of the international board meant a diffusing of the tensions caused by New York’s unilateral negotiations. By this time, at any rate, the members of the New York executive were preoccupied with a major development much closer to home: the proposed move of the institute to downtown Manhattan and its incorporation into a Center of Jewish History.

The idea that the New York LBI might join with other Jewish institutions in the city and create some such center had been floating around for decades. In the early 1970s, the institute entered into discussions with the Jewish Theological Seminary about creating a Center for German-Jewish History and Culture; the idea of securing the participation of the Hebrew Union College was also broached. The objection was raised, however, that the LBI

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<sup>105</sup> Frank Mecklenburg has addressed these questions in “Deutsch-jüdische Archive,” pp. 315f.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 317.

ought not align itself with any one particular stream of Judaism. The realization of such a project, it was concluded, would be difficult if not impossible.<sup>107</sup>

In the 1990s, when the notion of the New York LBI becoming part of a larger research center was taken up in earnest, such ideological objections were not an issue, since the center's potential partners were not rabbinical seminaries but academically oriented research institutes. In a meeting of the executive board held in September 1992, Ismar Schorsch mentioned that he had had informal talks with *YIVO* about the possibility of bringing the two institutions together under one roof "without compromising the independence of either institution." One month later Schorsch reported that he was engaged in serious talks with both *YIVO* and the American Jewish Historical Society.

In August 1993 it was announced that a building formerly housing the American Foundation for the Blind (the Helen Keller Institute), on 16<sup>th</sup> Street in lower Manhattan, would constitute the Center for Jewish History's site. The total cost of the project was estimated at 18.4 million dollars, approximately 16 million dollars of this coming from the sale of the LBI and *YIVO* buildings and a sizeable contribution from the Jesselson family in the name of the Yeshiva University Museum; \$ 2.4 million would thus still need to be raised. It was economics that had largely driven the New York institute, and Ismar Schorsch in particular, to negotiate the move into the new center. By the 1990s, it had generally been acknowledged that the townhouse on 73<sup>rd</sup> was in terrible disrepair and could no longer comfortably or even safely accommodate the institute's collection. Repairing and expanding the facilities would have been an undertaking that the always financially burdened LBI plainly could not afford.

The New York LBI had never really been able to generate interest within the American Jewish community, or funding from it. While a fuller treatment of the institute's financial history is beyond the scope of this chapter, it is worth briefly addressing the question of the source of such a basic problem. For Yosef Yerushalmi, the main factor at work here is what he calls the "Fiddler on the Roof factor": at a certain point, in the 1960s, American Jewry turned to Eastern Europe and Yiddish culture to feed its need for nostalgia. Even the German Jews, or at least their offspring, would eventually participate in this development to some extent. German Jewry, in Yerushalmi's words, "had no Fiddler on the Roof."<sup>108</sup>

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<sup>107</sup> Ergebnisse und Berichte der Arbeitsbesprechung des LBI in New York am 4. und 5. April, 1973, *LBI Archives New York*, AR 230 A20/3.

<sup>108</sup> Yerushalmi, interview with the author, New York, June 23, 2003. The lack of nostalgia regarding German Jewry had been noted by others. See for instance Gerson Cohen, "German Jewry as Mirror of Modernity," *LBI Year Book*, vol. 20 (1975), p. xi.

For both Herbert Strauss and Ismar Schorsch, the problem lies with traditions established by New York’s old German-Jewish community itself, which, at least when it comes to Jewish cultural endeavors, was not philanthropically inclined, Germany’s local Jewish communities having been state supported.<sup>109</sup> (Strauss does acknowledge that German Jews did, in fact, freely give money to general cultural organizations in New York City.) In the view of Carol Strauss, this community was highly insular, convinced that no one but itself has shared an interest in the German-Jewish past. With increasing interest in that past shown by “outsiders,” Strauss believes that the New York institute is now far more integrated into the larger Jewish community of the New York area; this, however, has been a rather recent development.<sup>110</sup>

Becoming part of the Center of Jewish History was thus understood as vital to the survival of the institute. The prime force behind this move was certainly Ismar Schorsch, who negotiated on the one hand with the center and on the other with suspicious and reluctant members of the New York LBI’s board. Schorsch felt strongly that the institute had no viable future on 73<sup>rd</sup> Street, the townhouse representing a romantic connection to both the LBI’s and the broader German-Jewish past. He insists that the institute has only gained from the new facilities, and from the synergy at the center, which he sees as offering the added benefit of serving as a catalyst for the development of lower New York City.<sup>111</sup>

Of course, not everyone in the New York LBI’s executive was as enthusiastic – the proposed move in fact sparked fierce debates and heated objections, these tending to gravitate around financing. By December 1994, the estimated cost for the center had risen to twenty to twenty-two million dollars, plus another ten million dollars for the maintenance budget. By 1996, twenty-six million dollars had been raised. This left a shortfall of somewhere between four and six million dollars. At the same time, a curious problem emerged in relation to the German Government. Michael Mertes, Chancellor Helmut Kohl’s *Ministerialdirektor*, let Strauss know that Germany had no interest in supporting any American Jewish research institute other than the LBI: the Center for Jewish History, he wrote, threatened the “special relationship” between his country and the institute because it simply did not embody the “same moral obligation.”

Just as important as such concerns were fears over loss of institutional identity, independence, and status. For instance, in November 1994, Joan Lessing wrote to Fred Grubel expressing her frustration at the way the LBI was being treated by YIVO and others – in the same “second class” way, she

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<sup>109</sup> Herbert Strauss, interview with the author, New York, July 6, 2003; Ismar Schorsch, interview with the author, New York, July 8, 2003.

<sup>110</sup> Carol Kahn Strauss, interview with the author, New York, June 23, 2004.

<sup>111</sup> Schorsch, interview with the author, New York, July 8, 2003.



suggested, as the way the German Jews had been treated by the U.S. Holocaust Museum. (Lessing did not elaborate on what she meant here.)<sup>112</sup> Such fears clearly emerge in a debate unfolding over 1998 and 1999 about a proposed Orthodox “chapel” to be housed in the new center. A major potential donor had approached Bruce Slovin, who was directing the plans to create the center, and offered to make a large contribution on condition that the “chapel” be built – with a *mechitzah* to separate the sexes during prayer. This sparked a hostile response, Michael Bamberger writing to Slovin to urge immediate termination of the idea (the “chapel” would “violate the center’s scholarly purpose and nature”),<sup>113</sup> and George Mosse writing to Carol Strauss to condemn the idea as “totally misguided” (“a historical research center has only one god, and that god is history”). Mosse saw the “chapel” as sign of a potential Orthodox takeover of the institute, “as they did in Jerusalem.”<sup>114</sup> Some suggested that the New York LBI pull out of the agreement altogether. Schorsch and others spoke out for compromise.<sup>115</sup>

In a letter dated 23 October 1999, Schorsch wrote to Slovin detailing the LBI’s uneasiness with the center’s direction. Item one was the chapel. Other concerns included fund-raising, inadequate space reserved for the LBI, fear over the institute’s autonomy, the center’s emphasis on community programs and popular events at the expense of serious research, and more general issues of governance. These major issues, Schorsch wrote, had resulted “in a major deviation from our original consensus and understanding. It is no longer that which one hoped and planned for.”<sup>116</sup> In April 1999, Eva Brunner Cohn, the New York LBI’s treasurer, submitted a formal motion for the institute to withdraw from the project; the motion was seconded by Guy Stern. “Our continued participation would not only seriously undermine our current excellence, but could even threaten the very existence of the LBI.” Michael Meyer and others voiced their own serious reservations about autonomy, finances, academic seriousness, and the loss of the institute’s unique character; the board members did not, however, agree to a formal withdrawal from the project.

Throughout 1999, much of the New York LBI board’s energy was understandably consumed by the question of the center. Schorsch pressed hard for

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<sup>112</sup> Joan Lessing to Grubel, November 23, 1994, *LBI New York*, Office Records. The minutes from 1998 contain a number of complaints and expressions of concern addressed to Grubel and Schorsch about the move to the center.

<sup>113</sup> Michael Bamberger to Bruce Slovin, August 24, 1998, *LBI New York*, Office Records.

<sup>114</sup> George Mosse to Carol Kahn Strauss, July 31, 1998, *LBI New York*, Office Records.

<sup>115</sup> See the records of the discussion of October 15, 1998, *LBI New York*, Office Records.

<sup>116</sup> Schorsch to Slovin, October 23, 1999, here p. 2, *LBI New York*, Office Records.

an acceptance of partnership, urging the LBI trustees to approve the sale of the townhouse. In December 1999, the 73<sup>rd</sup> Street building was on the market, with an \$ 8.7 million asking price. The trustees then began discussing just how much of the money from the sale the institute would be expected to pay the center and how much it would be able to keep for itself. The building would finally sell for five million dollars. After paying legal and other associated costs, the New York LBI would net half a million dollars; it would give four million dollars to the center.<sup>117</sup>

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With the sale of the 73<sup>rd</sup> Street townhouse and the move to the Center for Jewish History in the year 2000, the institute has doubtless entered into a new phase of its history. In important ways – probably in the most important ways – there is a continuity in its chief goal of serving as a central repository for material related to the history of the Jews in German-speaking lands, although this role has been somewhat mitigated by the opening of the Berlin facilities. On a practical level, the new structure on 16<sup>th</sup> Street offers more space for the library and archives, and better conditions for their long-term survival. And the New York institute remains a center of gravity for visiting German and Austrian officials, even if the space is more abstract or diffuse. Nevertheless, as a number of board members feared, an element of the LBI’s distinctive identity has, unavoidably, clearly been lost in the move. There no longer exists a distinct space for representing the particularity of the German-Jewish past: a space standing synecdochically *for* that past.

In any event, the loss is arguably more than compensated for by the fact that although now officially identified in terms of a larger concept of “Jewish History,” the New York institute has been able to endure as an important center for research on the Jews of Germany, sponsoring lectures, conferences, and ground-breaking publications. More abstractly but no less importantly, the move to the center signifies the institute’s full “Americanization,” its conceptual and material incorporation into contemporary American and American Jewish intellectual and institutional life. “Here it is, to an astounding degree, saved”: the “here,” at least in one important regard, has changed; but the “it” has again been saved in the process.

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<sup>117</sup> Carol Kahn Strauss, interview with the author, New York, June 23, 2004.



# The Making of a New Discipline: The London LBI and the Writing of the German-Jewish Past

Nils Roemer

In the course of the 1930s, England became the destination of many German-Jewish immigrants, who created their own networks of communication and association. From that time until – and it remains the case – the present, Jewish historians, philosophers, art critics and publishers from Germany have left a lasting mark on British intellectual and cultural life.<sup>1</sup> The immigrants included some widely respected scholars working on disparate aspects of Jewish history and culture, as well as religious leaders: alongside Leo Baeck himself, names that here come to mind are Alexander Altmann, Max Eschelbacher, David Herzog, Hans Liebeschütz, Bruno Italiener, Samuel Krauss, Ignaz Maybaum and Eva Reichmann. With the transfer of the Warburg Library from Hamburg to London in 1933 and the arrival there from Amsterdam of the Wiener Library in 1934, two important research institutions with close ties to German Jewry had successfully relocated to the United Kingdom; the onset of the Second World War thwarted similar plans, already in an advanced stage, for the transfer of the *Hochschule für die Wissenschaft des Judentums* to Cambridge.<sup>2</sup> In 1941, the immigrants founded a formidable institution to represent their interests in England, the Association of Jewish Refugees.<sup>3</sup>

During the war, the Anglo-Jewish Association compiled lists of highly valued Judaica collections in Germany. After the war, those collections not returned to their former owners were mainly divided up between the Jewish National Library in Jerusalem and American libraries; the associations and institutions linked to German Jews now living in Great Britain received

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<sup>1</sup> Daniel Snowman, *The Hitler Émigrés: The Cultural Impact on Britain of Refugees from Nazism*, London 2003.

<sup>2</sup> Christhard Hoffmann and Daniel R. Schwartz, “Early but Opposed, Supported but Late: Two Berlin Seminaries which Attempted to Move Abroad,” in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 36 (1991), pp. 267–304.

<sup>3</sup> On the *AJR*, see Marion Berghahn, *German-Jewish Refugees in England*, London 1984, pp. 156–164.

nothing. Leo Baeck's efforts to secure the library of the *Hochschule* were frustrated by Gershom Scholem, for whom Britain's German-Jewish emigré community seemed too transient to receive such a major collection.<sup>4</sup>

Nevertheless, with London-based Leo Baeck serving as president of the Council of Jews from Germany, established towards the war's end by Jewish organizations in Germany, Israel, Britain and the United States, the city had become one of the international centers of German-Jewish life.<sup>5</sup> Already in 1947, Eva Reichmann had underscored the importance of the German-Jewish legacy in the pages of *AJR Information*, and Hermann Schwab's *A World in Ruins: History, Life and Work of German Jewry* had appeared in London the previous year.<sup>6</sup> By 1950 Baeck felt obliged to appeal in *AJR Information* for efforts to ensure the survival of German Jewry's achievements in the various countries of emigration – he could observe the émigrés in England rapidly integrating themselves into British life.<sup>7</sup> Following this and similar appeals in the Jewish press in England and elsewhere, the Council established the Leo Baeck Institute in Jerusalem in May 1955.<sup>8</sup>

Among the many individuals who responded to the initial publicity about the LBI was Isaiah Berlin, who sent his apologies, but expressed his preference in a letter to the organizers for approaching German Jewry from a wider European-Jewish historical perspective.<sup>9</sup> At a preliminary meeting in London held in August 1955, a number of German-Jewish scholars debated the aims of the institute in response to an article in the *AJR Information* that functioned as a basis for the deliberations.<sup>10</sup> Participants in this meeting included Weltsch, Liebeschütz, the Reichmanns, Bruno Italiener, but also Alfred Wiener and Shalom Adler-Rudel. At this preliminary meeting, Hans Liebeschütz voiced considerable skepticism regarding a London branch of the institute, arguing that only New York provided favorable enough conditions.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Gershom Scholem to Salo Baron, May 31, 1949, Stanford University, *Salo Baron Archive* M580, box 43, folder 7; see also the article by Christhard Hoffmann on the founding of the Institute in this volume.

<sup>5</sup> Hermann Muller, "Aus der Gründungszeit des Council of Jews from Germany," in *In Zwei Welten. Siegfried Moses zum Fünfundsiebzigsten Geburtstag*, Tel Aviv 1962, pp. 184–199.

<sup>6</sup> Eva G. Reichmann, "Spiritual Heritage," in *AJR Information*, vol. 2 (February 1947), p. 11; Hermann Schwab, *A World in Ruins: History, Life and Work of German Jewry*, London 1946.

<sup>7</sup> Leo Baeck, "The German Jews," in *AJR Information*, vol. 5 (March 1950), p. 1.

<sup>8</sup> Minutes of the meeting of the Council of Jews from Germany, Israel Section, May 31, 1955, *LBI London*, file "Minutes 1955-57."

<sup>9</sup> Minutes of a preliminary meeting of the LBI in London, August 14, 1955, *LBI London*, file "Minutes 1955-57."

<sup>10</sup> "Leo Baeck Institute," in *AJR Information*, vol. 10 (July 1955), p. 1.

<sup>11</sup> Minutes of a preliminary meeting of the LBI in London, August 14, 1955, *LBI*

Some two months later, a more elaborate meeting was held, attended by Leo Baeck, Hans Bach, Esra Bennathan, Victor Ehrenberg, Julius Isaac, Bruno Italiener, Jacob Jacobsohn, Eva and Hans Reichmann, and several participants from abroad including Gershom Scholem and Selma Stern-Täubler.<sup>12</sup> In this venue, a number of distinguished figures – Hans Bach, Max Eschelbacher, Robert Weltsch and, crucially, Leo Baeck, emphasized the role of the future LBI as an instrument for the preservation of historical memory. It would be the institute's task, Weltsch argued, to “keep alive the memory of German Jewry,” in particular in the form it took from the Emancipation until the collapse of Weimar. Baeck, who had missed the founding meeting in Jerusalem due to illness, went further: “[the] object of our efforts,” he insisted, “is not only to preserve but also mainly to revive the heritage of German Jewry.”<sup>13</sup>

With time, the nostalgia-driven plans to revive the German-Jewish legacy gave way to more diverse and conflict-ridden accounts of the German-Jewish past. Similarly, the increasing insistence on high academic standards reined in a naïve rush merely to embrace and celebrate the past. This noble pursuit of scholarly detachment was ultimately responsible for the LBI's success in the creation of a new academic discipline when, as Arnold Paucker stated, “. . . after the expulsion and annihilation of German Jewry, the study of its modern history was revived and a new academic discipline, the science of German-Jewish historiography, was created.”<sup>14</sup> Gerson Cohen therefore rightly observed on the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of the institute that in contrast to the destruction of Eastern European Jewry, the annihilation of German-Jewish life and culture did not generate “[a] wistful literature of nostalgia.”<sup>15</sup>

Early on, the initial self-confident plans to transfer the legacy to the new centers of German-Jewish life became dampened by concerns about the feasibility of LBI office in London. It is striking that Weltsch himself, who would serve as chairman of the LBI's London branch until 1978 and as editor of the *Year Book* until 1970, felt that only New York could provide the right conditions for the study of German Jewry. Once the London branch had

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London, file “Minutes 1955–57.” At this meeting, Liebeschütz laid stress on not isolating the history of German Jewry from its German context.

<sup>12</sup> Minutes of a meeting organized by LBI London, October 16, 1955, *LBI Archives New York*, AR 6682, box 6, folder 1.

<sup>13</sup> “London Session of Leo Baeck Institute,” in *AJR Information*, vol. 10 (November 1955), p. 6; Minutes of a meeting organized by LBI London, October 16, 1955, *LBI Archives New York*, AR 6682, box 6, folder 1.

<sup>14</sup> Arnold Paucker, “In Memoriam: Robert Weltsch,” in *AJR Information*, vol. 38 (February 1983), p. 6.

<sup>15</sup> Gerson Cohen, “German Jewry as a Mirror of Modernity,” in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 20 (1975), pp. ix–xxx, here p. xi.

been set up, he bemoaned his excessive workload in the poorly staffed and underfunded office, which in the first year operated out of space shared with the Fairfax Council, and complained – despite the above-expressed sentiments – about the lopsided share of the budget accorded to New York.<sup>16</sup> In the course of that year, Weltsch battled with Reichmann over finances, aiming to become more independent from him by receiving his salary directly. At one point, he indicated that in his view the institute existed only in the imagination, the real work being done in his private office, with the help of one typist who worked during the evening: “Then I send the letters myself; I lick the envelopes, weigh them, affix the stamps, go to the post office.”<sup>17</sup>

This gloomy start notwithstanding, the institute quickly succeeded in enlisting several internationally renowned scholars into its ranks. One of these was Hans Liebeschütz, whom Robert Weltsch would later name the London branch’s “alter ego,”<sup>18</sup> and who would become one of the most prolific intellectual historians of German Jewry of his generation. Born in Hamburg, Liebeschütz’s first great interest was medieval and early modern European history, often in conjunction with the Warburg Institute. Some seven years after his 1939 arrival in England as a refugee, he became assistant lecturer in medieval history at Liverpool University. Unlike the other members of the London institute, Liebeschütz was not only a trained historian, but had also studied and taught at the *Hochschule für die Wissenschaft des Judentums* in Berlin during the 1920s and 1930s.<sup>19</sup>

Other such figures were Jacob Jacobson, the former director of the *Gesamtarchiv der deutschen Juden*, whom Weltsch later called “one of the patrons of German-Jewish historiography,”<sup>20</sup> the specialists in German history Francis L. Carsten and Werner E. Mosse, the attorneys Adolph Asch and Walter Breslauer, the psychoanalyst Willi Hoffer and the scholar-rabbis Alexander Carlebach and Alexander Altmann. Altmann, Richard Koebner, Jacobson, Ernst Lowenthal, Eduard Rosenbaum, Walter Schwab, Helmut Schmidt, Kurt Wilhelm and Hans Reichmann were the original members of the London branch’s board. They would be joined in 1960 by Richard Fuchs, Werner Mosse and Siegfried Stein.

<sup>16</sup> Robert Weltsch to Hans Tramer, April 30, 1956; Weltsch to Tramer, January 26, 1957; Robert Weltsch to Siegfried Moses, November 18, 1956; Weltsch to Moses, December 10, 1956; and Weltsch to Moses, October 17, 1955, *LBI Archives New York*, Robert Weltsch Collection, AR 7185, folder 5/8.

<sup>17</sup> Robert Weltsch to Max Kreuzberger, September 2, 1955, *LBI Archives New York*, Robert Weltsch Coll., AR 7185, folder 5/8.

<sup>18</sup> Robert Weltsch, “Looking Back Over Sixty Years,” in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 27 (1982), pp. 379–390, here p. 387.

<sup>19</sup> For additional details of Liebeschütz’s biography, see Ruth Nattermann’s article in this volume.

<sup>20</sup> Robert Weltsch, “Obituary Jacob Jacobson,” in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 13 (1968), p. xxi.

Hans Reichmann had been a *Syndikus* in the *Centralverein*. Upon his death in 1964 his widow, the historian and sociologist Eva Reichmann, was asked to join the institute's board.<sup>21</sup> Reichmann had long been admired for her work by many of her late husband's colleagues; it is not entirely clear whether or not her delayed inclusion on the board reflected the prejudice of the almost entirely male board but in general it does seem that the absence of women from higher posts at the institute resulted not only from a dearth of appropriately trained women but also from a longstanding consensus that women would only serve in the lower ranks. Siegfried Moses had at one point suggested that women also serve on the board – but at first the idea only seemed feasible for posts on the advisory committee.<sup>22</sup>

With the appointment of Arnold Paucker as director in 1959, the uncertainty characterizing the London branch gradually dissipated. Born into an affluent Berlin Jewish family in 1921, Paucker had served in the British Army during the war before arriving in Great Britain in 1950, where he studied at Birmingham University. Paucker has himself modestly explained his appointment in terms of difficulties in agreeing on a candidate from the older generation.<sup>23</sup> During his first year, he saw to the branch's relocation in 1959 from the Finchley area to Devonshire Street, where the Wiener Library had been located since 1957.<sup>24</sup> While the office space remained small, it nevertheless represented a significant improvement and placed those working at the LBI one floor up from the Wiener Library's substantial holdings.

Institutionally, the London office remained fairly isolated during its first years. In general, collaboration between the LBI and other Jewish research institutions either never materialized or else took place on an insignificant level, and this was particularly the case for the London office. In 1955, Michael Heymann from Jerusalem, who temporarily resided in Britain, urged the institute to establish close working relations with institutions like *Yad Vashem* and the Central Zionist Archives; this, however, did not occur.<sup>25</sup> The London LBI likewise remained outside the framework of Anglo-Jewish associations, virtually no cooperation existing during this early period with either the Anglo-Jewish Historical Society or the British branch of the Institute for Jewish Affairs, despite the fact that Eva Reichmann was a

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<sup>21</sup> Hans Lamm, "Salute to Eva Reichmann," in *AJR Information*, vol. 37 (January 1982), p. 7. See also Weltsch, "Looking Back Over Sixty Years," p. 388.

<sup>22</sup> Minutes of the meeting of the Council of Jews from Germany, Israel Section, May 31, 1955, *LBI London*, file "Minutes 1955-57."

<sup>23</sup> Arnold Paucker, "Mommsenstrasse to Devonshire Street," in Peter Alter, (ed.), *Out of the Third Reich: Refugee Historians in Post-War Britain*, London 1998, pp. 177-193, here p. 183.

<sup>24</sup> Ben Barkow, *Alfred Wiener and the Making of the Holocaust Library*, London 1997, p. 135.

<sup>25</sup> Michael Heymann, Proposed plan for the LBI Archives, *LBI London*.



member of the latter organization. Close working relations with the Wiener Library had indeed been envisioned from the beginning – Alfred Wiener (himself a former general secretary of the *C. V.*) had spoken out directly in favor of such plans – but despite the shared premises and Eva Reichmann’s leadership of the library’s research section between 1945 and 1959, little was undertaken of a concrete nature aside from the library’s annual compilation of postwar publications on German Jewry and the joint organization of public lectures.<sup>26</sup>

Facing the absence of a substantial reading public and lacking ties to other scholarly institutions, Robert Weltsch took on the task of uniting scattered individuals into a scholarly community. Insofar as Weltsch was a longstanding friend of various members of the Jerusalem branch and of Max Kreuzberger in New York, he was ideally placed to attract outsiders and his Zionist credentials helped him bridge differences between the LBI’s three branches, while promoting a distinct ethos and perspective on the part of the London branch. Hence moving in opposition to the inclinations of the Jerusalem office, the London LBI sought contacts with scholars in Germany. Hans Reichmann, representing the London Council of Jews from Germany, and Siegfried Moses of the *Irgun Olej Merkas Europa* had in fact voiced opposing views over this issue prior to the institute’s founding: Reichmann believed that after the Luxemburg Agreement, contacts with the Federal Republic within the framework of research on German Jewry were in order; Moses categorically rejected such an idea.<sup>27</sup> Notwithstanding these ongoing debates, Hans Tramer traveled already in 1958 to Germany from Jerusalem to meet with the institute’s Society of Friends. Despite this visit, Tramer too favored forging contacts with the German-Jewish community in Switzerland instead of Jews residing in Germany.<sup>28</sup> More eager to pursue contacts with Germany than their colleagues in Jerusalem, Weltsch, Werner Rosenstock (General Secretary of the Association of Jewish Refugees and editor of *AJR Information*) and Hans Reichmann met with the mayor of Frankfurt in the late winter of 1957 to inquire about the progress of plans for a history of the city’s Jewish community. In the course of the conversation, Reichmann promised the support of the London LBI in the collection of materials.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>26</sup> Minutes of a preliminary meeting of the LBI in London, August 14, 1955, *LBI London*, file “Minutes 1955–57”; Memorandum describing joint activities of Leo Baeck Institute and Wiener Library, August 17, 1956, *LBI London*.

<sup>27</sup> Christhard Hoffmann, “The German-Jewish Encounter and German Historical Culture,” in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 41 (1996), pp. 277–290, here pp. 277–278.

<sup>28</sup> “Um die jüdische Zukunft. Dr. Hans Tramer bei den ‘Freunden des Leo-Baeck-Instituts’ in Frankfurt,” in *Allgemeine Wochenzeitung des Judentums*, November 14, 1958, p. 14. See also the correspondence between Hans Tramer and Hermann Levin Goldschmidt, *Archiv für Zeitgeschichte*, Zurich, Hermann Levin Goldschmidt Collection.

<sup>29</sup> Hans Reichmann to the members of the Board of the Institutes, March 13, 1957, *Wiener Library Archives London (WLA)*, Leo Baeck Institute Collection.

Two years after that meeting, the London LBI reported that it had delivered on its promise, partly as a response to requests from various members of the Association who had contributed to the historical project.<sup>30</sup> In the same year, Weltsch traveled again to Frankfurt, where he met members of the Society of Friends, amongst them several Israeli intellectuals who resided in Germany, as well as the director of the society, Ernst Gottfried Lowenthal. Nevertheless, with Jerusalem instructing LBI members in general not to associate the institute with the *Zentralrat*, potential cooperation with Jewish scholars like Hans Lamm – who oversaw that organization’s cultural work – and others became difficult to formalize.<sup>31</sup>

In the early years of the LBI, the precise nature of the institute’s research agenda remained unclear. Writing in the opening pages of the first *Year Book*, Siegfried Moses indicated that the central purpose of the LBI was both reviving and preserving the memory of German Jewry – and this for both surviving German Jews and the Jewish world at large.<sup>32</sup> The basic premise and moral claim here was that despite the fluidity of its geographic boundaries and its internal diversity, German Jewry had offered the world a unique legacy. With reference to an essay by Selma Stern, Robert Weltsch thus argued that the German Jews had emerged as a “unique and distinct type” that remained a “sociologically recognizable group, through their group-consciousness” in the age of emancipation and assimilation.<sup>33</sup>

Richard Koebner, a former professor of German history in Jerusalem living in England since 1955, saw the institute’s main tasks as researching on the one hand the contribution of German Jews towards an understanding of Judaism and on the other hand the role of German Jewry as an element within the “German social body.”<sup>34</sup> In many ways Koebner’s ideas echoed a document, circulating within the three LBI branches in April 1956, which had been prepared by Eugen Täubler in order to outline the program for a Baeck-Warburg foundation.<sup>35</sup> Täubler’s vision was of an institute devoted to

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<sup>30</sup> Progress report of LBI London, December 24, 1959, *LBI London*.

<sup>31</sup> Robert Weltsch, Memorandum to LBI London board members, February 11, 1959, *WLA*, LBI Coll.; “Ein prominenter Gast: Empfang für Dr. Robert Weltsch in Frankfurt am Main,” in *Allgemeine Wochenzeitung des Judentums* (February 13, 1959), p. 5.

<sup>32</sup> Siegfried Moses, “Leo Baeck Institute of Jews from Germany,” in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 1 (1956), pp. xi–xviii, here p. xi.

<sup>33</sup> Robert Weltsch, Introduction in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 1 (1956), pp. xix–xxxii, here pp. xxii and xxiv, citing Selma Stern, “Problems of American-Jewish and German-Jewish Historiography,” in Erich E. Hirshler, (ed.), *Jews from Germany in the United States*, New York, 1955, pp. 5–17.

<sup>34</sup> Richard Koebner, Memorandum following the meeting of the LBI, London, 16 August 1955, *LBI London*. On Koebner, see Robert Weltsch, *LBI Year Book*, vol. 3 (1958), p. xix.

<sup>35</sup> Eugen Täubler, Memorandum re Baeck-Warburg Foundation, circulated by let-

remembrance, but one also providing the tools for a critical re-evaluation of German-Jewish history for the sake of ensuring the continued relevance of German Jewry's heritage. Following up on his argument for the relevance to humanistic values of the diasporic, universalistic dimensions of Judaism, Täubler proposed approaching German Jewish history within the broader framework of Judaism as a "cultural whole." And when it came to the German-Jewish past in particular, Täubler argued for a similarly comprehensive approach that began with the Middle Ages.<sup>36</sup> In any event, even though Weltsch stressed the importance of such ambitious ideas as offering an orientating framework,<sup>37</sup> they would only partly inform the LBI's research, which was in many ways far more narrowly defined.

Just as importantly, the nature of the German-Jewish heritage would in fact remain elusive for the founders, and would be contested among them. At the public opening meeting of the LBI in Jerusalem in May 1955, Jerusalem-based Ernst Simon defined the German-Jewish tradition as encompassing not only modern achievements but also those of medieval *Haside Ashkenaz*; for Simon, the German Jews had actually abandoned their Jewish identity.<sup>38</sup> London-based Hans Liebeschütz took issue with Simon's premise of German Jewry having taken, in his words, "the wrong way" – a premise he viewed as inordinately judgmental. Rather vaguely, Liebeschütz stressed that, "the intellectual and spiritual aspect of German-Jewish history shows a definitely positive balance."<sup>39</sup> In turn, Weltsch agreed with the philosopher and historian of Jewish philosophy Julius Guttman that Germany was the "birthplace of modern Judaism," the German-Jewish achievement having

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ter to Max Kreuzberger and Siegfried Moses, Jerusalem, Robert Weltsch, London, Selmar Spier, Jerusalem, April 30, 1956, *LBI London*.

<sup>36</sup> Täubler had already advanced his views, distancing himself from the notion of studying German-Jewish history from an internal Jewish perspective, in a talk at the *Gesamtarchiv* delivered before the Great War. See *idem*, "Bericht über die Tätigkeit des Gesamtarchivs der deutschen Juden," in *Mitteilungen des Gesamtarchivs der deutschen Juden*, vol. 3 (1911), pp. 55–84, here pp. 71–72.

<sup>37</sup> Robert Weltsch, Introduction in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 1 (1956), pp. xix–xxx, here pp. xxii–xxiv; Robert Weltsch, "Das Leo Baeck Institute (1963)," in *idem*, *An der Wende des Modernen Judentums. Betrachtungen aus fünf Jahrzehnten*, Tübingen 1972, pp. 67–80, here pp. 73–77; Robert Weltsch to Selma Stern, March 3, 1958, University of Basel (*UB Basel*), Stern's papers, D 12/40; Selma Stern-Täubler, "Eugen Täubler and the 'Wissenschaft des Judentums,'" in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 3 (1958), pp. 40–59, here p. 58.

<sup>38</sup> Ernst Simon, "The Spiritual Legacy of German Jewry," in *Judaism*, vol. 5 (1956), pp. 217–224; Ernst Simon, "Die Geistige Erbschaft des Deutschen Judentums. Zur Eröffnung des Leo Baeck Instituts," in *AJR Information*, vol. 10 (September 1955), pp. 6–7.

<sup>39</sup> Hans Liebeschütz, "German Jewry in the Perspective of History: The Views of Ernst Simon and Adolf Leschnitzer," in *AJR Information*, vol. 10 (November 1955), p. 6.

been made possible through a “unique blend of Judaism and European Christian civilization.”<sup>40</sup>

In 1955, Leo Baeck, Hans Reichmann and Robert Weltsch sketched out the parameters of the institute’s future work, which was to center on historical reconstruction and the collection and preservation of documents and testimonies.<sup>41</sup> Eugen Täubler had argued for the need to act as quickly as possible while witnesses to German Jewry’s demise were still living.<sup>42</sup> Contributors to the *Year Book* and other institute publications would thus be both historians and witnesses – “we are living sources,” Robert Weltsch explained to Hans Liebeschütz. Most likely to the dismay of specialists in nineteenth-century German Jewry such as Liebeschütz, Weltsch saw the LBI’s primary imperative – as had Buber in the Jerusalem founding meeting – as research into the recent past; everything before 1871 could be reconstructed from written sources, and hence could wait.<sup>43</sup>

From its inception, the London LBI sought the cooperation of *AJR Information* readers, seen as a natural pool for participation in its activities. In this respect, Werner Rosenstock served as a mediator between the LBI and a wider public.<sup>44</sup> Ernest Kahn, who would go on to contribute a pair of articles on literary topics to the *Year Book*, wrote in the *AJR Information* in 1965 that the latter publication was supplementing the *Year Book*’s work. The *Year Book*, he indicated, had “built up a more and more complete picture of our past in Germany and in Europe.”<sup>45</sup> Already in 1957, as part of its effort to appeal to a broader audience, the London LBI had created its own Society of Friends, which Weltsch hoped would garner support for the branch and move its research towards “lively cooperation with all those who still have memories of the German-Jewish past.”<sup>46</sup> Likewise with this goal in mind, in 1959 Arnold Paucker organized a slightly eclectic series of talks on, respectively, Jewish genealogical studies, Albert Ballin, Walther Rathenau,

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<sup>40</sup> Robert Weltsch, Introduction in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 1 (1956), pp. xix–xxxii, here pp. xix and xxiv.

<sup>41</sup> *LBI Archives New York*, LBI London Coll., AR. 6682, box 12, folder 8.

<sup>42</sup> Eugen Täubler, Memorandum re Baeck–Warburg Foundation, *LBI London*.

<sup>43</sup> Robert Weltsch to Hans Liebeschütz, 12 June 1957, *LBI Archives New York*, LBI London Coll., AR. 6682, box 12, folder 5. On the founding meeting in Jerusalem, see Christhard Hoffmann’s article in this volume.

<sup>44</sup> W. Rosenstock, “A Link between Two Ages: The Leo Baeck Institute,” in *AJR Information*, vol. 14 (March 1959), pp. 1 and 3; Werner Rosenstock, “Records of Our Heritage: Fourth Year Book of the Leo Baeck Institute,” in *AJR Information*, vol. 15 (June 1960), p. 3.

<sup>45</sup> Ernest Kahn, “Towards a History of German Jewry: Fifth Year Book of the Leo Baeck Institute,” in *AJR Information*, vol. 16 (August 1961), p. 6.

<sup>46</sup> Robert Weltsch, For a brochure explaining the objects of the LBI (June 12, 1957), *LBI Archives New York*, LBI London Coll., AR. 6682, box 7, folder 1.

and Jews in German expressionism.<sup>47</sup> With the Society of Friends not attracting more than 150 to 200 members, including individuals living outside of Great Britain, the interest in the public lectures slowly subsided and they ended in 1964.<sup>48</sup>

Despite the existence at this time of a vibrant German-Jewish immigrant group in England, active participation in the work of the LBI remained limited. In the end, very few members of the *AJR* would publish in the *Year Book*, with historians associated with the London branch themselves tending to do so only on a small scale. At the same time, the institute was on the threshold of significant change during this period. Already in 1956, the death of Leo Baeck signaled the waning of the once-prominent presence of distinguished German Jews who had witnessed the Weimar and Nazi periods. The institute lost another formidable figure in 1958 with the death of Richard Koebner, with Alexander Altmann leaving for Brandeis University the following year.

This somewhat difficult situation was aggravated by an often-expressed concern in both London and Jerusalem that the institute's three branches were drifting apart. Members became worried in light of increasing references to Leo Baeck Institutes, in the plural, and New York seemed to be signaling autonomy with its plans to build up a substantial library.<sup>49</sup> Robert Weltsch referred in this context to a "fight against geography," which entailed questions of authority that were continually being debated.<sup>50</sup> For his part, Hans Liebeschütz was anxious to counter the impression that the London branch was the LBI's "poor relation," reminding readers of the (Jerusalem) *Bulletin* that Leo Baeck himself had chosen London as his home.<sup>51</sup>

Nevertheless, despite Liebeschütz's interjection, the reality was that sandwiched between Jerusalem and New York within a diminishing German-Jewish community, the London branch was struggling to maintain a network of supporters and participants. As an immediate response, the branch did its best to begin fostering research on German Jewry in Great

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<sup>47</sup> "Ballin and Rathenau: Lecture at the Leo Baeck Institute," in *AJR Information*, vol. 15 (February 1960), p. 8; "The First Generation: A Lecture by M. Eschelbacher," in *AJR Information*, vol. 15 (March 1960), p. 10; "Leo Baeck Institute Lecture," in *AJR Information*, vol. 15 (July 1960), p. 6; "Leo Baeck Institute Lecture," in *AJR Information*, vol. 15 (June 1961), p. 13.

<sup>48</sup> Minutes of a meeting of LBI members, August 21, 1956, *LBI London*; Minutes of a meeting of LBI members, Jerusalem, November 14, 1956, *LBI London*; Arnold Pauker, interview with the author, London, January 5, 2004.

<sup>49</sup> Robert Weltsch, Memorandum to LBI London board members: short report about talks in Israel, December 11, 1958, *LBI Archives New York*, LBI London Coll. (uncataloged), box 6, folder 2.

<sup>50</sup> Minutes of the LBI London board meeting, September 27, 1960, *LBI London*.

<sup>51</sup> Hans Liebeschütz, "Die Verantwortung gegenüber der eigenen Vergangenheit," in *Bulletin des Leo Baeck Instituts*, 12 (1960), pp. 30–31.

Britain. The London board charged Liebeschütz in particular with the task of training future students, although Weltsch remained skeptical about such plans.<sup>52</sup> For Weltsch, it seemed impossible to find interested scholars in England and he even doubted that an office in Jerusalem was tenable:<sup>53</sup> anywhere but New York, an historian would be doomed to a subaltern role, that of a “supplicant.”<sup>54</sup>

Still, in the face of all these worries, the London branch of the LBI would carve out a distinct profile for itself with the publication of the *Year Book* under Weltsch’s direction. Thanks to his negotiations, 2,000 copies of each *Year Book* volume would see print,<sup>55</sup> an astonishingly high quantity, underscoring its desire to appeal “to everybody who wants to form a picture of a past epoch, and of the character, greatness and significance of what was once German Jewry.”<sup>56</sup> Like *AJR Information*, which regularly reviewed the LBI’s publications, the *Year Book* appeared in English, despite continued criticism of this policy, Weltsch maintaining that English had become the vernacular of the Jewish diaspora.<sup>57</sup>

During the London institute’s first decade, its members focused their research on the period from the *Kaiserreich* to the 1930s and German Jewry’s destruction. Within this framework, much attention was given to problems of economic history – an idea promoted by the young economist Esra Bennathan in particular.<sup>58</sup> We thus find Hans Liebeschütz – his own interests generally centered on questions of intellectual history – arguing that German Jewish cultural history was shaped by economic factors in the period leading up to German unification in 1866.<sup>59</sup> More significantly, Robert Weltsch expressed strong interest in the London branch assuming a leading role in an ambitious project to map the socio-economic history of German Jewry, a project that would have involved the participation of Eduard Rosenbaum, former secretary of the Hamburg chamber of commerce in the Weimar period and a sociologist and economic historian of German Jewry.

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<sup>52</sup> Minutes of a preliminary meeting of the LBI in London, August 14, 1955, *LBI London*, file “Minutes 1955–57.”

<sup>53</sup> Robert Weltsch to Siegfried Moses, September 10, 1956, *LBI Archives New York*, Robert Weltsch Coll., AR 7185, folder 2/12

<sup>54</sup> Robert Weltsch to Hans Tramer, February 7, 1956, *LBI Archives New York*, Robert Weltsch Coll., AR 7185, folder 2/12

<sup>55</sup> East and West Library to Robert Weltsch, June 3, 1958, *LBI Archives New York*, Robert Weltsch Coll., AR 7185, folder 2/12

<sup>56</sup> Siegfried Moses, “Leo Baeck Institute of Jews from Germany,” p. xiv.

<sup>57</sup> Robert Weltsch, Introduction in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 2 (1957), pp. ix–xxvii, here p. xix; Werner Rosenstock, “Unbiased Research of the Past: Second Year Book of the Leo Baeck Institute,” in *AJR Information*, vol. 13 (January 1958), p. 4.

<sup>58</sup> Esra Bennathan, Further to Prof. Koebner’s memorandum, *LBI London*.

<sup>59</sup> Hans Liebeschütz, “Problems of Diaspora History in XIXth-Century Germany,” in *Journal of Jewish Studies (JJS)*, vol. 8 (1957), pp. 103–111.

Julius Isaac of the London School of Economics was now invited to join the institute, and members began conducting interviews, researching archival collections, and collaborating with the Wiener Library in collecting memoirs.<sup>60</sup> In this manner the London LBI became a collection point for memoirs and histories of local communities that had been written by survivors.<sup>61</sup> But despite all this early activity, this project never materialized.

To anchor the London office more firmly within the international landscape of research on the German-Jewish past, the London LBI, together with the Council, organized a conference in London in 1959 that was attended by over 300 people. For *AJR Information*, the conference confirmed that, "... more than two decades after their dispersion, the Jews from Germany have retained the values and obligations they have in common."<sup>62</sup> Within this venue, Siegfried Moses duly stressed the obligation to preserve the German-Jewish legacy, Ernst Simon elaborated on the Jewish and non-Jewish traditions manifest in German Jewish history, and Gershom Scholem provided a toned-down critical evaluation of nineteenth-century German-Jewish *Wissenschaft des Judentums*, thus politely recording his critical distance from the LBI's own scholarship.<sup>63</sup> (In a subsequent interview, Scholem would openly express his regret at having lectured in front of the "philistines of the Baeck Institute in London.")<sup>64</sup> Scholem had certainly disapproved of Liebeschütz's emphasis in the first volume of the *Year Book* on the vitality and self-assertion of German Jewry – an approach Liebeschütz viewed as a response to both apologetics and self-denial.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> Memorandum re Leo Baeck Institute and Wiener Library, August 17, 1956; Minutes of a meeting of LBI members, August 21, 1956, *LBI London*.

<sup>61</sup> See, for example, Benno Elkan, "Meine Jugend"; Ludwig Hass, "Erinnerungen an seinen Vater von Judith Schrag-Haas"; Bernhard Kolb, "Die Juden in Nürnberg. Tausendjährige Geschichte einer Judengemeinde von ihren Anfängen bis zum Einmarsch der amerikanischen Truppen am 20. April 1945" (Nuremberg 1946), *LBI London*.

<sup>62</sup> "Two Conferences of Jews from Germany: Council and Leo Baeck Institute Meet in London," in *AJR Information*, vol. 14 (October 1959), pp. 1–2, here p. 1; "Preserving German Jewry's Achievements," in *Jewish Chronicle*, September 11, 1959, p. 9; "Tagung des Leo Baeck Instituts in London," in *Allgemeine Wochenzeitung des Judentums*, September 25, 1959, p. 3.

<sup>63</sup> "Public Meeting of the Leo Baeck Institute: Leading Scholars Address Large London Audience," in *AJR Information*, vol. 14 (October 1959), p. 3. The article appeared in the *Bulletin* of the LBI and not in the *Year Book*. See Gershom Scholem, "Wissenschaft vom Judentum Einst und Jetzt," in *Bulletin des Leo Baeck Instituts*, 3, no. 9 (1961), pp. 10–20.

<sup>64</sup> "L'identité juive: Entretiens avec Gershom Scholem," in *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales*, vol. 35 (November 1980), pp. 3–19, here p. 4.

<sup>65</sup> Hans Liebeschütz, "Jewish Thought and its German Background," in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 1 (1956), pp. 217–236.

Weltsch's approach was of course much closer to that of Liebeschütz than Scholem. For him, after Hellenistic Judaism and Spanish Judaism, German Judaism represented the third intense and fruitful encounter with an outside culture in Jewish history. The LBI's main task, Weltsch felt, was to instill an informed memory of this unique encounter among the scattered descendants of German Jewry. Originally, he had considered the *Year Book* merely a "temporary expedient before suitable authors for writing a comprehensive history could be found."<sup>66</sup> When it proved difficult to devote individual volumes to particular topics, he often presented a volume's disparate contributions alongside an introduction aimed at pulling them together. Weltsch was in fact not satisfied with the publication of what he termed "incidental composition," nor with the republication and continuation of pre-war works like the *Germania Judaica* and Selma Stern's *Jews in the Prussian State* which, however, he urged her to complete.<sup>67</sup>

To supplement such publications, all three branches agreed on producing an academic series in German; this raised the issue of finding a German publisher that was both academically suitable and lacked a tainted (Nazi) history. The London branch favored the distinguished Mohr Siebeck publishers in Tübingen, as this would furnish the series with immediate recognition.<sup>68</sup> Sensing that the launching of this series involved a basic change in institute policy, Jerusalem's Siegfried Moses insisted that the intended audience would not be readers in Germany. For Weltsch, in contrast, the LBI's "language question" was bound up with the special circumstances under which the institute operated. He opted for a German-language series because most of its potential readers would be German.<sup>69</sup> The launch of the series in 1965 thus involved a tacit but nevertheless dramatic change of intended audience – one with which London's Robert Weltsch had much to do.

The original self-assurance of the period of the Leo Baeck Institute's founding was further tempered and complicated by the antagonism of Zionist and non-Zionist interpretations of German-Jewish history and the Holocaust that cast a long shadow upon the study of German Jewry. As Gerson Cohen has rightly observed, "After all, the fact underlying them all [the LBI publications] is Tragedy, Calamity, Catastrophe."<sup>70</sup> With publication of Raul Hilberg's *The Destruction of the European Jews* in 1961, the Holocaust, while nominally outside the remit of the institute's work, nevertheless shaped

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<sup>66</sup> Robert Weltsch, "Looking Back Over Sixty Years," p. 388.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>68</sup> See the minutes of the meeting of the board, October 14, 1957 and December 16, 1957 in London, and the minutes of the Jerusalem board meeting, November 20, 1957, *LBI Archives New York*, LBI London Coll., AR 6682, box 12, folder 1.

<sup>69</sup> Minutes of meeting and Progress report of LBI London, December 24, 1959, *LBI London*.

<sup>70</sup> Gerson Cohen, "German Jewry as a Mirror of Modernity," p. x.



in many ways how the LBI fashioned the discipline of German-Jewish studies. In Jerusalem, London and New York, LBI board members studied Hilberg's magnum opus intensely – a reflection of a growing interest among them in the history of the *Centralverein*, the *Reichsvertretung*, and Jewish self-defense against the Nazis. In his work, Hilberg famously described a German Jewry that was basically passive in the face of mortal peril – indeed partly complicit in its own destruction, a reflection of a tradition of compliance that had traditionally served Jews well when threatened but was inadequate in the new, radical circumstances. This thesis had its follow-up in certain sections of Hannah Arendt's *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil*, first appearing in 1961 as a series of articles in the *New Yorker* and in 1963 as a book. Arendt's portrayal of both the *C.V.* and – doubtless particularly – Leo Baeck in terms of failure and collaboration deeply offended many of her former colleagues at the LBI.

In London, the debates centered around Hilberg and Arendt were the backdrop to an effort by both Eva Reichmann and Arnold Paucker to counter their arguments with a detailed study of the initiatives for self-defense undertaken by the *C.V.* and other German-Jewish organizations.<sup>71</sup> Despite Reichmann's intimate involvement in the *C.V.*, in her *Hostages of Civilization* of 1950 (a book for which she had received a second doctorate from the London School of Economics), she had omitted any references to an active Jewish response to Nazi antisemitism. This omission appears to have reflected her intent in the book of raising "personal experience to the level of academic objectivity," as she explained in the introduction to the 1976 German edition.<sup>72</sup> Such unease regarding the status of one's personal voice echoed a general skepticism regarding the accounts of survivors. Post-1945 war crimes trials tended to marginalize these accounts in favor of documentary evidence – an approach shared by pioneering historians of the Holocaust such as Leon Poliakov, who explained that "wherever possible, to forestall objections, we have quoted the executioners rather than the victims" as sources.<sup>73</sup> On the other hand, the omission reflected Reichmann's sense that the history of antisemitism and Nazism were mainly topics of German history. This meant

<sup>71</sup> Re Raul Hilberg, *The Destruction of the European Jews*, November 1962, LBI New York, LBI Office Records, II (Correspondence all LBI Institutes) 62/2. See also Max Grunewald, Letter, in *Commentary* (August 1962), p. 164 and the contribution by Jürgen Matthäus in this volume.

<sup>72</sup> See the introduction by Eva Reichmann, *Flucht in den Hass. Die Ursachen der deutschen Judenkatastrophe*, Frankfurt 1956, reprinted in Eva Reichmann, *Größe und Verhängnis deutsch-jüdischer Existenz. Zeugnisse einer tragischen Begegnung*, Heidelberg 1974, pp. 165–169, here p. 165.

<sup>73</sup> Helmut Peitsch, "Autobiographical Writing as *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* (Mastering of the Past)," in *German History*, vol. 7 (1989), pp. 47–70; Donald Bloxham, *The Holocaust on Trial: The War Crimes Trials in the Formation of History and Memory*, Oxford 2001; Leon Poliakov, *Harvest of Hate*, London, 1956, p. xiv.

analyzing German Jewry's destruction in a German rather than a German-Jewish historical framework.<sup>74</sup>

Under the impact of the controversy surrounding Hilberg and Arendt, the affinity between the *C.V.* legacy and the London LBI was translated into concrete research programs; when Arnold Paucker jokingly referred to the London office as the *Centralverein* in an interview, he was in fact citing one such program.<sup>75</sup> Eva Reichmann now felt compelled to publicly defend the *C.V.* against Arendt's charges of collaboration with the Nazi authorities. While Weltsch himself declined to participate in a rebuttal, in October 1963 Reichmann attended an open meeting in which four speakers critically dissected Arendt's accusations.<sup>76</sup> Interspersing an overview of German Jewry's precarious situation in the 1930s with her personal experiences, she here described the *C.V.* not as a sign of German-Jewish assimilation but rather as a formidable educational and defensive force.<sup>77</sup>

In the wake of this meeting, the importance of closely studying the Jewish response to the Nazi rise to power – and doing so, as Reichmann had suggested, in a newly detached manner – became apparent. With the new interest in both the *C.V.* in particular and Jewish self-defense in general, the possibility of a more comprehensive research profile had also emerged. Even before the debates over Hilberg and Arendt, Weltsch, in consultation with Werner Mosse, had contacted the Jerusalem and New York branches with a plan to prepare a “monument to German Jewry”<sup>78</sup> through a series of separate volumes of essays by a range of scholars treating its various stages. As seen through to completion by the LBI's London branch, this “monument,” appearing between 1965 and 1981 with contributions from Israel, Great Britain, the United States and – crucially – Germany, would eventually comprise five volumes.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> Eva Reichmann, *Hostages of Civilization*, London, 1950, pp. 5–7.

<sup>75</sup> Paucker interview.

<sup>76</sup> Robert Weltsch to Hannah Arendt, August 16, 1963, *LBI Archives New York*, Robert Weltsch Coll., AR 7185, folder 2/1; A. L. Eastermann *et al.*, “They Did Not Aid Eichmann,” *World Jewry*, vol. 6, no. 6 (November/December 1963), pp. 9–11.

<sup>77</sup> Eva Reichmann, “Antwort an Hannah Arendt,” in *AJR Information*, vol. 19 (January 1964), p. 6; Eva Reichmann, “Alfred Wiener – the German Jew,” in *Wiener Library Bulletin*, vol. 19 (1965), pp. 10–11.

<sup>78</sup> Robert Weltsch to Adler-Rudel, December 14, 1959, *LBI London*.

<sup>79</sup> Werner E. Mosse and Arnold Paucker (eds.), *Entscheidungs-jahr 1932. Zur Judenfrage in der Endphase der Weimarer Republik. Ein Sammelband*, Tübingen 1965 (Schriftenreihe wissenschaftlicher Abhandlungen des Leo Baeck Instituts 13); Werner Eugen Mosse (ed.), *Deutsches Judentum in Krieg und Revolution. Juden im Wilhelminischen Deutschland, 1916–1923. Ein Sammelband*, Tübingen 1971 (Schriftenreihe wissenschaftlicher Abhandlungen des Leo Baeck Instituts 25); Werner Mosse (ed.), *Juden im Wilhelminischen Deutschland, 1890–1914*, Tübingen 1976 (Schriftenreihe wissenschaftlicher Abhandlungen des Leo Baeck Instituts 33); Hans Liebeschütz and Arnold

Publication of this work reflected a shift in focus in which the London branch had played a central role: away from recollection, reflection, and indeed research into the past containing a considerable degree of nostalgia, towards an analysis of a conflict-ridden encounter between Jews and Germans. At the same time, despite initial approval for the project by the other branches, internal controversy seemed to loom at the LBI regarding the planned first volume of the comprehensive history. Significantly, the period to be covered in this volume was not the eighteenth or nineteenth century, but rather German Jewry's much later "year of decision," 1932.<sup>80</sup> The Jerusalem office in particular was apprehensive that German-Jewish Zionism would not be adequately addressed in the volume. Werner Mosse avoided direct confrontation, merely confirming that contributions would focus on the economic and social roles Jews played in Germany's public sphere, the views of representative non-Jewish groups on the "Jewish question," and how Jews responded to antisemitism, a theme that would take in both Zionist responses and the self-defense work of the C.V. In the course of reviewing the volume's table of contents a year before publication, the Jerusalem board reiterated its reservations.<sup>81</sup> Informed by the ongoing debate over Hilberg and Arendt, the volume's central concern was addressing the sources of German Jewry's historical catastrophe – what Werner Mosse termed a problem of "Jewish and German history"<sup>82</sup> – while correcting the idea of German-Jewish passivity in the face of Nazism. To the latter end, the volume included a detailed study of the C.V.'s self-defense efforts by Arnold Paucker, its first sentence summarizing the outcome of the evidence he presented: "German Jewry was not idle in engaging the threatening dangers that it faced in the last years of the Weimar Republic."<sup>83</sup>

Despite the obvious differences between the various contributors to the volume, Weltsch struck a conciliatory tone, stressing that the institute did not wish to judge the various ideological conflicts and positions emerging in the course of German Jewry's modern history. Notwithstanding such distancing, which he himself acknowledged, Mosse also emphasized that the early 1930s remained a living reality for émigré historians – the resulting mix of retro-

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Paucker (eds.), *Das Judentum in der deutschen Umwelt 1800–1850. Studien zur Frühgeschichte der Emanzipation*, Tübingen 1977 (Schriftenreihe wissenschaftlicher Abhandlungen des Leo Baeck Instituts 35); and W. E. Mosse, Arnold Paucker and R. Rürup (eds.), *Revolution and Evolution: 1848 in German-Jewish History*, Tübingen 1981 (Schriftenreihe wissenschaftlicher Abhandlungen des Leo Baeck Instituts 39).

<sup>80</sup> Mosse and Paucker (eds.), *Entscheidungsjahr 1932*.

<sup>81</sup> Minutes of the LBI London board meeting, September 27, 1960; Minutes of meeting and Progress report of LBI London, December 24, 1959, October 21, 1963; Minutes of the LBI Jerusalem board meeting, May 6, 1964, *LBI London*.

<sup>82</sup> Mosse and Paucker (eds.), *Entscheidungsjahr 1932*, p. vii.

<sup>83</sup> Arnold Paucker, "Der Jüdische Abwehrkampf," in *ibid.*, pp. 405–499, here p. 405.

spective empathy and scholarly sobriety being a source of historiographical strength. Although Mosse's remarks were basically affirmative in tenor, a degree of anxiety perhaps came through in his insistence that the institute strove towards high academic standards – accompanied by an expression of regret for the apologetic streak running through the LBI's publications.<sup>84</sup> Fully coming to terms with German Jewry's recent history would, Mosse observed, require the cooperation of German scholars. He therefore thanked the two German theologians, Hans-Joachim Kraus and Karl Thieme, for their contributions on the Protestant and Catholic churches' attitudes towards the Jews.<sup>85</sup>

Over the institute's first decade, most LBI publications were written by authors from outside Great Britain: with the exception of several pieces in the *Year Book* written by London branch members, there were several volumes of the *Schriftenreihe* edited by, respectively, Weltsch, Weltsch and Hans Kohn, and Eva Reichmann, and a collection of essays by Leo Baeck.<sup>86</sup> This may explain the stress being laid during this period in London on both the LBI's achievements in general and the London branch's role in the publication of *Entscheidungsjahr 1932*. This work would in fact prove one of the institute's great successes: after its republication in 1966, Raul Hilberg himself would describe it as "formidable" and "indispensable."<sup>87</sup>

In 1965, as part of the institute's tenth-anniversary celebrations, London branch members organized a large reception featuring an address by Werner Mosse reviewing the LBI's achievements that was attended by many scholars from British universities, both Jewish and non-Jewish.<sup>88</sup> But on the international level, differences between the institutes, particularly between Jerusalem and London, would continue to emerge in the period that followed, the most famous example being Gershom Scholem's attack on the idea of a "German-Jewish dialogue" in the pages of the LBI *Bulletin*. As is well known, Scholem here came close to indicting German Jewry for their assimilative

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<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, p. viii and p. xii.

<sup>85</sup> Hans-Joachim Kraus, "Die evangelische Kirche," in *ibid.*, pp. 249–270; Karl Thieme, "Deutsche Katholiken," in *ibid.*, pp. 271–288.

<sup>86</sup> Robert Weltsch, (ed.) *Deutsches Judentum – Aufstieg und Krise. Gestalten, Ideen, Werke*. Vierzehn Monographien, Stuttgart 1963; Hans Kohn and Robert Weltsch, (eds.) *Martin Buber: Sein Werk und seine Zeit. Ein Beitrag zur Geistesgeschichte Mitteleuropas, 1880–1930*, Cologne 1961; Eva G. Reichmann (ed.), *Worte des Gedenkens für Leo Baeck*, Heidelberg 1959; Leo Baeck, *Aus drei Jahrtausenden. Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen und Abhandlungen zur Geschichte des jüdischen Glaubens*, with introduction by Hans Liebeschütz, Tübingen 1958.

<sup>87</sup> Raul Hilberg, in *American Historical Review (AHR)*, vol. 72 (1967), pp. 1425–1426; James Joll, in *Historical Journal*, vol. 11 (1968), pp. 197–200.

<sup>88</sup> "Zehn Jahre Leo-Baeck-Institute. Eindrucksvolle Ausstellung – Empfang in London," in *Allgemeine Zeitung des Judentums*, May 28, 1965, p. 6; "Leo Baeck Institute: Tenth Anniversary Reception," in *AJR Information*, vol. 20 (June 1965), p. 12.

propensity, suggesting that the German Jews had not only lived in a dream-world, but indeed had contributed to their own downfall.<sup>89</sup> What is perhaps less known is that for Scholem, Eva Reichmann's *Hostages of Civilization* had contributed a great deal to the misconception held by many Germans after the war that the Nazi seizure of power had been an "historical accident."<sup>90</sup> Reichmann responded to Scholem in the same venue, charging that he "made the Jewish complex absolute as it corresponds to his judeo-centered perspective." Whereas she, Reichmann, sought historical explanations in social, political and economic factors, Scholem, she dismissively observed, preferred to blame individuals and groups for their actions.<sup>91</sup>

Although this highly charged exchange in the pages of an institute publication was unusual, historians with very diverse viewpoints were working at the different institute branches. It is difficult to separate the eclectic mix of scholars who became associated with the different institute branches into discrete schools and this diversity did not lessen over time. Scholem, for instance, can hardly be considered representative of the Jerusalem branch. Moreover, his own evaluation of German Jewry was far more complicated and self-contradictory than his unequivocal indictment in the *Bulletin* suggests. Conflicting views were inevitable between and indeed within individual scholars in the wake of an event as traumatic as the Holocaust.

These conflicts notwithstanding, the LBI continued to aim for a comprehensive history of German Jewry; plans at the London LBI for a study of the *Centralverein* by Eva Reichmann and Arnold Paucker never came to fruition. In 1967, Paucker did however publish his own important volume, a compilation and analysis of documents that recorded the activities of German Jewry's self-defense organizations in the Weimar Republic's final phase; Reichmann supplemented this research with a volume of her own essays, some of which had first appeared in the 1930s.<sup>92</sup> With his book, Paucker succeeded in fulfilling one of his central goals, a penetrating refutation of the widespread assumption of German Jewry's passivity in the face of the Nazi threat.<sup>93</sup> At the

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<sup>89</sup> Gershom Scholem, "Noch einmal: Das deutsch-jüdische 'Gespräch,'" in *Bulletin des Leo Baeck Instituts*, 30 (1965), pp. 167–172, here p. 169. See also *idem*, "Jews and Germans," in *idem*, *On Jews and Judaism in Crisis*, ed. by Werner J. Dannhauser, New York 1976, pp. 71–92.

<sup>90</sup> Gershom Scholem, "Noch einmal," p. 169.

<sup>91</sup> Eva G. Reichmann, "Zur Klärung in eigener Sache," in *Bulletin des Leo Baeck Instituts*, 36 (1966), pp. 342–344, here p. 343.

<sup>92</sup> Arnold Paucker, *Der jüdische Abwehrkampf gegen Antisemitismus und Nationalsozialismus in den letzten Jahren der Weimarer Republik*, Hamburg 1968; Eva Reichmann, *Größe und Verhängnis deutsch-jüdischer Existenz. Zeugnisse einer tragischen Begegnung*, Heidelberg 1974.

<sup>93</sup> Review by Peter Pulzer, "Arnold Paucker, *Der jüdische Abwehrkampf gegen Antisemitismus und Nationalsozialismus in den letzten Jahren der Weimarer Republik*," in

same time, the book and its thesis helped place the London branch more clearly on the German-Jewish historiographical map.

A year before the book's appearance, Hans Liebeschütz published an important study in the *Schriftenreihe* of the views of Judaism held by various German thinkers, Jewish and non-Jewish, from the Idealists to the Wilhelminian periods, the culmination of a lifetime of writing and research.<sup>94</sup> For Liebeschütz, German-Jewish history represented an intellectual encounter with German thinkers. He did not address the question of the role played by that intellectual history within the framework of Jewish philosophy. On the one hand, his study was masterful in its sweep and insight; on the other hand, it revealed a magnanimity extending to an avoidance of using the term "antisemitism" even in relation to the antisemitic historian Heinrich von Treitschke – one source of criticism of the work offered by both Peter Pulzer and Jacob Toury.<sup>95</sup> Toury's extensive Hebrew-language review may well have been motivated by Liebeschütz's critique of his own study, itself published in the *Schriftenreihe* and originally a dissertation written under the distinguished German-Jewish-Israeli historian Jacob Katz, entitled "The Political Orientation of German Jewry from Jena to Weimar."<sup>96</sup> In Liebeschütz's view, Toury's book failed to accord German Jewry its proper place in German history. A central goal of the LBI, he indicated, had been to recover a valuable portion of what was both Jewish history and world history; Toury's approach, he suggested, "might give the unintended impression that ... the world in which the German Jews moved was drawn like shadows thrown on a wall by the artificial light of their illusions and disappointments."<sup>97</sup>

As indicated, the London branch was instrumental in establishing ties with German scholars – something that probably reflected its relative openness and "worldliness." Although members of the London LBI were generally averse to the idea of establishing an office of the institute in Germany, they did look for ways of staying in touch with Jewish scholars there, and the LBI as a whole sought ways of relating to German-Jewish communities while

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*Historical Journal*, vol. 13 (1970), pp. 186–188; Review by Raul Hilberg, "Arnold Paucker, *Der jüdische Abwehrkampf gegen Antisemitismus und Nationalsozialismus in den letzten Jahren der Weimarer Republik*," in *AHR*, vol. 74 (1969), pp. 1024–1025.

<sup>94</sup> Hans Liebeschütz, *Das Judentum im deutschen Geschichtsbild von Hegel bis Max Weber*, Tübingen 1967 (*Schriftenreihe wissenschaftlicher Abhandlungen des Leo Baeck Instituts* 17).

<sup>95</sup> Peter Pulzer, "Review of *Das Judentum im Deutschen Geschichtsbild*," in *JJS*, vol. 19 (1968), 86–87; Jacob Toury, "Review of *Das Judentum im Deutschen Geschichtsbild*," in *Kiriat Sefer*, vol. 43 (1968), pp. 378–382.

<sup>96</sup> Jacob Toury, *Die politischen Orientierungen der Juden in Deutschland. Von Jena bis Weimar*, Tübingen 1966 (*Schriftenreihe wissenschaftlicher Abhandlungen des Leo Baeck Instituts* 15).

<sup>97</sup> Hans Liebeschütz, "From Jena to Weimar," in *AJR Information*, vol. 22 (May 1967), p. 6.

maintaining independence from the *Zentralrat*.<sup>98</sup> One such scholar was Kurt Wilhelm, who had been a member of the London board even before his return to Germany from Swedish exile, but was now honorary professor of *Wissenschaft des Judentums* at the University of Frankfurt am Main. Another was Ernst Gottfried Lowenthal, formerly an associate editor of the *C.V.-Zeitung*, who had returned to Germany after the war and, starting in 1957, had worked to organize the LBI's Frankfurt-based *Freunde und Förderer*.<sup>99</sup> In 1958, he became a member of the London board, serving as the institute's representative in Germany.<sup>100</sup> In this function, he contributed concretely to the *Freunde und Förderer* emerging as central to the institute's fundraising efforts, as well as its becoming an important basis for cooperative ventures with German academics.

For a long time, the Jerusalem board had been opposed to such cooperation, but in 1964 it signaled some rethinking – provided the contacts were pursued for the sake of the German-Jewish past, not as an element of *Wiedergutmachung*.<sup>101</sup> The following year, the Council altered its own long-standing position, thus paving the way for more formal contacts with Germany.<sup>102</sup> In this regard, Werner Mosse has recalled the help he offered in overcoming “the residual reluctance of some older members to associate more closely with German academics.”<sup>103</sup> As a reflection of these changes within the LBI, plans were made to include a number of German historians, most notably Hamburg-based Werner Jochmann.<sup>104</sup> At a meeting of the London LBI in 1967, the decision was reached to set up a committee of Jewish and non-Jewish historians living in Germany to function as an “advisory council,”<sup>105</sup> Liebeschütz here taking on the task of directing the process.<sup>106</sup> In 1968, Liebeschütz, Paucker, Werner Mosse, Eva Reichmann and Weltsch thus met with, among others, Rudolf Vierhaus, Ernst Schulin and Werner Jochmann,<sup>107</sup> following which London decided to further intensify contacts with both

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<sup>98</sup> Report of the LBI meeting in London, September 6–7, 1959, *LBI New York*, LBI Office Records, II 61/1.

<sup>99</sup> See contribution by Ruth Nattermann in this volume.

<sup>100</sup> Hans Reichmann to Robert Weltsch, May 1, 1958, *WLA*, LBI Coll.

<sup>101</sup> Minutes of the LBI Jerusalem board meeting, May 6, 1964, *LBI London*.

<sup>102</sup> Ernest Hamburger, “Das Leo-Baeck Institute,” in *Geschichte in Wissenschaft und Unterricht*, vol. 21 (1970), pp. 131–144, here p. 136.

<sup>103</sup> Werner E. Mosse, “Self-Discovery: A European Historian,” Peter Alter (ed.), *Out of the Third Reich: Refugee Historians in Post-War Britain*, London 1998, pp. 133–160, here p. 139.

<sup>104</sup> See the article by Stefanie Schüler-Springorum in this volume.

<sup>105</sup> Minutes of an LBI working meeting, May 18–22, 1967, *LBI London*.

<sup>106</sup> Minutes of the LBI London board meeting, December 12, 1967, *LBI New York*, LBI Office Records, II 61/18.

<sup>107</sup> Report of a meeting of LBI representatives with German historians, Berlin March 10, 1968, *LBI New York*, LBI Office Records, II 61/18.

German scholars and foundations.<sup>108</sup> It would still take some six years before this evolution in attitudes within all three institutes received, as it were, its official German academic acknowledgment, in the session on German-Jewish history at the 1974 *Historikertag* in Braunschweig, which was also the venue for a meeting between various LBI members and 25 leading German historians.<sup>109</sup>

These developments naturally led to new networks for scholarly exchange emerging at a time when research on the German-Jewish past was increasingly shifting to an American academic context.<sup>110</sup> To create a new collaborative framework, Arnold Paucker and the New York branch's Fred Grubel together organized a regular session on German-Jewish history at the American Historical Association convention; this would in turn produce a steady stream of articles for the *Year Book*.<sup>111</sup>

The changes at the institute, at first emerging hesitantly from tense discussions with – in particular – the Jerusalem LBI had, by the beginning of the 1970s, become a program. When Paucker took over the editorship of the *Year Book* in 1970, he moved, as would be expected, to promote research on the study of Jewish self-defense, Western Yiddish, and a comparative approach to German Jewry – and towards an overcoming of what he described as the “Prussian-Jewish rut” of earlier work at the LBI.<sup>112</sup> Paucker was here echoing Fritz Bamberger's critique of the LBI's role in propagating a “‘message’ of German Jewry” – the institute's task, Paucker explained, was not to “transmit eternal values” from the German-Jewish past.<sup>113</sup> Over the following decades, a consistent emphasis on academic standards, accompanied by diminishing reference to the task of remembrance, signaled an ongoing reorientation of the London branch. In view of such a fundamental shift of perspective, it came as somewhat of a shock when, in 1972, the *Year Book* was subject to a dismissive evaluation by Raul Hilberg in the *American Historical Review*:<sup>114</sup> the

<sup>108</sup> Meeting of the Leo Baeck Institute London, May 5, 1971, *LBI New York*, LBI Office Records, II 62.

<sup>109</sup> Progress report of LBI London, 1974/1975; *LBI Year Book*, vol. 20 (1975), pp. 3–46.

<sup>110</sup> On the changing constituency of the contributors to the *Year Book*, see Christhard Hoffmann, “Deutsch-jüdische Geschichtswissenschaft in der Emigration: Das Leo Baeck-Institut,” in Herbert A. Strauss, Klaus Fischer, Christhard Hoffmann and Alfons Söllner (eds.), *Die Emigration der Wissenschaften nach 1933. Disziplingeschichtliche Studien*, Munich, London, New York and Paris 1991, pp. 257–279, here p. 269.

<sup>111</sup> Paucker interview.

<sup>112</sup> Arnold Paucker, “Mommsenstrasse to Devonshire Street,” p. 185

<sup>113</sup> Paucker interview; Arnold Paucker, “Preface/Introduction,” *LBI Year Book*, vol. 37 (1992), pp. ix–xxix, here p. xxvi; Fritz Bamberger, “The Arden House Conference: Exploring a Typology of German Jewry,” in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 19 (1974), pp. 3–10, here p. 4.

<sup>114</sup> Arnold Paucker to Grubel, December 19, 1972, *LBI New York*, LBI Office Records, II 62/6.



institute, Hilberg indicated, was an “organization dedicated to nostalgic research,” and its periodical was “about people, most of them old friends well known to the authors and familiar to prospective readers.”<sup>115</sup> This, of course, was about as far as possible from where the London office wanted the Leo Baeck Institute to be.

As if to deflate such criticism, another milestone volume of the comprehensive history of German Jewry appeared in 1971 entitled *Deutsches Judentum in Krieg und Revolution*, that treated German-Jewish political and cultural activity between 1916 and 1923,<sup>116</sup> its overall aim being, as Werner Mosse explained in his introduction, to address the question posed in the earlier volume: that of the sources of German Jewry’s catastrophe, now located in a “critical turning point of German history.”<sup>117</sup> Mosse and Eva Reichmann were here mainly responsible for depicting the crisis of the European bourgeoisie and chronicling the transformations in Jewish self-understanding during this period, Mosse focusing on the disintegration of civil society, Reichmann on the Great War’s impact, the encounter with Eastern European Jews, the Balfour Declaration, the myth of an international Jewish-Bolshevik conspiracy, and the general dashing of German Jewry’s high expectations.<sup>118</sup>

With its many publications – consecutive collaborative volumes, various other studies in the *Schriftenreihe*, and the *Year Book* – the institute had clearly moved beyond its early memorializing emphasis towards a more detached form of investigation. Weltsch was mindful that the ideal of scholarly objectivity remained difficult, as the memory of the destruction still had a powerful grip on an entire generation of historians, Jewish and non-Jewish alike.<sup>119</sup> Ironically, efforts to compensate for the intense emotions inherent in the historical subject sometimes led to the opposite extreme. Looking back at the first 20 years, Gerson Cohen thus noted, along with the LBI’s accomplishments, that its publications “bespeak an eerie quality of unreality in their depiction of ‘the past in a detached, impartial spirit, *sine ira et studio*.’”<sup>120</sup> While doubtless addressing a quality of *some* of the *Year Book*’s articles, this quotation from an article in its first volume failed to address the essence of the remarkable transformation of the LBI during its first 20 years.

<sup>115</sup> Raul Hilberg, “Review of Yearbook XV,” in *AHR*, vol. 77 (1972), pp. 1473–1474.

<sup>116</sup> Werner Eugen Mosse (ed.), *Deutsches Judentum in Krieg und Revolution. Juden im Wilhelminischen Deutschland, 1916–1923*.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*, p. vii.

<sup>118</sup> Werner E. Mosse, “Die Krise der europäischen Bourgeoisie und das deutsche Judentum,” in *ibid.*, pp. 1–26; Eva Reichmann, “Der Bewußtseinswandel der deutschen Juden,” in *ibid.*, pp. 511–612.

<sup>119</sup> Robert Weltsch, “Das Leo Baeck Institute (1963),” here p. 68.

<sup>120</sup> Gerson Cohen, “German Jewry as a Mirror of Modernity,” p. 10. He cites

Persistent in their new outlook, Paucker and Mosse hoped that the slowly occurring generational change would aid their new program. During the early 1970s, the London branch had enlarged its board with younger scholars such as the Oxford historian of antisemitism and German-speaking Jewry Peter Pulzer (born in Vienna in 1929), and Julius Carlebach, reader in sociology and Israeli studies at the University of Sussex (born in Hamburg in 1922). In 1976 a new volume in the comprehensive history series appeared in the *Schriftenreihe*, likewise edited by Werner Mosse. Focusing on the Wilhelminian period, the volume had contributions from British, Israeli, American and German researchers, who in part traced the rise and metamorphosis of socio-political antisemitism between 1890 and the Great War's outbreak, while outlining the dramatic Jewish encounter with antisemitism and describing Jews' contribution to and participation in Germany's economy and culture. Arnold Paucker delineated the difficulties in German-Jewish self-defense efforts; Pinchas Rosenblüth, Uriel Tal, and Yehuda Eloni analyzed on Jewish theological and philosophical writings, debates about the essence of Judaism, and Zionism. It was left to Robert Weltsch to strike a balance between the divergent scholarly agendas; he argued that with the greater possibilities available to Jews in *Kaiserzeit* Germany, came an unavoidable weakening of Jewish identity.<sup>121</sup>

In 1978 Hans Liebeschütz died, shortly before his 85th birthday, and Robert Weltsch gave up his work in London, retiring to Jerusalem. The previous year had seen publication of another volume in the series, this time centered on the start of the nineteenth century. In his contribution, Liebeschütz took issue with mainly Israeli scholars who argued that the enchantment of German Jewry with German culture involved a blindness to that culture's potential dangers. For Liebeschütz, the Jewish-German encounter was both dynamically creative in nature and highly intellectual. In his essay, Jacob Toury analyzed the unraveling of Jewish identities after the failed 1848 revolution. Other contributors wrote on particular individuals – the rabbi and editor of the *Allgemeine Zeitung des Judenthums*, Ludwig Philippson, and the founder of neo-Orthodoxy, Samson Raphael Hirsch.<sup>122</sup>

The by now prolific publication record of the London branch had given it an international reputation. Writing in the *Jewish Chronicle* in 1959, Robert Weltsch had regretted that “language difficulties barred the majority of the Anglo-Jewish community” from attending the LBI's first major conference

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Selmar Spier, “Jewish History as We See It,” in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 1 (1956), pp. 3–14, here p. 3

<sup>121</sup> Werner Mosse (ed.), *Juden im Wilhelminischen Deutschland, 1890–1914*, pp. 689–702.

<sup>122</sup> Hans Liebeschütz and Arnold Paucker (eds.), *Das Judentum in der deutschen Umwelt 1800–1850. Studien zur Frühgeschichte der Emanzipation*.

in Britain.<sup>123</sup> Ten years later, the *Journal of Jewish Studies* extensively reviewed the institute's publications, while its *Schriftenreihe* volumes were being favorably discussed in international journals.<sup>124</sup> Based on its growing international renown, the LBI succeeded in organizing the first English-speaking conference at Magdalen College, Oxford, in 1979 with over 60 participating historians, including many from Germany. The conference's focus was on the impact of the events of 1848 on internal German-Jewish developments and the relationship between Jews and non-Jews in Germany. Edited by Werner Mosse, Arnold Paucker and the German historian Reinhard Rürup, the conference proceedings were published as another volume of the *Schriftenreihe*, and displayed a much more muted and detached engagement with the German-Jewish past in comparison with the previous edited volumes.<sup>125</sup> This volume confirmed a move in the newer German-Jewish historiography away from the overriding concern with the "problematic interrelation" between Germans and Jews, a move that Ismar Schorsch apparently confirmed in his description of the LBI in the 1980 *Year Book* as "the international forum in which young American, Israeli, German and English academics, whose own historical experience lies this side of 1933, exhibit and test the products of their craft."<sup>126</sup>

With the publication of this last comprehensive volume on 1848, a sense of completion gave rise to increasing feelings if not of exhaustion then of the need to augment the existing research profile with a new agenda. Already in 1980 Arnold Paucker voiced his sense that the institute needed to start taking a more comparative approach to German Jewish history.<sup>127</sup> Werner Mosse himself remarked around the same time that three decades of research "had come close to exhausting the possibilities." For him, the remaining specialized work was best left to German scholars, with the LBI turning to a pursuit of comparative Jewish studies.<sup>128</sup> These concerns would surface nine years later in another conference organized by the London LBI together with the Max Planck Institute for History in Göttingen at Schloss Ringberg, the

<sup>123</sup> Robert Weltsch, "Scholars Talk in German," in *Jewish Chronicle*, September 18, 1959, p. 24.

<sup>124</sup> See, for example, *JJS*, vol. 17 (1966), which reviews several publications by the LBI; Lamar Cecil, Review of "*Das Judentum in der deutschen Umwelt*," in *The Journal of Modern History*, vol. 51 (1979), 368–370; Michael A. Meyer, Review of "*Das Judentum in der deutschen Umwelt*," in *AHR*, vol. 83 (1978), 745–746.

<sup>125</sup> W. E. Mosse, Arnold Paucker and R. Rürup (eds.), *Revolution and Evolution: 1848 in German-Jewish History*; "Seminar des Leo Baeck Instituts in Oxford," in *Mitteilungsblatt* (August 24, 1979).

<sup>126</sup> Ismar Schorsch, "The Leo Baeck Institute: Continuity amid Desolation," Introduction in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 25 (1980), pp. ix–xii, here p. ix.

<sup>127</sup> Arnold Paucker to Robert Weltsch, 13 May 1980, *LBI Archives New York*, Robert Weltsch Coll., AR 7185, folder 5/20.

<sup>128</sup> Werner E. Mosse, "Self-Discovery: A European Historian," p. 153.

focus now being on German-Jewish historiography as it had emerged since 1945. Several of the papers subsequently published in the *Year Book* involved critical assessments of the general approach taken earlier by the institute, along similar lines to what had been already suggested by Mosse and Paucker.<sup>129</sup> That same year, in order to cement its extensive cooperation with German historians, the London branch, represented by Werner Mosse, spearheaded the founding of the institute's *Wissenschaftliche Arbeitsgemeinschaft* (Mosse would also represent the LBI on that body's executive board).<sup>130</sup>

Over the following decade, the London branch would devote considerable attention to the history of German Jews in Great Britain. In his programmatic essay in the first volume of the *Year Book*, Siegfried Moses had cited the history of emigration as one of the institute's central topics.<sup>131</sup> After a few initial efforts, emigration to Britain would be generally neglected in the institute's publications, London branch members in particular tending to subscribe, as suggested, to Eugen Täubler's view of German Jewry's history in the context of German history. Yet the absence of a vibrant field of Anglo-Jewish studies at the same time meant that the framework for research on emigration had not been ideal. In the winter of 1986-87, a conference on Jews in Great Britain, held in Leeds, signaled an improvement in this general area.<sup>132</sup> Collaboration with British institutions and associations, hitherto limited at best, now gradually became more feasible. Arnold Paucker thus now worked to establish the London LBI's position more forcefully within the British academic world – an aim reflected, in part, in another conference, held in 1988 and sponsored by the Anglo-Jewish Historical Association and the German Historical Institute, that focused on “The History of German-Speaking Jews in the United Kingdom.” With Clare College, Cambridge, offering a sumptuous garden setting, the conference seemed visibly to validate an underlying narrative presented by various speakers: that of German-Jewish success in the United Kingdom. Sir Geoffrey Elton, historian of the Tudor period and son of the distinguished ancient historian and German-Jewish emigrant to Britain Victor Ehrenberg, hosted the event. The presence of many other eminent Anglo-German Jews, such as Sir Claus Moser, scion of a Berlin banking family, director of *The Economist* and profes-

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<sup>129</sup> See the contributions by Reinhard Rürup, Michael Meyer, David Sorkin and Moshe Zimmermann to the *LBI Year Book*, vol. 35 (1990); Michael A. Meyer, “Jews as Jews versus Jews as Germans: Two Historical Perspectives,” in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 36 (1991), pp. xv–xxii.

<sup>130</sup> On the history of the *Arbeitsgemeinschaft*, see the article by Stefanie Schüler-Springorum in this volume.

<sup>131</sup> Siegfried Moses, “Leo Baeck Institute of Jews from Germany,” in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 1 (1956), pp. xi–xviii, here p. xvi.

<sup>132</sup> See the conference proceedings: David Cesarani (ed.), *The Making of the Modern Anglo-Jewry*, Oxford 1990.

sor of social statistics at the London School of Economics, produced an ambience described in the *AJR Information* as “glittering.”<sup>133</sup> The conference’s papers, centered on questions of migration, cultural influence, and refugees, would be published in a *Schriftenreihe* volume entitled *Second Chance: Two Centuries of German-Speaking Jews in the United Kingdom* (1991). Although the papers were generally celebratory in tone, contributions by British historians such as Louise London and Tony Kushner struck a more skeptical chord regarding the avowed benevolence and tolerance of British society towards immigrants and refugees.<sup>134</sup>

These efforts for a wider and more comparative study of German Jewry were echoed by John Grenville from Birmingham University, who became a board member of the institute and succeeded Arnold Paucker in 1992 as the editor of the *Year Book*. Over recent years, Grenville had become increasingly drawn to the study of German Jewry during the Nazi period, with an emphasis on the Jewish community of Hamburg.<sup>135</sup> In the introduction to the first volume of the *Year Book* under his editorship, he and associate editor Julius Carlebach stressed their desire “to extend a comparative approach” to the study of German Jewry and widen its chronological scope; they also indicated that “the *Year Book* editors are making a specific effort to promote German-Jewish studies in the new *Bundesländer*.”<sup>136</sup> In the period that followed, the London LBI organized two major conferences comparing (for the first time in a formal setting) the experience of Jews in Germany with that of Jews in Great Britain: in 1996 at the Oxford Centre for Hebrew and Jewish Studies and in 1997 at – once again – Clare College. The proceedings were published as the 60<sup>th</sup> volume of the *Schriftenreihe*.<sup>137</sup> And a similar conference held in 2001 (coinciding, as it happened, with the attacks on the World Trade Center) considered German-Jewish acculturation from a broad comparative perspective, its geographical scope broadened to take in the history of German Jews in America.<sup>138</sup>

<sup>133</sup> Ronald Stent, “The History of German-Speaking Jews in the United Kingdom,” in *AJR Information*, vol. 44 (November 1988), p. 3.

<sup>134</sup> Werner E. Mosse, Julius Carlebach *et al*, (eds.), *Second Chance: Two Centuries of German-speaking Jews in the United Kingdom*, Tübingen 1991 (*Schriftenreihe wissenschaftlicher Abhandlungen des Leo Baeck Instituts* 48); Geoffrey Alderman, Review of “Second Chance,” in *The English Historical Review*, vol. 109 (1994): 1021–1022.

<sup>135</sup> John Grenville, “From Gardener to Professor,” in Peter Alter (ed.), *Out of the Third Reich: Refugee Historians in Post-War Britain*, London: 1998, pp. 55–72.

<sup>136</sup> John Grenville and Julius Carlebach, Introduction in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 38 (1993), pp. ix–xi.

<sup>137</sup> Michael Brenner, Rainer Liedtke and David Rechter (eds.), *Two Nations: British and German Jews in Comparative Perspective*, Tübingen, 1999 (*Schriftenreihe wissenschaftlicher Abhandlungen des Leo Baeck Instituts* 60).

<sup>138</sup> For the conference proceedings, see Rainer Liedtke and David Rechter (eds.), *Towards Normality: Assimilation and Acculturation Within German-Speaking Jewry*, Tübingen, 2001.

In a certain manner, the death of Eva Reichmann in 1998 and Werner Mosse in 2001 had marked the end of an era at the London LBI.<sup>139</sup> Arnold Paucker, now director of the branch for over 40 years, retired the same year as Mosse's death, to be replaced by Raphael Gross, the Swiss son of a Holocaust survivor from Bratislava and author of an intensely debated book on the antisemitism of the Nazi jurist Carl Schmitt. Under Gross's directorship, widened international cooperation with various institutions in research on both contemporary and historical forms of antisemitism was signaled by a conference held in Hamburg in 2002 and co-sponsored by the Hamburg Institute for Social Research (in cooperation with the *Evangelisches Studienwerk* of Villingst), with the challenging title "Morality in Germany – 1933–1945." A renewed interest at the London LBI in the history of the Holocaust has also been reflected in closer cooperation with the adjacent Wiener Library and intensified fund-raising efforts have resulted, in part, in a new project on the role played by Jewish academics in nineteenth- and twentieth-century German-speaking Europe. In addition, Gross's recent appointment as director of the Centre for German-Jewish Studies at Sussex University has involved the London LBI directly in the teaching of German-Jewish history at a British university. Hence despite generational change, the London institute has continued along its charted path of fostering international research.

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gen 2003 (Schriftenreihe wissenschaftlicher Abhandlungen des Leo Baeck Instituts 68).

<sup>139</sup> Arnold Paucker, "Obituary: Eva Reichmann," *The Guardian*, September 30, 1998, p. 22.



## The “German Question”: The Leo Baeck Institute in Germany

Stefanie Schüler-Springorum

The “German Question” preoccupied the three Leo Baeck Institutes since their founding. How extensive should contacts with Germany be – with the land from where one had been expelled a few years previously, the land of the murderers of one’s own friends and family? Should these contacts remain “light” in nature,<sup>1</sup> or would the long-term goal necessarily be Germany having its own institute? There were innumerable debates within the LBI over the nature and extent of such contacts, which were being handled in very different ways on an individual level. In this way, the history of the LBI in Germany can be described as the formation of an initially very tentative and for the most part informal network: a five-decade process in which conferences and both successful and failed projects led to contacts gradually solidifying and becoming institutionalized. Despite the establishing in December 1989 of an LBI “academic working committee” in Germany, the *Wissenschaftliche Arbeitsgemeinschaft des Leo Baeck Instituts in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*, this process continues today.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Minutes of the LBI Jerusalem board meeting, July 20, 1960, *LBI Jerusalem*, file 1025. The author would like to thank the participants in the Tutzing Conference for their insightful comments. My special thanks go to Christhard Hoffmann, Guy Miron, Aubrey Pomerance and Nils Römer for providing me with archival material from Jerusalem, London and New York and for discussing my paper intensively. I am also indebted to Tom Angress, Ingrid Belke, Ursula Büttner, Arno Herzig, Georg Heuberger, Stefi Jersch-Wenzel, Cécile Lowenthal-Hensel, Arnold Paucker, Monika Richarz, Reinhard Rürup, Ernst Schulin and Barbara Suchy for complying patiently with being transformed from historians into witnesses.

<sup>2</sup> Herbert A. Strauss was the first scholar to deal explicitly with the LBI’s history: “Die Leo Baeck Institute und die Erforschung der deutsch-jüdischen Geschichte,” in *Geschichte und Gesellschaft*, vol. 9 (1983), pp. 471–478; his student Christhard Hoffmann followed this path some years later with a large-scale project focusing on the emigration history of German-Jewish historiography: “Deutsch-jüdische Geschichtswissenschaft in der Emigration. Das Leo-Baeck-Institut,” in Herbert A. Strauss *et al.* (eds.), *Die Emigration der Wissenschaft nach 1933. Disziplingeschichtliche Studien*, Munich 1991, pp. 257–279.



Already before the LBI's foundation, the various German-Jewish organizations – above all the *Irgun Olej Merkas Europa* in Jerusalem and the London-based Council of Jews from Germany – came into sharp conflict over the form of future cooperation with(in) Germany; this conflict was exemplified in an exchange of letters between Siegfried Moses and Hans Reichmann.<sup>3</sup> When the LBI was founded in 1955, the official policy that initially prevailed was maintaining clear-cut boundaries: there should never be separate LBI facilities in Germany; the “heritage of German Judaism” was to be preserved, nurtured and passed on within the three great centers of emigration, Jerusalem, London and New York.

Nevertheless, only three years later, in 1958, when a “Society of Friends of the Leo Baeck Institute” was formed in Israel and Great Britain, there were few objections to such a loose-knit circle of supporters being located in Frankfurt am Main as well; this was certainly connected with the close proximity in that city, placed as it was at the center of the previous American Zone, to the important international Jewish organizations. Both Hans Tramer and Robert Weltsch stopped in Frankfurt in their trips to Germany in 1958 and 1959, respectively, speaking at events sponsored by the newly founded German “Society of Friends.”<sup>4</sup> These ties would become formal after financial negotiations with the German authorities over the coming years: on June 28, 1962, the “Friends and Sponsors of the Leo Baeck Institute” was established as a German association, officially registered and granted non-profit status on August 17. This facilitated one of the central tasks of the “Friends and Sponsors” – fundraising. At the same time, it allowed German state support, above all through funds from the Ministry of the Interior, the Conference of State Culture Ministers (*Kultusministerkonferenz*), and the German Urban Congress (*Deutscher Städtetag*), of an institution outside of Germany.<sup>5</sup> Two former German Jews, the publicist Ernst G. Lowenthal and the attorney Shlomo Ettlinger, formed the directorship of the “Friends and Sponsors”; although as representatives of various Jewish organizations and Israeli agencies both men sometimes stayed in Germany, they had not given up their residencies in, respectively, London and Jerusalem. Lowenthal was followed in 1970 by Hans Seidenberg, a returned emigrant from Israel who was now permanently re-

<sup>3</sup> See *idem*, “The German-Jewish Encounter and German Historical Culture,” in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 41 (1996), pp. 277–290, in particular pp. 277f.; and Hoffmann's contribution to this volume on the founding history of the LBI.

<sup>4</sup> See Franz Meyer, “Die Gesellschaft der Freunde des Leo Baeck Instituts,” in *Bulletin des Leo Baeck Instituts*, 1, no. 1 (1957), pp. 6–9; *Allgemeine Wochenzeitung der Juden in Deutschland*, November 14, 1958, p. 14; *ibid.*, February 13, 1959, p. 5; Georg Heuberger, interview with the author, Frankfurt am Main, March 15, 2004.

<sup>5</sup> See *Satzungen der Freunde und Förderer des Leo Baeck Instituts*, June 28, 1962; *Bescheinigung über die Gemeinnützigkeit*, July 18, 1962; *Eintragung ins Vereinsregister*, August 17, 1962; *Vermögensaufstellung für das Jahr 1965*, July 5, 1966, all in *Freunde und Förderer Archives*.

siding in Germany and who had been an associate judge on the Prussian regional court. With Arno Lustiger, a survivor of Auschwitz and Buchenwald who, as a displaced person, had chosen to stay in Germany in 1945, a representative of Germany’s extant Jewish community took over the organization’s directorship in 1989; in 1992, Georg Heuberger followed Lustiger as the first representative of the second German-Jewish generation to emerge after the war.<sup>6</sup>

Until his death in 1994, above all Lowenthal (born in Cologne in 1904) would enduringly stamp the ties formed by the LBI in Germany – and later, German ties to the LBI. With an academic background in the social sciences and political theory, Lowenthal had been active on behalf of both the *CV* and the *Reichsvertretung* until his emigration from Germany in April 1939. He thus still knew many of the “founding fathers” from the days they worked together in pre-war Germany. In his double function as a member of the London LBI board and of the directorship of the “Friends and Supporters,” Lowenthal had essentially been the “unofficial official” representative of the LBI in Germany since the early 1960s. His widow Cécile Lowenthal-Hensel recalls that he always placed great emphasis on remaining effectively independent, strictly rejecting any formal office. As an accompaniment to his own journalistic and scholarly work, he became an observer of postwar Germany’s developing Jewish communities, as well as its historiographical scene, building and mediating contacts in both directions – something from which younger German historians would benefit, as Stefi Jersch-Wenzel has stressed.<sup>7</sup>

In the early years, this mediating role was certainly not always a pleasure; with its pronounced policy of maintaining distance, the LBI soon found itself in a – presumably unavoidable – state of tension with the various persons steering “Jewish affairs” on German soil. For it was not merely the dispensers of state monies who, it seems, repeatedly pressed for an institutional presence of the LBI in Germany; rather, and posing far greater complications, the various Jewish organizations already actually existing in the country did so as well. Since from the start the LBI had gone out of its way to avoid even symbolic gestures that could have been understood as legitimating or acknowledging further Jewish existence in the perpetrators’ land, the attitude towards the Central Council of Jews in Germany, founded in 1950, was distinctly distant. Already in 1956, the institute had turned down Heinz Galinski’s proposal to establish a German LBI office; and even the Council’s two

<sup>6</sup> See *Bestellung Hans Seidenberg*, December 28, 1970, *ibid.*; Heuberger, interview.

<sup>7</sup> See Lowenthal’s postwar recollections in Michael Brenner, *Nach dem Holocaust. Juden in Deutschland 1945–1950*, Munich 1995, pp. 185–190; Obituary in *LBI Information*, vol. 5/6 (1995), pp. 57f; Stefi Jersch-Wenzel, interview with the author, Berlin, February 6, 2004; Cécile Lowenthal Hensel, interview with the author, Berlin, April 26, 2004, who recalls that her husband was always sure that an LBI Institute in Germany would only be a matter of time.

great scholarly projects in the following decades, the founding of Heidelberg's *Hochschule für Jüdische Studien* in 1971 and *Zentralarchiv zur Erforschung der Geschichte der Juden in Deutschland* in 1987, would alter nothing in this "hard line."<sup>8</sup>

Behind this stance stood a deep conviction that the only legitimate representatives of extinguished German Judaism were the emigrants' organizations; these organizations not only demanded political recognition from the German state but also were willing to act in the face of other Jewish groups. Denying Germany's newly emerged Jewish communities a representational role was made easier by the fact that to a large extent they were composed of East European displaced persons with no family roots in Germany. Against such a backdrop, it is not surprising that such distance was maintained vis-à-vis Jews doing historical work, even if they were the first people after 1945 to work on the history of German-Jewish communities, as Michael Brenner has shown with the example of Stefan Schwarz.<sup>9</sup>

In contrast, the relation to those German Jews who had returned from emigration, who were not shuttling back and forth between Germany and their lands of exile like Lowenthal or Adolf Leschnitzer but had again settled permanently in the country, taking on responsibilities in the new Jewish communities, was much more ambivalent. This was the case, for example, with Hans Lamm, the Central Council's long-standing cultural advisor, head of Munich's Jewish community from 1970 until 1985. Lamm was a trained historian; he had received his Ph.D. from Erlangen University in 1951 with a dissertation on the "internal and external development of German Jewry in the Third Reich," the earliest work on this subject (although never to be published). He had directed a small Jewish press (*Ner Tamid*) since the end of the 1950s. But it seems that for a time no one at the LBI was interested in establishing closer contact with him – despite the institute's complaint about only learning of his press's publications after the fact, "through newspaper advertisements."<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Hoffmann, "German-Jewish Encounter," p. 278. For the general isolation of the incipient Jewish community, see Brenner, *Nach dem Holocaust*, pp. 99–102; for the LBI's and especially Gershom Sholem's reaction to the *Hochschule*, see Julius Carlebach, "Journey to the Centre of the Periphery," in Peter Alter (ed.), *Out of the Third Reich: Refugee Historians in Post-War Britain*, London 1998, pp. 3–23, in particular pp. 20f; and for the reaction to the *Heidelberg Zentralarchiv* see the contribution of Aubrey Pomerance to this volume.

<sup>9</sup> Information provided by Michael Brenner in his written comments on an earlier version of this article. Since neither Schwarz nor the second example for this group, Josef Wulf, were professionally trained historians, one might speculate that some bourgeois prejudice against autodidactic endeavors might have played a role as well: see Nicolas Berg, *Der Holocaust und die westdeutschen Historiker. Erforschung und Erinnerung*, Göttingen 2003, pp. 343–363, 594–613.

<sup>10</sup> Statement by Robert Weltsch, "Zu wissenschaftlichen Instituten in Deutsch-

As the complaint demonstrates, by the start of the 1960s at the latest, on both the Jewish and non-Jewish sides it was no longer possible to close one’s eyes to the increase in Jewish activities in Germany. In January 1960, Robert Weltsch himself observed that, “in Germany over recent years scholarly institutions and private associations and publishing houses have treated many subjects that are almost identical with the material falling within the LBI’s circle of interest.” This situation prompted Weltsch to call for a discussion about the basic approach of the LBI. It was the case, he indicated, that many of the projects involved were more well-meant morally than distinguished on a scholarly level, but continuing to “ignore all these things” would in his view be an “anomaly,” particularly since in the future “more financial means” might “possibly be available for serious work in the field of German-Jewish history.” Hence on both pragmatic and substantive grounds Weltsch pleaded for “actively making contact with Germany,” although he was fully aware how “rather wide-ranging and complicated” such a “possibly fruitful undertaking” would be – an undertaking best left to London, for purely “geographical reasons,” as he diplomatically added.<sup>11</sup>

If we are to trust the minutes, Weltsch’s suggestion of possibly getting in touch with Lamm was completely ignored in the Jerusalem board’s ensuing discussion, but there was a willingness to assess Germany’s new non-Jewish undertakings related to Jewish history in a more differentiated manner. “Friendly but only light contact [*Tuchföhlung*]” was thus recommended for programs in Jewish studies tied to denomination or settled in theological faculties:<sup>12</sup> a position that apparently hardly changed well into the 1990s. In contrast, the Cologne Library’s *Germania Judaica* seemed “completely harmless,” so that in this case cooperation – at first mediated by Ernst Lowenthal, later direct – was possible.<sup>13</sup>

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land,” attachment to letter by Shalom Adler-Rudel to LBI Jerusalem board members, January 24, 1960, *LBI Jerusalem*, file 1025. On Lamm’s dissertation, I again refer to Brenner’s comments, see n. 9, above. It remains a matter of speculation how great a role the personality of his *Doktorvater*, Hans-Joachim Schoeps, might have played in the LBI’s attitude.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> Minutes of the LBI Jerusalem board meeting, July 20, 1960, *LBI Jerusalem*, file 1025. In that respect, Hermann Greive (see below) was an exception. For the development of Jewish Studies in Germany, see Margarete Schlüter, “Judaistik an deutschen Universitäten heute,” in Michael Brenner and Stefan Rohrbacher (eds.), *Wissenschaft vom Judentum. Annäherungen nach dem Holocaust*, Göttingen 2000, pp. 85–96; and Andreas Gotzmann, “Entwicklungen eines Fachs – Die universitäre Lehre in der Judaistik,” *ibid.*, pp. 97–110.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.* See also Shalom Adler-Rudel to LBI Jerusalem board members, January 24, 1960; *idem* to Ernst Lowenthal, April 17, 1969; Jutta Bohnke-Kollwitz to Jochanan Ginat, November 26, 1971; and Ginat to Bohnke-Kollwitz, December 5, 1971, *LBI Jerusalem*, file 1025.

Basically, however, the Jerusalem LBI's highly cautious line prevailed over Weltsch's initiative. This was reflected soon after in the reaction to the establishing of the *Institut für die Geschichte der deutschen Juden (IGdJ)* in Hamburg: in 1963, in answer to a query, its founders were informed by the LBI that there was no intention "of entering into a closer working relationship with those facilities already present in Germany." Rather, the LBI wished "initially to wait and observe" the research being carried on there.<sup>14</sup> In any event, when Palestine-emigrant Heinz Moshe Graupe was appointed head of the *IGdJ* two years later, Siegfried Moses and Shalom Adler-Rudel met with him in Jerusalem before his move to Hamburg. Graupe promised "the most complete cooperation," which for some reason or other was never realized.<sup>15</sup>

All this led to an at first glance rather odd situation: in a certain way it was easier to seek contact with non-Jewish than Jewish Germans. In the former case borders were clear-cut; there was a sense that professional cooperation could be limited to a group of established researchers in the field. Solid bourgeois respect for the academic calling, with its formal honors and titles – the very institution of German professorship – may also, of course, have played a role. What is in any event certain is that the "German Question" was posed above all in relation to LBI publications – and here especially in regards to the institute's ambitious plans for a general history of the German Jews, which would take the form of the now famous *Sammelbände*. For at the heart of each volume in the series was, in Arnold Paucker's retrospective formulation, "the *Judenfrage* in Germany ... the tense relationship between Germans and Jews ... . With this sort of question at work it quickly became clear that the participation of German historians at symposia and in publications would be needed."<sup>16</sup>

The initiative in this respect was by no means limited to the London LBI. For example, as early as 1956 Siegfried Moses had contacted the jurist Franz Böhm, based in Frankfurt and Bonn, to learn more about his work coordinating an anthology on "Judaism in history and in the present" for the Socie-

<sup>14</sup> *Senatsdrucksache* 113, May 28, 1963, Archiv Institut für die Geschichte der deutschen Juden (*IGdJ*).

<sup>15</sup> Minutes of the LBI Jerusalem board meeting, January 13, 1965, *LBI New York*, LBI Office Records, II (Correspondence all LBI Institutes) 63/3. On the founding of the *IGdJ* see Peter Freimark, "Vom Hamburger Umgang mit der Geschichte einer Minderheit. Vorgeschichte und Gründung des Instituts für die Geschichte der deutschen Juden," in Peter Freimark, Alice Jankowski and Ina S. Lorenz (eds.), *Juden in Deutschland. Emanzipation, Integration, Verfolgung und Vernichtung. 25 Jahre Institut für die Geschichte der deutschen Juden Hamburg*, Hamburg 1991, pp. 466–477; on Graupe see Obituary in *Uni-HH. Berichte, Meinungen aus der Universität Hamburg*, vol. 29, no. 1 (1998), p. 64.

<sup>16</sup> Arnold Paucker, "Erfahrungen und Erinnerungen. Ein Rückblick," in *idem*, *Deutsche Juden im Kampf um Recht und Freiheit. Studien zu Abwehr, Selbstbehauptung und Widerstand der deutschen Juden seit dem Ende des 19. Jahrhunderts*, Teetz 2003, p. 380.

ty for Christian-Jewish Cooperation and to explore the possibilities of cooperation on the project.<sup>17</sup> The following year Robert Weltsch again pressed the Jerusalem board members to voice what he termed "principled" views or to make a decision regarding possible objections to the "occasional collaboration of non-Jews (Germans) with the yearbook," since recently there had been increasing queries in that direction.<sup>18</sup> In any event, the issue seems to have been discussed so heatedly that seven years later a decision one way or the other was still outstanding. In a meeting of the New York LBI in 1964, Siegfried Moses used the institute's pending tenth-year anniversary as an occasion to review what had been accomplished until then; the need to resolve the issue was underscored under his third point:

Regarding non-Jewish contributors [*Bearbeiter*], it seems highly desirable to me that in a general and basic manner we determine the types of themes we should encourage non-Jews to treat. This will need careful consideration. Probably first and foremost describing objective facts will come into question as a suitable task for non-Jews; perhaps describing the conduct of non-Jews, non-Jewish groups, and non-Jewish organizations vis-à-vis the Jews ... while in general the conduct of Jews will certainly be assigned to Jewish authors.<sup>19</sup>

With consideration of the essays making up the *Sammelbände*, it becomes clear that this line was maintained, at least implicitly, well into the 1970s. Hence in the framework of *Entscheidungsjahr 1932* and *Deutsches Judentum in Krieg und Revolution, 1916–1923*,<sup>20</sup> there was an onset of careful contact with some German scholars – historians, sociologists, political scientists and theologians who wrote on either antisemitism or the "Jewish question" in the context of their various non-Jewish academic specialties. The example of Wilhelm Treue shows that one was not always especially adept in choosing contributors. As Christhard Hoffmann has already indicated, in a 1955 historical handbook Treue's description of court Jews was riddled with antisemitic clichés; in the second *Sammelband*, he was given space explicitly to expound upon "economic themes in German antisemitism." Presumably it was

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<sup>17</sup> Franz Böhm, Walter Dirks and Walter Gottschalk (eds.), *Judentum. Schicksal, Wesen und Gegenwart*, 2 vols., Wiesbaden 1965. Böhm had been the head of the German delegation in the restitution negotiations, and might have met Moses in that context in 1954: see Siegfried Moses to Franz Böhm, September 12, 1956; Böhm to Moses, September 26, 1956, *LBI Jerusalem*, file 159.

<sup>18</sup> Robert Weltsch to LBI Jerusalem board members, February 14, 1957, *ibid.*, file 1099.

<sup>19</sup> Speech by Siegfried Moses, October 1, 1964, *ibid.*, file 1072.

<sup>20</sup> Werner E. Mosse (with Arnold Paucker) (eds.), *Entscheidungsjahr 1932. Zur Judenfrage in der Endphase der Weimarer Republik*, Tübingen 1965 (Schriftenreihe wissenschaftlicher Abhandlungen des Leo Baeck Instituts 13); *idem*, *Deutsches Judentum in Krieg und Revolution, 1916–1923*, Tübingen 1971 (Schriftenreihe wissenschaftlicher Abhandlungen des Leo Baeck Instituts 25).

felt he was indispensable as, in Weltsch's words, the LBI lacked "reliable contributors in the realm of economic and social history."<sup>21</sup>

In a manner certainly extending to all the LBI branches, the theme of "objectivity" (*Sachlichkeit*) – "the objective facts," "pure scholarship" emerging again and again in the Jerusalem institute's meetings – clearly functioned as a bridge, an opening to any cooperation whatsoever with non-Jewish German scholars.<sup>22</sup> And things indeed seem to have remained on the level of "purely objective cooperation," since with one important exception, none of the German authors in either of the first two *Sammelbände* would appear in later work of the LBI in Germany. The exception was Werner Jochmann who, as director of the Research Center for the History of National Socialism in Hamburg,<sup>23</sup> would become the first major contact point for the LBI in Germany.

Born in 1921, Jochmann belonged to the generation that had not only been socialized into Nazism in school and Hitler Youth, but had adult memories too of war, persecution of Jews, and mass murder. He later frequently described himself as a "typical product of Nazi education"<sup>24</sup> – of a system that allowed him, a half-orphan from a lower-middle-class family in the Silesian provinces, to go to Gymnasium and advance socially. His early wounding on the Eastern front in September 1941 not only saved him from a much worse fate but also appears to have initiated his slow turn away from the Nazi regime. Looking back, at least, Jochmann repeatedly tied both his lifelong interest in a scholarly confrontation with Nazism and his political journalistic engagement directly to his personal experiences in the war against the Soviet Union. In 1953, following his doctoral work in medieval studies, he became academic assistant to Fritz Fischer in Hamburg, thus seizing the chance to devote himself entirely to modern German history, more particularly to the

<sup>21</sup> Wilhelm Treue, "Zur Frage der wirtschaftlichen Motive im deutschen Antisemitismus," in *ibid.*, pp. 409–408; see also Christhard Hoffmann, "Juden und Judentum in der bundesdeutschen Geschichtswissenschaft," in *Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft*, vol. 43, no. 8 (1995), pp. 677–686, in particular p. 679; Minutes of the LBI Jerusalem board meeting, April 1, 1968, *LBI New York*, LBI Office Records, II 60/36.

<sup>22</sup> There is a striking parallel here to the findings of Nicolas Berg (*Westdeutsche Historiker*, pp. 568–615) regarding the postwar fascination by German historians with "objectivity," with its precisely opposite motivation.

<sup>23</sup> Today called the Research Center for Contemporary History (*Forschungsstelle für Zeitgeschichte*). On the center's founding, see Ursula Büttner, "Die Forschungsstelle für die Geschichte des Nationalsozialismus in Hamburg," in *Zeitschrift des Vereins für Hamburgische Geschichte*, vol. 74/75 (1989), pp. 81–96; *idem*, "Werner Jochmanns Wirken als Leiter der Forschungsstelle für die Geschichte des Nationalsozialismus," in *idem* (ed.), *Das Unrechtsregime. Internationale Forschung über den Nationalsozialismus*, vol. 1: *Ideologie – Herrschaftssystem – Wirkung in Europa*, Hamburg 1986, pp. xv–xxvii.

<sup>24</sup> Quoted in *idem*, "Über die Grenzen hinweg. Zum Tod von Professor Werner Jochmann," speech delivered at the memorial service in Hamburg, January 27, 1995, Ursula Büttner's private papers, Hamburg.

end of the Weimar Republic and the Nazi period. In the West Germany of the 1950s, this was more the exception than the rule – something we have not only known since the appearance of Nicolas Berg’s study.

In our context what seems more salient is the interlinking of Jochmann’s personal interest in the history of Nazism with that in German-Jewish history, hence his view of the two realms as forming something like a single unit. With few exceptions, German researchers have treated these realms as entirely separate until today; they have developed different academic networks and been marked by different lines of discussion and conflict. It is important to note that for Jochmann one interest clearly emerges from the other: for him as well as for many colleagues, the initial question he wished to answer was “how could it happen?” and following his appointment as first director of the Hamburg research center in 1960, his initial publications were devoted to just that question, with Hamburg as his example.<sup>25</sup> However, in contrast to his Munich colleagues, Jochmann worked with great energy from the start to establish contact with Jewish scholars;<sup>26</sup> along with his main field of research (the *völkisch* movement and antisemitism), he explored various themes related to German-Jewish history.<sup>27</sup>

This was the reason for the London LBI contacting Jochmann in 1966 within the framework of preparations for the second *Sammelband, Krieg und Revolution*,<sup>28</sup> whose working title was “*Vom Weltkrieg zur Weimarer Republik. Die Zuspitzung der Judenfrage im Rahmen der deutschen Geschichte, 1817–1923*” [“From the World War to the Weimar Republic: The Sharpening of the Jewish Question in the Framework of German History, 1817–1923”].<sup>29</sup> Arnold Paucker, at the time the London LBI director, had made Jochmann’s ac-

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<sup>25</sup> See *Ausgewählte Dokumente zur Geschichte des Nationalsozialismus 1933–1945*, ed. by Hans-Adolf Jacobsen and Werner Jochmann, Bielefeld 1961–1966, and Jochmann’s Introduction, pp. 6–74. A detailed account of Jochmann’s experiences as a young adult in Nazi Germany is offered by Ursula Büttner, “Werner Jochmann: Den Antisemitismus bekämpfen – eine politische Aufgabe,” in *Annäherungen. 50 Jahre christlich-jüdische Zusammenarbeit in Hamburg*, Hamburg 2002, pp. 59–62.

<sup>26</sup> See for example his intensive exchange of letters and, soon, visits to Shaul Esh, starting in 1962. In the following years, these Israeli contacts were to be extended to Esh’s student Josef Walk, as well as to Daniel Cohen, Eli Rothschild and many others: see Jochmann Correspondence 1962–1972, in *Archives of the Forschungsstelle für Zeitgeschichte in Hamburg (FZH Archives)*.

<sup>27</sup> See, for example, his edition of Leo Lippmann, *Mein Leben und meine amtliche Tätigkeit*, Hamburg 1964.

<sup>28</sup> Mosse, *Krieg und Revolution*.

<sup>29</sup> Originally, the contribution on antisemitism was to be written by Walter Gross, who withdrew from the project after a lengthy dispute that concerned both his approach and the general relevance of his topic for German-Jewish history: see his outline and the comments by Robert Weltsch, Hans Liebeschütz and Eva Reichmann, as well as the memorandum and various comments by Weltsch on the project, LBI Correspondence 1966–1994, in Büttner’s private papers.



quaintance a year previously while in Hamburg to deliver a talk. Other LBI members then met him at a December 1966 institute conference in London to which he was invited; the long-lasting friendship between Jochmann and Tom Angress dates from the same period.<sup>30</sup> But Jochmann's closest contact would be with Paucker, whose book on the German-Jewish *Abwehrkampf*<sup>31</sup> would appear in the series published by the research center in 1968. Even the fact that Jochmann took Werner Mosse's friendly comment that he should be "completely unconcerned about the time problem"<sup>32</sup> all too literally, delivering his voluminous contribution<sup>33</sup> to the "nonplussed" London institute around eighteen months later than had been expected, did not affect – or at least not permanently – the close relationship that had emerged between the LBI and the Hamburg center.<sup>34</sup>

But as indicated, Jochmann and his center were an exception; presumably a certain unease at the unstructured way articles were solicited for the *Sammelbände* played a role in the LBI international board's April 1966 decision to formalize contacts with Germany. There was in any case much pressure being exerted in this regard from the institute's financial supporters there – according to the Londoners they were now constantly raising the possibility of establishing an LBI research center in Germany. But as Robert Weltsch made unmistakably clear in a meeting of the Jerusalem board in April 1968, such a facility was out of the question. He thus described establishing contact with the goal of "creating a kind of consultative body in Germany" as above all a "way out" – an escape from German pressure. Other reasons, such as concern about the institute's long-term existence and doubts about fulfilling self-set goals, were only intimated.<sup>35</sup>

The hope expressed by Werner Mosse in the foreword to the first *Sammelband* that the "heritage" (*Vermächtnis*) of the German Jews, their history, be viewed "essentially as a part of German intellectual and cultural history," and that such a view would be adopted in Germany, was certainly shared to vary-

<sup>30</sup> Arnold Paucker, interview with the author, Tutzing, February 23, 2004; Tom Angress, interview with the author, Berlin, February 6, 2004.

<sup>31</sup> Arnold Paucker, *Der jüdische Abwehrkampf gegen Antisemitismus und Nationalsozialismus in den letzten Jahren der Weimarer Republik*, Hamburger Beiträge zur Zeitgeschichte, vol. 4, Hamburg 1968.

<sup>32</sup> Mosse to Jochmann, May 20, 1968; Weltsch to Jochmann, March 25, 1970, Büttner's papers, LBI Correspondence 1966–1994; and *FZH Archives*, Jochmann Correspondence 1962–1972.

<sup>33</sup> Werner Jochmann, "Die Ausbreitung des Antisemitismus," in Mosse, *Krieg und Revolution*, pp. 409–510.

<sup>34</sup> See correspondence *ibid.* Robert Weltsch's original term was "fassungslos": see Weltsch to Jochmann, October 6, 1969.

<sup>35</sup> Minutes of the LBI Jerusalem board meeting, April 1, 1968, *LBI New York*, LBI Office Records, II 60/36.

ing degrees by individual LBI members.<sup>36</sup> In any case, over the years the attitude towards German contacts does not appear to have split as neatly along CV–ZVfD (Israel – London) lines as London LBI members have tended to stress in their memoirs. As we have seen, Siegfried Moses was already on the watch for partners in Germany early on, and as a researcher at *Yad Vashem*, Shaul Esh, for example, had been involved in an intensive exchange with the Hamburg research center since the start of the 1960s. But since the task of making official contact had been given to the London institute, the first – and for a long time closest – relationships with German colleagues unfolded in that venue. With their added distance, others could take on the role of skeptics.<sup>37</sup>

In his report to the Jerusalem board, Weltsch detailed the preparations for rapprochement; the “very many strong misgivings” and pain involved in this process can be read both directly and between the lines.<sup>38</sup> Initially, it was “difficult to create the right contacts.” After a year, by May 1967, it seemed that had been achieved but then the Six-Day War moved everything else to the background. The second attempt at establishing contact, mainly led by Hans Liebeschütz, was more successful. Since certainly not only Shaul Esh was “against inviting men who held any sort of office in the Nazi period,”<sup>39</sup> the effort was expressly made to find “younger scholars” who had shown an “interest in these questions.” The contributors to both of the first *Sammelbände* were contacted, but also acquaintances “from the old days.” In this manner Ernst Schulin was recommended by the widow – who had known Buber – of his former teacher, an Orientalist who himself had been in contact with Gershom Scholem and Ernst Simon.<sup>40</sup> Reinhard Rürup, at the time Thomas Nipperdey’s academic assistant, had in a certain sense recommended himself on the basis of what Weltsch described as his “highly excellent work on the Emancipation in Baden,” along with his (and Nipperdey’s) article on the his-

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<sup>36</sup> Werner E. Mosse, Foreword in *Entscheidungsjahr 1932*, pp vii–xiv, p. ix; see also Siegfried Moses, “Leo Baeck Institute of Jews from Germany,” in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 1 (1956), pp. xi–xviii.

<sup>37</sup> See Werner E. Mosse, “Self-Discovery: A European Historian,” in Peter Alter (ed.), *Out of the Third Reich*, pp. 133–160, in particular p. 139; Arnold Paucker, “Momsenstrasse to Devonshire Street,” *ibid.*, pp. 175–193, in particular pp. 187f.; Paucker, interview; Angress, interview; *FZH Archives*, Jochmann Correspondence 1962–1972; and Büttner’s papers, LBI Correspondence 1966–1994. Esh, for example, who was not uncritical about “German contacts,” nevertheless also expressed his pleasure at Jochmann being present and how much he appreciated his work: see Minutes of the LBI Jerusalem board meeting, April 1, 1968, *LBI New York*, LBI Office Records, II 60/36, p. 8.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 8. To understand Esh’s remark it is important to note that German professors traditionally have civil service status.

<sup>40</sup> Ernst Schulin, interview with the author, Freiburg i. Br., June 30, 2003.

tory of the term “antisemitism” in the *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe*.<sup>41</sup> Gradually, a correspondence was thus established with a group of “around twelve gentlemen”<sup>42</sup> with whom the next step, directly meeting, was to be taken – “a small attempt without any publicity ... naturally with great care [*Vorsicht*] since we ourselves do not know where this is heading.”

Several summaries exist of this first official encounter between LBI members and German scholars, along with minutes based on a tape-recording. The meeting took place on March 10, 1968 in Berlin.<sup>43</sup> After Hans Liebeschütz’s introductory talk on the “*Zweiseitigkeit*” (“double-sidedness”) of German-Jewish history and Werner Mosse’s outlining of the methodological problems of the *Sammelband* project, a discussion began that extended long into the afternoon. The initial focus was on questions of method and on the periods and geographical borders to be treated; later came problems of practical organization and the question of how to proceed. At this point the only open disagreement emerged, the German side proposing a more systematic and effective structuring of the entire enterprise with a search for new contributors being carried out through a questionnaire being sent to all historical institutes and facilities in Germany. The Londoners politely declined this proposal, without spelling out the real reason, that is, the deeper significance they attached to personal recommendation. In the discussion’s following exchanges, this seems to have only been grasped by Kurt Sontheimer among the insistent Germans. On the Jewish side, there was repeated stress on the need to illuminate the problem “from both sides” and depict it with a “complete objectivity” that was not to “silence the negative aspects,” however “heavily laden with feelings [*sehr gefühlsbelastet*] ... these things [*diese Dinge*]” might be.<sup>44</sup> For their part, the German historians maintained an air of professional neutrality: at no point in the minutes is there the slightest indication of

<sup>41</sup> Reinhard Rürup, “Die Judenemanzipation in Baden,” in *Zeitschrift für die Geschichte des Oberrheins*, vol. 114 (1966), pp. 214–300; *idem* (with Thomas Nipperdey), “Antisemitismus,” in *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe. Historisches Lexikon zur politisch-sozialen Sprache in Deutschland*, vol. 1, Stuttgart 1972, pp. 129–153; see also *idem*, *Emanzipation und Antisemitismus. Studien zur “Judenfrage” der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft*, Göttingen 1975, pp. 37–73, 95–114.

<sup>42</sup> The historians involved were Hans Paul Bahrtd, Werner Conze, Thomas Nipperdey, Reinhard Rürup, Hans Roos, Paul Kluge, Otto Michel, Helmuth Plessner, Ernst Schulin, Kurt Sontheimer, Gerhard Schulz, Rudolf Vierhaus, Fritz Wagner and Werner Jochmann. The first five listed were not able to attend the meeting but joined the newly founded consultative committee later on, along with Wilhelm Treue. The LBI participants were Hans Liebeschütz, E.G. Lowenthal, Werner Mosse, Arnold Paucker, Eva Reichmann, Hans Tramer and Robert Weltsch.

<sup>43</sup> See Minutes of the meeting of LBI representatives with German historians, March 10, 1968, and the evaluations of that meeting by Weltsch and Tramer at the LBI Jerusalem board meeting, April 1, 1968, both in *LBI New York*, LBI Office Records, II 60/36.

<sup>44</sup> In this respect, see also Hans Liebeschütz’s very emotional statement, *ibid.*, p. 28.

either astonishment at or even awareness of the actual significance of these emigrants – a “small group,” in Weltsch’s words, of “the surviving German-speaking Jewry that together experienced the old times” – seeking out a dialogue with them in the first place. For the Jewish historians, it was, as Weltsch stressed in his closing words, “a matter of the heart”; for the German historians (at least this is what the minutes suggest) it was self-evident that they had been asked for advice and help on the basis of their professional competence and would be showered with thanks for their presence – not to speak of solid hospitality in a “good although mid-level hotel,” preceded by supper together with their spouses on March 9. It is possible that expressions of thanks from the German side were not recorded; it is also possible that the apparent asymmetry at work here, the recourse to the “strictly professional,” resulted from a “certain awkwardness” (“*eine gewisse Befangenheit*” – Rürup) vis-à-vis the Jewish colleagues. In any case even now Ernst Schulin and his wife clearly recall how “greatly impressed” (“*ungeheuer beeindruckt*”) they were by this meeting and how deeply moved they were by, precisely, the generosity and friendliness of the Jewish emigrants.<sup>45</sup>

Be this as it may, all in all the LBI’s impression was positive, since as Weltsch later emphasized it had been clear beforehand that “if one went ahead” one would have to “resign oneself [*sich abfinden*] to the problematic nature of certain things.” Hans Tramer stressed that the German historians had all made “a good, nice [*nett*], open impression”; many of the younger ones revealed “tremendous enthusiasm” which, according to Weltsch, almost had to be restrained: “That made us nervous, because we had actually promised more there than we could offer.” It was thus decided simply to pursue “completely informal” contact for the time being, and to set up a sort of “consultative group” in Germany that would correspond with the London LBI and cooperate in coming projects.<sup>46</sup>

Among the German participants in the meeting, it seems that Ernst Schulin took up the matter most directly: in May he met in his home with interested parties based in Berlin (Wolfram Fischer, Sontheimer, Nipperdey and Rürup) and reported on the March meeting, then conveying the new ideas and suggestions that had emerged to London.<sup>47</sup> For Rürup, this meeting represented the first, still “very probing and tentative” contact with the LBI.<sup>48</sup> (One must remember he had not attended the March meeting.) In the end, Schulin, Rürup, and Jochmann, together with Hermann Greive (who was

<sup>45</sup> Schulin, interview; Reinhard Rürup, interview with the author, Berlin, November 21, 2003.

<sup>46</sup> Minutes of the LBI Jerusalem board meeting, April 1, 1968, *LBI New York*, LBI Office Records, II 60/36.

<sup>47</sup> Schulin to Mosse, June 18, 1968, Büttner’s papers, LBI Correspondence 1966–1994.

<sup>48</sup> Rürup, interview.

asked later) remained as the German contributors to the next *Sammelband*, on the Jews in Wilhelminian Germany; Rürup was even assigned the introductory article.<sup>49</sup>

In contrast to somewhat older colleagues such as Werner Jochmann, Ernst Schulin (b. 1929), Reinhard Rürup (b. 1934), and Hermann Greive (b. 1935) belonged to the generation of historians that had experienced National Socialism as children or younger teenagers, had attended university after the war and then, in the words of Konrad Jarausch and Rüdiger Hohls, “were confronted with the catastrophic legacy of their parents and swore they would themselves do better.”<sup>50</sup> In any case, their paths to German-Jewish history were different: as was the case with Jochmann, Greive’s interest in Judaism had been sparked by his work on the history of antisemitism, work that had even led to a new orientation to his career: instead of entering the priesthood as he had planned, he turned to history and Jewish studies, teaching Jewish history at the Martin Buber Institute of the University of Cologne in the 1970s.<sup>51</sup> Ernst Schulin and Reinhard Rürup knew each other from their student days in Göttingen, where they engaged themselves intensively with historical and political questions in (among other venues) a regularly held historical colloquium organized for students.<sup>52</sup> As Schulin himself explained it, in their search for “undamaged models and values for the sake of a new orientation,” many of these students considered “emigrants to be the better,

<sup>49</sup> Reinhard Rürup, “Emanzipation und Krise. Zur Geschichte der ‘Judenfrage’ in Deutschland vor 1890,” in Werner E. Mosse (with Arnold Paucker) (eds.), *Juden im Wilhelminischen Deutschland 1890–1914*, Tübingen 1976 (rev. ed. 1998) (Schriftenreihe wissenschaftlicher Abhandlungen des Leo Baeck Instituts 33), pp. 1–56. Of those present at the March meeting, only Vierhaus would remain connected to the LBI – albeit not through his own research focus, but always willing to give counsel and support; see also Jochmann to Paucker, November 26, 1976, *FZH Archives*, Correspondence LBI London 1966–1983. It should be noted that Sontheimer and Schulz remained approachable, and that the latter would contribute an article to a later *Sammelband*: “Der späte Nationalismus im deutschen politischen Denken des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts,” in Hans Liebeschütz and Arnold Paucker (eds.), *Das Judentum in der deutschen Umwelt 1800–1850. Studien zur Frühgeschichte der Emanzipation*, Tübingen 1977 (Schriftenreihe wissenschaftlicher Abhandlungen des Leo Baeck Instituts 35), pp. 95–137.

<sup>50</sup> Konrad Jarausch and Rüdiger Hohls, “Brechungen von Biographie und Wissenschaft. Interviews mit deutschen Historikern/innen der Nachkriegsgeneration,” in *idem* (eds.), *Versäumte Fragen. Deutsche Historiker im Schatten des Nationalsozialismus*, Stuttgart and Munich 2000, pp. 15–54, here p. 37.

<sup>51</sup> See Hermann Greive, *Theologie und Ideologie. Katholizismus und Judentum in Deutschland und Österreich 1918–1935*, Cologne 1969; *idem*, *Die Juden. Grundzüge ihrer Geschichte im mittelalterlichen und neuzeitlichen Europa*, Darmstadt 1980; Obituary in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 29 (1984), p. viii; Barbara Suchy, interview with the author, Tutzing, February 26, 2004.

<sup>52</sup> See Interview with Reinhard Rürup in Jarausch and Hohls (eds.), *Versäumte Fragen*, pp. 267–280.

more trustworthy teachers.”<sup>53</sup> Schulin – according to Georg Iggers “among the few historians whom we knew then willing to critically confront the German past”<sup>54</sup> – entered the realm of German-Jewish history by way of an interest in Walther Rathenau. In the early 1960s, Rürup did so through activities in adult education programs that confronted him with West German antisemitism:<sup>55</sup> this work sparked a concern with the mechanisms of political emancipation, centered on the question of majority-minority relations, and this led in turn to the above-mentioned study of Jewish emancipation in Baden. Under Schulin together with his academic assistant Konrad Kwiet, and then under Schulin’s successor Rürup starting in 1975, the Berlin Technical University’s history department developed into the LBI’s second and eventually most important academic partner in Germany; it would remain such a partner until Rürup’s retirement in 1999.<sup>56</sup>

In the meanwhile, another initiative came from Hamburg: in April 1969, Werner Jochmann arranged a meeting there in order to continue the previous year’s dialog. Alongside Rürup, Schulin, Vierhaus and Roos – the latter meant to be persuaded to contribute a *Sammelband* article on the *Ostjudenfrage* – Weltsch, Paucker and Mosse came from London, and Hans Kohn arrived from New York; both Rürup and Schulin had been in touch with him for some time. At this point at the latest, competition began to surface between the two Hamburg-based research centers. Graupe, the director of the *IGdJ*, was not invited to the substantive discussions but only to the dinner. In view of Graupe’s intellectual history of the German Jews (appearing in 1969)<sup>57</sup>, it would be astonishing, as Arnold Paucker recalls, if he had actually had “no interest in the subject-matter” (“*thematisch desinteressiert*”) of the discussions; another possibility is that the already mentioned awe felt for full professors and the LBI’s ambivalence towards returned German-Jewish emigrants played a role.<sup>58</sup> What is certain is that the *IGdJ* did not participate in

<sup>53</sup> Ernst Schulin, “Tradition und Geschichtsdenken in Deutschland,” paper delivered at the Humboldt Club in Japan, March 29-31, 1996 <<http://www.kclc.or.jp/humboldt/schuling/htm>>.

<sup>54</sup> Wilma Iggers and Georg Iggers, *Zwei Seiten der Geschichte. Lebensbericht aus unruhigen Zeiten*, Göttingen 2002, p. 148.

<sup>55</sup> For the impact that the rise in West German antisemitism in the late 1950s and early 1960s had on individuals and politics, leading to the founding of the two above-mentioned Hamburg institutes, see Peter Reichel, *Vergangenheitsbewältigung in Deutschland. Die Auseinandersetzung mit der NS-Diktatur von 1945 bis heute*, Munich 2001, pp. 147–149.

<sup>56</sup> Paucker already mentions the importance of the Berlin–Hamburg–London connection in 1968: see Paucker to Jochmann, October 17, 1968, Büttner’s papers, LBI Correspondence 1966–1994.

<sup>57</sup> Heinz Moshe Graupe, *Die Entstehung des modernen Judentums. Geistesgeschichte der deutschen Juden 1650–1942*, Hamburg 1969.

<sup>58</sup> Paucker to Jochmann, March 21, 1969; Paucker to Schulin, March 10, 1969, *FZH Archives*, Jochmann Correspondence 1962–1972; Paucker, interview.

the planning and discussions involved in this early phase of German-Jewish historiographical cooperation.

Aside from activity on behalf of the *Sammelbände*, the Berlin-Hamburg group initially produced only one initiative – though to be sure, an important one. This was the idea, promoted most energetically by Jochmann in close consultation with London, of participating in the biennial historian's convention (the *Historikertag*) in Braunschweig in October 1974. The resulting conference session was chaired by Jochmann and included talks by Rürup, Liebeschütz, and Greive; it was the first session on German-Jewish history to be held at a *Historikertag*. All those participating considered it the next "important stage in the ... in fact faltering rapprochement" with the German Federal Republic – an impression reflected in the fact that not only Paucker and Mosse but also Hans Tramer and Max Kreutzberger traveled to Braunschweig.<sup>59</sup> In his introduction to the session, Jochmann spent some time describing the work of the LBI and reviewed the beginning of West German research into German-Jewish history, stressing its importance for German history in general, which thus was obliged to integrate it into its scholarship. Looking back on the occasion, Rürup now believes that Jochmann was more aware of its historical and political dimensions than the younger historians.<sup>60</sup> Presumably, the difference in perception at work here partly mirrored a difference in experience, Jochmann still belonging, as indicated, to a generation that had lived through and with Nazism. Already in the 1970s, younger historians like Schulin and Rürup felt freer to cultivate their international contacts intensely, and in a relatively dispassionate manner.

This was also the case for the small group of German historians who worked on aspects of German-Jewish history but were not present at the meetings and conferences of the early 1970s. For example, in a similar way to Rürup, Arno Herzig (b. 1937) had developed an interest in German-Jewish history through adult education activities and engagement against anti-semitism in West Germany during the 1960s. As a young teacher in Iserlohn, he initially focused on the history of the Jews in that town; this led to contacts both with colleagues in the University of Münster's center for research on Jewish religion and history – known as the *Delitzschianum* – and with Rürup, later with Greive and Jochmann, and eventually to his qualifying thesis, published in 1973, on the history of Jewish emancipation in Westphalia.<sup>61</sup> As a professor first in Essen and then in Hamburg, German-Jewish history, particularly of the early modern period, remained one of his main

<sup>59</sup> Rürup, interview; Paucker, interview; and Jochmann's correspondence on the matter in *FZH Archives*, Jochmann Correspondence 1962-1972.

<sup>60</sup> See Paucker to Jochmann, June 4, 1974, *ibid.*; Rürup, interview; and the papers delivered at the *Historikertag* in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 20 (1975), pp. 3-46.

<sup>61</sup> See Arno Herzig, *Judentum und Emanzipation in Westfalen*, Münster 1973; Arno Herzig, interview with the author, Hamburg, April 21, 2004.

focal points; he would form solid connections with the LBI as a result of the institute's major conference in Oxford in 1979.

The route to German-Jewish history taken by Ingrid Belke (b. 1935) was equally circuitous. With an academic background in classical philology, Belke worked as an editor for the *Deutsche Verlagsanstalt* in Stuttgart. Her responsibilities in that publishing house for the LBI's volumes of memoirs led to a lively correspondence with Max Kreutzberger, Hans Tramer and Margarethe Edenheim-Mühsam, soon followed by personal encounters. Kreutzberger then prompted her to take on the editing of the Moritz Lazarus – Heymann Steinthal correspondence. After a short period as visiting lecturer in Cincinnati, Belke decided to obtain a doctorate (following her *Staatsexamen*), which she completed in 1975 with a dissertation on the Viennese social reformer Josef Popper-Lynkeus. This was followed by a five-year research appointment at the *IGdJ*; in 1981 Belke moved to the German Literary Archives in Marbach, where her activities have included organizing an exhibit on Jewish publishing houses in Germany and editing the writings of Siegfried Kracauer (an ongoing project).<sup>62</sup>

Two other researchers, Stefi Jersch-Wenzel and Monika Richarz (both born in 1937), came to German-Jewish history during their university studies for different reasons:<sup>63</sup> Jersch-Wenzel recalls an intense curiosity prompting her to choose Jewish themes for her seminar reports; Richarz traces her interest directly back to the "dramatic impression" made on her by a trip to Poland in 1958: she became aware, "with a real shock," just how much was being suppressed and silenced in the Federal Republic. In the late 1950s, the Free University, with its comparatively high number of German-Jewish professors (both visiting emigrants and returnees), already offered something like an ideal ambiance for both young scholars.<sup>64</sup> For both, Adolf Leschnitzer, former

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<sup>62</sup> See Ingrid Belke (ed.), *Moritz Lazarus und Heymann Steinthal. Die Begründer der Völkerpsychologie in ihren Briefen*, 3 vols., 1971–86 (Schriftenreihe wissenschaftlicher Abhandlungen des Leo Baecks Instituts 21, 40 and 44); *idem*, *Die sozialreformerischen Ideen von Josef Popper-Lynkeus*, Tübingen 1978; *idem*, *In den Katakomben. Jüdische Verlage in Deutschland, 1933–1938*, Marbach 1983. The edition of the collected work of Kracauer will be completed in 2008: Ingrid Belke to the author, 8 July 2004.

<sup>63</sup> Monika Richarz, interview with the author, Berlin, July 22, 2003; Stefi Jersch-Wenzel, interview.

<sup>64</sup> For German postwar historians and academic remigration to Germany see Hans Rosenberg, "Rückblick auf ein Historikerleben zwischen zwei Kulturen," in *idem*, *Machteliten und Wirtschaftskonjunkturen. Studien zur neueren deutschen Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte*, Göttingen 1978 (Kritische Studien zur Geschichtswissenschaft 31), pp. 11–23. See also Winfried Schulze, "Der Neubeginn der deutschen Geschichtswissenschaft nach 1945," in Ernst Schulin (ed.), *Deutsche Geschichtswissenschaft nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg (1945–1965)*, Munich 1989, pp. 1–37; Frank Stern, *Im Anfang war Auschwitz*, Gerlingen 1991, pp. 187–197; Marita Krauss, *Heimkehr in ein fremdes Land. Geschichte der Remigration nach 1945*, Munich 2001; *idem*, "Jewish Remigration – An Overview of an Emerging Discipline," in *LBI Yearbook*, vol. 49 (2004), pp. 107–119.



Berlin *Gymnasium* teacher and official with the *Reichsvertretung*, now a professor at New York's City College and, since 1952, an honorary professor in Berlin who taught there in the summer, served as an important mentor. As a member of the LBI's New York board, Leschnitzer functioned as something like the institute's Berlin agent,<sup>65</sup> while making a mark on the Free University's students with what Jersch-Wenzel recalls as his "overwhelmingly fascinating" ("umwerfend faszinierend") seminars on German-Jewish history. A circle of approximately fifteen doctoral students soon formed around him, including the children of Jewish emigrants and survivors, among them Amos Funkenstein, Julius Schoeps and Konrad Kwiet. For Richarz, this represented a "heady mixture" ("rasante Mischung") that both young women experienced as "enthraling" ("hochspannend") and enormously impressive.<sup>66</sup>

Both Jersch-Wenzel and Richarz wrote their doctorates under Leschnitzer (in 1964 and 1970 respectively),<sup>67</sup> and both remained historians of German Jewry in the decades that followed. In the framework of a research group on industrialization under Wolfram Fischer, Jersch-Wenzel's first work was editing a documentary history of the German-Jewish Grünfeld family's linen factory;<sup>68</sup> she then wrote her *Habilitation* thesis on the minorities question in Brandenburg in the age of mercantilism.<sup>69</sup> Starting in 1975 she directed her own German-Jewish history section at the Berlin Historical Commission, later teaching as a *Privatdozentin* at the Technical University of Berlin. In connection with a project of Rürup's sponsored by the *Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft* (DFG), Richarz moved to New York in 1972, becoming a research fellow at the LBI, which was then under Ismar Schorsch's direction, in order to examine the institute's collection of memoirs. The resulting three-volume work, a pioneering contribution to German-Jewish social history, appeared between 1976 and 1982; in 1984 she was appointed director of the *Germania Judaica* library.<sup>70</sup>

The participation of both historians in the anthology *1848 in German-Jewish History* (appearing in 1981) confirmed their acceptance into the LBI's "international community." Fifteen years later, they would be the only Ger-

<sup>65</sup> See, for example, Robert Weltsch to LBI Jerusalem board members, February 14, 1957, *LBI Jerusalem*, file 1099.

<sup>66</sup> See *ibid.*; and Richarz, interview; Jersch-Wenzel, interview.

<sup>67</sup> Stefi Jersch-Wenzel, *Jüdische Bürger und kommunale Selbstverwaltung in preussischen Städten 1808–1848*, Berlin 1967; Monika Richarz, *Der Eintritt der Juden in die akademischen Berufe. Jüdische Studenten und Akademiker in Deutschland 1678–1848*, Tübingen 1974 (Schriftenreihe wissenschaftlicher Abhandlungen des Leo Baeck Instituts 28).

<sup>68</sup> Fritz V. Grünfeld and Stefi Jersch-Wenzel, (eds.) *Das Leinenhaus Grünfeld. Erinnerungen und Dokumente*, Berlin 1967.

<sup>69</sup> Stefi Jersch-Wenzel, *Juden und "Franzosen" in der Wirtschaft des Raumes Berlin-Brandenburg zur Zeit des Merkantilismus*, Berlin 1978.

<sup>70</sup> See Monika Richarz, interview; *idem* (ed.), *Jüdisches Leben in Deutschland. Selbstzeugnisse zur Sozialgeschichte 1780–1945*, 3 vols., Stuttgart 1976–1982.

mans – and the only women – to write chapters for the four-volume *Deutsch-Jüdische Geschichte in der Neuzeit*.<sup>71</sup> In any event, if we consider the small number of those working on German-Jewish themes in Germany of the late 1960s and early 1970s, the high percentage of women who began their academic careers outside the universities – often remaining in spheres of only marginal scholarly importance – is striking. At the time, consequent pursuit of a professorship was scarcely conceivable for women, this having the indirect advantage that they could devote themselves exclusively to their strongest intellectual interests over many years. For the male colleagues of historians such as Jersch-Wenzel and Richarz, appointed to chairs in the 1970s, German-Jewish history necessarily remained one among several themes for research and teaching: the first chair in the field was not established in a German university until 1997.

Nevertheless, from the perspective of academic politics the engagement of these full professors was particularly important at just that time: with new "players" on the scene, both new possibilities and new conflicts were on the agenda. At the start of the 1970s, the Israeli universities initiated contacts with Germany to explore the possibility of financing chairs and institutes. In the wake of the establishment of the Institute for German History at the University of Tel Aviv in 1971, the Hebrew University, represented by Jacob Katz, contacted Werner Conze in Heidelberg in May of that year, presenting a research plan that, it was hoped, would be financed by the *Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft* (DFG). Conze had no objections but he was unaware that one of his female assistants, responsible for preparing a bibliography of German-Jewish economic history for the LBI, was engaged in "a little professional espionage" for the institute, keeping Liverpool-based Hans Liebeschütz informed the entire time about the state of the negotiations.<sup>72</sup> The LBI did not trust the Jerusalem initiative, particularly since the proposed theme, "the role of the Jews and the 'Jewish Question' in nineteenth- and twentieth-century German intellectual and social history," corresponded rather precisely with the institute's own research plans; in addition there was some concern that the LBI's own financial prospects could be damaged by

<sup>71</sup> See Stefi Jersch-Wenzel, "Rechtslage und Emanzipation"; "Bevölkerungsentwicklung und Berufsstruktur," in *Deutsch-Jüdische Geschichte in der Neuzeit*, vol. 2: *Emanzipation und Akkulturation 1780–1871*, Munich 1996, pp. 15–95; Monika Richarz, "Die Entwicklung der jüdischen Bevölkerung"; "Berufliche und soziale Struktur"; "Frauen in Familie und Öffentlichkeit," in *ibid.*, vol. 3: *Umstrittene Integration 1871–1918*, Munich 1997, pp. 13–100.

<sup>72</sup> See Ursula Hüllbüsch to Hans Liebeschütz, June 1, 1971 (quote); June 13, 1971; August 3, 1971; November 21, 1971; see also the description of the internal Israeli competition by Robert Weltsch to Hans Liebeschütz, May 30, 1972, all in *FZH Archives*, Correspondence LBI London 1966–1983. See too *Juden in der deutschen Wirtschaft. Vom Beginn des 19. Jahrhunderts bis zum Jahr 1933*, Eine Bibliographie, zusammengestellt im Auftrag des LBI Jerusalem von Ursula Hüllbüsch, Heidelberg 1972.

the development. When Siegfried Moses raised the matter directly with Katz in the summer of 1971, Katz was “extremely ‘surprised’ – it had never occurred to him that his activity in Germany could backfire against the institute.”<sup>73</sup> What followed was an agreement – apparently resulting from tough discussions – that the LBI would be a partner in the hoped-for German-Israeli cooperative venture.<sup>74</sup> And the institute was at least officially informed about the spring 1972 negotiations between Katz and Conze, the historian Ernst Nolte, and the political scientist Karl Dietrich Bracher that led to the establishment, in line with the above-mentioned theme, of a “study group for the promotion of scholarly work on the role of the Jews and the ‘Jewish Question’ in German intellectual and social history.” The participation of the Israeli embassy’s cultural attaché and a highly placed German-government representative suggests strong political support for this cooperation from the beginning.<sup>75</sup> It is the case that the search for the greatest possible names among German historians increasingly led to “generational danger zones,” and then, as in the case of Conze, to people who had not only “held an office” in the Nazi period but had been actively involved in shaping Nazi academic policy.<sup>76</sup>

Wolfgang Scheffler and Shlomo Aronson, who were also present at the meeting, were asked to prepare an inventory of German-Jewish historical research within West Germany. After scrutinizing the relevant course catalogs and bibliographies, they confirmed that Jewish themes were only being addressed in the framework of theology departments; with the exception of some work on a local level, other research was only “sporadic.” Founding a study group for the sake of building up this area of research thus made eminent sense, they indicated. They recommended Jochmann’s institute in Hamburg as the group’s coordinating office, given its excellent contacts and a well-supplied library, as well as the existence in the same city of a “small institute for the history of the German Jews (focal point: research on the 18<sup>th</sup> century),” in other words the *IGdJ*.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> Weltsch to Liebeschütz, July 22, 1971, *FZH Archives*, Correspondence LBI London 1966–1983.

<sup>74</sup> Siegfried Moses, Notiz betreffend die von der Hebräischen Universität in Deutschland geführten Verhandlungen, August 30, 1971, *ibid*.

<sup>75</sup> Katz to Moses, May 16, 1972, *ibid*.

<sup>76</sup> On Conze, see Michael Fahlbusch, *Wissenschaft im Dienst der nationalsozialistischen Politik? Die “Volksdeutschen Forschungsgemeinschaften” von 1931–1945*, Baden-Baden 1999; Ingo Haar, *Historiker im Nationalsozialismus. Deutsche Geschichtswissenschaft und der “Volkstumskampf” im Osten*, Göttingen 2000; Götz Aly, “Theoder Schieder, Werner Conze oder Die Vorstufen der physischen Vernichtung,” in Winfried Schulze and Otto Gerhard Oexle (eds.), *Deutsche Historiker im Nationalsozialismus*, Frankfurt am Main 2000, pp. 163–183; Thomas Etzemüller, *Sozialgeschichte als politische Geschichte. Werner Conze und die Neuorientierung der deutschen Geschichtswissenschaft nach 1945*, Munich 2001.

<sup>77</sup> Shlomo Aronson and Wolfgang Scheffler, “Zum gegenwärtigen Stand von For-

In line with this advice, Jochmann was invited to the next meeting, held in Bonn in October 1972, where he expressed willingness to see his research center take over the coordinating role and to cooperate with the new director of the *IGdJ*, Peter Freimark. The invited representatives of the LBI were still unhappy with the Hebrew University’s procedure but they considered their interests sufficiently protected – not least of all through Jochmann – to remain with the project *volens volens* “after considerable reflection” (Jochanan Ginat).<sup>78</sup> Under Jacob Katz’s chairmanship, the group now constituted itself officially in Hamburg as the “International Working Circle for Research on German-Jewish History” (November 1972) and began planning for a three-day symposium, itself meant to serve as the basis for either a single, collective application to the *DFG* for major funding or several individual applications. The possibility of *DFG* support was, in fact, the most obvious and important motive for founding the working circle, which had also agreed on specifying and distributing the various research activities of its members.<sup>79</sup> At about the same time, Tel Aviv University, represented by Jacob Toury, presented Toury’s own nine-volume project (in substance very similar to the other projects) to be submitted for German funding.<sup>80</sup> Conflicts about internal orientation and organization now emerged with the Hebrew University. The Jerusalem LBI could itself not mitigate these conflicts between the two Israeli universities and neither could Jochmann. After “final, desperate efforts,” the German, who had always seen himself as an “honest broker,” decided to cancel the conference planned for March 1973.

In the following years as well, Jochmann’s responsibilities as coordinator of the still extant working circle turned out to be very trying. After a long series of exchanges and several meetings, agreement was finally reached at a “planning group consultation” in September 1974 to apply for *DFG* funds for a collective project on “The Social History of the German-Jewish Middle Class (1870–1917): Integration and Identity”;<sup>81</sup> to reach an agreement on

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schung und Lehre zur deutsch-jüdischen Geschichte und der Rolle der Juden in Deutschland an den Universitäten der Bundesrepublik und in West-Berlin,” n.d. [1972], *FZH Archives*, Internationaler Arbeitskreis für deutsch-jüdische Geschichte.

<sup>78</sup> See Hans Tramer, Bericht über die Zusammenkunft von Vertretern der Hebräischen Universität, Jerusalem, Historikern an deutschen Universitäten und den Vertretern des Leo Baeck Instituts am 13. Oktober 1972 in Bonn, October 17, 1972, *LBI Jerusalem*, file 1035; see also Paucker to Jochmann, September 19, 1972, Büttner’s papers, LBI Correspondence 1966–1994; and Ginat to Jochmann, January 23, 1973; *FZH Archives*, Internationaler Arbeitskreis für deutsch-jüdische Geschichte.

<sup>79</sup> See Protokoll der Sitzung des leitenden Gremiums zur Planung und Durchführung der Forschungsprojekte der deutsch-jüdischen Geschichte, November 6, 1972; and Jochmann to Wolfgang Treue, December 4, 1972, both *ibid*.

<sup>80</sup> See Ginat to Jochmann, January 23, 1973; and Jochmann’s response, February 19, 1973, *ibid*.

<sup>81</sup> Following Hermann Greive’s suggestion the subtitle was renamed “Interdependence and Independence.”

project-related substantive issues, a major conference was held in Hamburg in 1975. In the period beforehand, Jochmann had repeatedly complained about quarrels between the project's participants and the poor quality of submitted papers.<sup>82</sup> In 1976, the *DFG* accepted the working group's application. This development was linked, not least of all, to the existence of influential backers such as Jürgen Kocka, Gerhard A. Ritter, and Ernst Schulin, all of whom spoke at the Hamburg conference, as well as to the fact that the entire enterprise was politically desirable – even the Federal Chancellor's office had expressly welcomed it.<sup>83</sup> This notwithstanding, Jochmann, who saw himself as the project's "general partner," persisted in indicating that the "miserably" submitted ideas, most of which were fit "for the waste-basket," robbed him of sleep.<sup>84</sup> By 1976, he was somewhat satisfied, although he would prove to be wrong in some details: he thus found Shulamit Volkov's project outline very interesting, but nonetheless doubted it could be realized because of the "unpractical external circumstances" – the applicant "[is] married and has a child."<sup>85</sup>

All in all, whether the fault lay with the applications, the lack of interested German historians, or the slow work pace of coordinators Jochmann and Freimark, the *DFG* program was clearly no model of international German-Jewish academic cooperation, although it did result in some important studies.<sup>86</sup> The total number of applications was in any case small, and not all the projects accepted and presented in planning conferences seem to have been completed.<sup>87</sup> On the other hand, the "secondary gain" in communication

<sup>82</sup> See Minutes of the meeting of the Internationaler Arbeitskreis zur Erforschung der deutsch-jüdischen Geschichte, January 15, 1974; Minutes of the meeting of the Planungsgruppe, September 9, 1974, all *ibid.*; see also Jochmann to Paucker, March 13, 1974; April 16, 1974; May 29, 1974; June 21, 1974, Büttner's papers, LBI Correspondence 1966–1994.

<sup>83</sup> See Jochmann to Behörde für Schule, Jugend und Berufsbildung, August 19, 1972; Program and Minutes of the Conference "Sozialgeschichte des deutsch-jüdischen Bürgertums (1870–1917)," Hamburg, March 10–11, 1975, all in *FZH Archives*, Internationaler Arbeitskreis für deutsch-jüdische Geschichte.

<sup>84</sup> Jochmann to Paucker, April 3 and 4, 1975, Büttner's papers, LBI Correspondence 1966–1994.

<sup>85</sup> Jochmann to Paucker, March 1, 1976; see also *idem*, February 10, 1976 and Mosse to Jochmann, February 5, 1976, *ibid.*

<sup>86</sup> Avraham Barkai (with Schoschanna Barkai-Lasker), *Jüdische Minderheit und Industrialisierung. Demographie, Berufe und Einkommen der Juden in Westdeutschland 1850–1914*, Tübingen 1988 (Schriftenreihe wissenschaftlicher Abhandlungen des Leo Baeck Instituts 46); Marion A. Kaplan, *The Making of the Jewish middle class: Women, family, and identity in Imperial Germany*, New York 1991; Chaim Schatzker, *Jüdische Jugend im zweiten Kaiserreich. Sozialisations- und Erziehungsprozesse der jüdischen Jugend in Deutschland, 1870–1917*, Frankfurt am Main 1988.

<sup>87</sup> Rürup, interview; see also the critique of Moshe Zimmermann, "Jewish History and Jewish Historiography. A Challenge to Contemporary German Historiography," in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 35 (1990), pp. 35–52, in particular p. 44. Although Ursula

should not be underestimated here: in the conferences, a second one of which was held at the Technical University in 1980,<sup>88</sup> a younger generation of Israeli historians was present, along with their – to be sure far fewer – German counterparts; the two groups would remain in contact with each other, some of the Germans also maintaining ties with the LBI. This was the case for Barbara Suchy (b. 1941), author of a Marburg University dissertation on “The Depiction of Jews and Judaism in English, French and German Lexicons and Encyclopedias of the Enlightenment” and recommended by Katz to Greive. In the framework of the *DFG* project, Suchy researched the history of the “Association for Defense against Antisemitism” (the *Abwehrverein*) founded by non-Jewish liberals in the Wilhemian period, publishing the results in the *LBI Year Book*. Since 1991 she has been responsible for the yearbook’s extensive bibliography together with Annette Pringle.<sup>89</sup>

By the mid-1970s, quarrels with Israeli colleagues and the looming competition for German funds had led the LBI to focus more strongly on the possibilities for institutionalizing its presence in Germany. Already in 1971, Siegfried Moses had pointed in this direction during a meeting of the Jerusalem board;<sup>90</sup> a year later he presented Robert Weltsch in London and Max Kreuzberger in New York with a plan for “formation of a committee for the promotion of the efforts of the Leo Baeck Institute in Germany”:

Despite much effort, our long-standing wish to be permanently and actively represented in Germany’s academic world has always been thwarted by our not having found anyone ready and able to take on this task in the necessary way. It is my feeling that the need for a permanent presence has become even stronger for one reason in particular: with word having gotten out in the appropriate German circles that we are a partner with the Hebrew University, and with recent parallel efforts on the part

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Hüllbüsch, for example, had originally intended to write on Jewish economic history, she had to change her topic to the activities of Jewish associations. She complained about the coordinators’ work, in this case the work of Freimark, which had made her miss several job opportunities and deadlines. In the end, her application was turned down: see Ursula Hüllbüsch to Hans Liebeschütz, May 13, 1975, in *FZH Archives*, Internationaler Arbeitskreis für deutsch-jüdische Geschichte.

<sup>88</sup> Papers were presented by Avraham Barkai, Ingrid Belke, Ulrich Dunker, Marion Kaplan, Chaim Schatzker, Barbara Suchy, Shulamith Volkov and Moshe Zimmermann. On the opening night, the participants were invited to Ernst and Cécile Loewenthal’s home: see the program and papers of the second conference, Arno Herzig’s private papers.

<sup>89</sup> Suchy, interview; see also *idem*, *Lexikographie und Juden im 18. Jahrhundert. Die Darstellung von Juden und Judentum in den englischen, französischen und deutschen Lexika und Enzyklopädiën der Aufklärung*, Cologne and Vienna, 1979; *idem*, “Der Verein zur Abwehr des Antisemitismus,” part 1 in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 28 (1983), pp. 205–239; part 2 in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 30 (1985), pp. 67–103.

<sup>90</sup> See Minutes of the LBI Jerusalem board meeting, June 23, 1971, *LBI Jerusalem*, file 1035.

of other Israeli universities, our presence as an independent, autonomous factor is now desired with special urgency [(ist) ganz besonders dringend erwünscht].<sup>91</sup>

Moses intended to fill his planned committee with German historians he knew personally; for a long time, he had considered the ideal chairman for the planned committee to be the former Mayor of Hamburg, Herbert Weichmann. He now believed that he had found an ideal executive director in the jurist and restitution expert Werner Schwarz. It is unclear why this latter idea was not realized – perhaps Schwarz did not want the responsibility, or perhaps Kreutzberger did not approve (his personal relationship with Schwarz was not the best). In any case, Kreutzberger himself now became actively engaged in the matter, trying to gain the cooperation of Martin Broszat, director of the Institute for Contemporary History, during a visit to Munich; in his view the Londoners had been extremely remiss when it came to that institute. Kreutzberger's impression was that Broszat was "truly interested" and considered the isolation of German-Jewish history to be "unhealthy" and "unnatural."<sup>92</sup> For his part, Broszat now indicated his support for the establishment of a separate German branch of the LBI – a branch that by its very nature would strongly depend on the collaboration of non-Jewish German historians, although naturally the direction would remain "in Jewish hands." The initiative for this, Broszat indicated, could come "only from the Jewish side," not from "non-Jewish German historians interested in this question." As an alternative he considered a separate German initiative as desirable; this could possibly be steered by Jochmann and would be able to cooperate with the LBI.<sup>93</sup> With Broszat himself clearly not interested in participating, this effort from New York was as fruitless as the efforts of Siegfried Moses a year earlier.

The idea of a "committee" did emerge again at the start of the 1980s, this time in the form of a scholarly board of trustees located within the Frankfurt-based "Friends and Sponsors of the LBI," its members meant to "be helpful and ... offer suitable advice in distribution of the institute's publications in its own sphere of activity," as it was officially put.<sup>94</sup> Unofficially, in view of growing competition what was at issue was, in Paucker's words to Jochmann, "consolidation ... and the fact that the more meagerly flowing funds [from the German government] ... are simply no longer sufficient," so that it had to be clear "that we should have priority in view of almost thirty years of activity and the resulting accomplishments."<sup>95</sup> For these reasons, in

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<sup>91</sup> Moses to Weltsch and Kreutzberger, December 1, 1972, *ibid.*, file 1099.

<sup>92</sup> Kreutzberger to Moses, October 12, 1973, *ibid.*, file 1001.

<sup>93</sup> Broszat to Kreutzberger, September 21, 1973, *ibid.*

<sup>94</sup> Hans Seidenberg to Jochmann, June 1, 1982, LBI-Freunde und Förderer, in Büttner's private papers.

<sup>95</sup> Paucker to Jochmann, May 4, 1982, *ibid.*

forming the new board there was an effort not only at proportional representation of party politicians but also at bringing in high governmental officials and other "benevolently inclined" persons such as former German ambassadors to Israel. And twenty-five years after the tension-filled beginnings, an appropriate arrangement was even found to govern relations with the Central Council of Jews in Germany: Hans Lamm would represent the Council's directorate on the board. On the scholarly side of things, Gerhard A. Ritter and Rudolf Vierhaus – two historians with long-standing ties to the LBI – became board members, along with Reinhard Rürup and Werner Jochmann, the two most important "active players" on the German scene. For Jochmann, who had withdrawn from the field of German-Jewish research at the end of the 1970s, work on the board would represent a last institutional bridge to the LBI; its German contacts were now finally centered in Berlin's Technical University.<sup>96</sup> On November 3, 1982, the board – officially designated the *Kuratorium der Freunde und Förderer des Leo Baeck Instituts* – was constituted in a meeting in Frankfurt. It saw its main task as "increased cooperation with the universities and scholarly institutes in the German Federal Republic."<sup>97</sup> Over the coming years, the board's concrete work mainly involved, along with direct support of the work of the LBI, gaining new members on the one hand, publicity on the other – for instance the German-language *LBI Information* bulletins (since 1991) and the *Jüdischer Almanach* (since 1993). Other ideas such as publishing paperback editions of various works of German-Jewish history would also be frequently discussed but never materialized.<sup>98</sup>

The large number of press reports suggests that the general public received this new LBI "offensive" with great interest. To the surprise of the board members, the journalists' questions repeatedly focused on the theme of a German LBI.<sup>99</sup> At the end of the 1970s and start of the 1980s, popular West German interest in the history of Germany's Jews – above all on a local level – had begun to emerge; this interest was spurred forward by the *Holocaust* television miniseries, as well as by the country's "history workshop" movement, with its notion of a history written "from below."<sup>100</sup> As suggested, during this

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<sup>96</sup> See his correspondence with Arnold Paucker for those years and his letter to Peter Freimark, October 24, 1978, "resigning" officially from all German-Jewish activities, Büttner's papers, LBI Correspondence 1966–1994; and Büttner, interview with the author, Hamburg, February 2, 2004.

<sup>97</sup> Minutes of the founding meeting of the *Kuratorium der Freunde und Förderer des Leo Baeck Instituts*, November 3, 1982, in *Freunde und Förderer Archives*.

<sup>98</sup> See the reports and minutes of the *Kuratorium* meetings 1982–1994, Jochmann's estate, LBI-Freunde und Förderer.

<sup>99</sup> See the collection of newspaper clippings in *Freunde und Förderer Archives*.

<sup>100</sup> See, for example, the critical view of Monika Richarz, "Luftaufnahme – Die Schwierigkeiten der Heimatforscher mit der jüdischen Geschichte," in *Babylon*, vol. 8 (1991), pp. 27–33.



period the network of relations between German and Jewish historians had continued to broaden. Although relatively few West German historians were working in German-Jewish history, they met more frequently, and with an increasingly large circle of colleagues from the U.S.A., Britain and Israel. The major LBI conferences took place in these countries, not West Germany, but a large number of non-German historians were now making use of the possibilities offered, for instance, by the Historical Commission in Berlin, spending research periods above all there or in Hamburg.<sup>101</sup> Against this backdrop it is clear that when in 1985 the LBI decided to hold its first conference on German soil, and this to address the theme of persecution of Jews in Nazi Germany, what was at work here was more than a great symbolic gesture.<sup>102</sup> Rather, the development also reflected the confidence now acquired by the LBI in its own hard-won position in the scholarly world – as well as the trust now acquired in the relationship with its German colleagues.<sup>103</sup>

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If there has ever been an academic field in which the category of trust – a category that has recently been accorded scholarly honor<sup>104</sup> – has played a central role, then that field takes in the German-Jewish historiographical relations described in this essay. The slow growth of trust runs through the material reviewed here like a leitmotif; it appears to have done so in a series of similar ritual stages.

There was first of all the correspondence, by means of which a sense of “decent attitude” could be obtained or displayed, depending on which side of the divide one was on. Gradually there was a shunting aside of academic

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<sup>101</sup> Researchers at the *Historische Kommission* in Berlin were, among others, Peter Pulzer, Fritz Stern, Herbert Strauss, Steven Aschheim and Werner Mosse; Avraham Barkai and John Grenville spent some time at the Research Center in Hamburg; Rürup, interview; Jersch-Wenzel, interview.

<sup>102</sup> The conference took place October 28–31, 1985. See Fred Grubel, Foreword, and Peter Gay, Conclusion, in Arnold Paucker (with Sylvia Gilchrist and Barbara Suchy) (eds.), *Die Juden im Nationalsozialistischen Deutschland / The Jews in Nazi Germany 1933–1943*, Tübingen 1986 (Schriftenreihe wissenschaftlicher Abhandlungen des Leo Baeck Instituts 45), pp. xvii–xx and pp. 389–392, respectively. See also the opening remarks of Max Gruenewald and the opening speech of Helmut Kohl, in Rolf Vogel (ed.), *Der deutsch-israelische Dialog. Dokumentation eines erregenden Kapitels deutscher Außenpolitik*, vol. 3, Munich 1988, pp. 1395–1400. The LBI’s art collection was exhibited for the first time in Germany in coordination with the conference. Entitled “Jettchen Geberts Kinder,” the exhibition opened in Berlin at the conference’s end, then traveling to Frankfurt, Bonn, Essen, Munich and Braunschweig: see *LBI News*, vol. 52 (1986), p. 11.

<sup>103</sup> The active German participants were Jochmann, Rürup, Schulin, Richarz, Jersch-Wenzel, Freimark, Strauss and Broszat.

<sup>104</sup> See Ute Frevert, *Vertrauen. Historische Annäherungen*, Göttingen 2003.

titles as an “expression...[of] friendly feeling.”<sup>105</sup> Later, considerably later, there was a shift from formal *Sie* to familiar *du*. When Jewish historians visited Germany, at least in Hamburg, they could experience detailed hospitality extending from hotel bookings, to help with archival work, to – and this was central – dinners together, most importantly in one or another home. In any detailed study, analyzing the role here of wives (and children) would be necessary, since an important additional step was taken with contact in a family context. In several letters Robert Weltsch, for example, recalls being “deeply moved” by Anita Jochmann’s gesture of having a type of bread he loved delivered to him at the airport.<sup>106</sup> Sometimes, of course, the friendly gestures were one-way: in his correspondence with Siefried Moses, Franz Böhm tried to personalize their contact (by, for instance, mentioning Moses’ wife), while Moses maintained a strictly business style.<sup>107</sup> But when true friendships did develop from the working contacts and were explicitly defined as such on the Jewish side, then the Germans accepted them with gratitude. We thus find Arnold Paucker indicating as early as 1970 that “the [Hamburg] research center is one of the few places in Germany where I feel truly comfortable as a former German Jew,” or Jochmann himself proclaiming after a London visit that he almost had the feeling of “belonging there.”<sup>108</sup> Doubtless biographical particularities played a considerable part in this process. Paucker, for example, with his “great talent for forming and maintaining friendships” and both his socialization in the German socialist youth movement and his participation in the resistance activities of young German Jews within Nazi Germany, felt less constrained vis-à-vis German colleagues from the start – this as soon as he sensed there was not only agreement regarding “the principles of scholarly work” but scholarly political “thought and intention” as well.<sup>109</sup>

Paucker recently again stressed that “the same concerns often tie us together. It is striking that the German historians who have chosen German-Jewish history as their research area are so very different than professional representatives of the formerly prevalent German nationalist orientation. They strongly reflect the progressive political leanings that once character-

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<sup>105</sup> Shaul Esh to Jochmann, August 28, 1967, *FZH Archives*, Correspondence 1962–1972.

<sup>106</sup> Robert Weltsch to Werner Jochmann, March 25, 1970, Büttner’s papers, LBI Correspondence 1966–1994.

<sup>107</sup> Moses to Böhm, September 12, 1956, and Böhm to Moses, September 26, 1956, *LBI Jerusalem*, file 159.

<sup>108</sup> Paucker to Jochmann, 27 January 27, 1970, *ibid.*, Jochmann to Paucker, January 4, 1973, *FZH Archives*, Correspondence LBI London 1966–1983.

<sup>109</sup> Reinhard Rürup, “Arnold Paucker – Historiker und Zeitzeuge der deutsch-jüdischen Geschichte. Eine Einführung,” in Paucker, *Deutsche Juden*, pp. ix–xxii, pp. xv–xviii.

ized the Jews in Germany.”<sup>110</sup> Those considering Paucker’s assessment of his German colleagues as an idealizing projection might feel more comfortable with the more restrained remark of Werner Mosse that “Relations, on occasion cordial and sometimes fruitful, were rarely problematic. So far as I personally was concerned, though it was never forgotten, the past rarely cast a shadow. ... Over the years, I paid repeated visits to the Federal Republic, worked with German colleagues and made some friends.”<sup>111</sup> While a similarity of political orientation in Paucker’s sense may well have been at work in some of the friendships formed, it remains the case that – as Herbert Strauss once observed – for Jews, scholarly work in Germany and with German colleagues was only possible if one learned, while preserving one’s own memories, to interact with people who had entirely contrary experiences.<sup>112</sup> This was naturally mainly the case if one met someone from the older generation: Werner Jochmann, for instance, who experienced the war and Nazism as an adult, appears to have been “especially sensitive” in this regard, and this in turn generated trust.<sup>113</sup> And only after this emotional base had been settled was it possible to express one’s “unease” with certain formulations in the Germans’ contributions.<sup>114</sup>

But rituals bridging the emotional gulf had their value for the younger generation as well. Although for its members, war and mass murder did not have the same biographical relevance, one nevertheless asked (as one continues to ask): why in the world does a non-Jew get involved in German-Jewish history? But before the question could be posed, general reservations regarding Germans had to be overcome. As Rürup suggests, recalling his experiences in the 1970s as a guest professor first in Berkeley and later in Israel, this would mostly occur through the indirect intercession of colleagues inviting, for example, their German guests for dinner together with others, thus as it were openly demonstrating their innocuousness.<sup>115</sup> At the same time, visits abroad introduced younger German historians to a new world: through his London visit in 1971 Ernst Schulin could grasp in a concrete manner “what emigration actually means,”<sup>116</sup> and living in New York in the 1970s,

<sup>110</sup> Paucker, *Erinnerungen*, p. 381.

<sup>111</sup> Mosse, “Self-Discovery,” pp. 157, here p. 147. See also John Grenville, “From Gardener to Professor,” in Alter (ed.), *Out of the Third Reich*, pp. 57–72, in particular p. 68; Fred Grubel, *Schreib das auf eine Tafel, die mit ihnen bleibt. Jüdisches Leben im 20. Jahrhundert*, Vienna 1998, pp. 292–294.

<sup>112</sup> See Herbert A. Strauss, *Über dem Abgrund. Eine jüdische Jugend in Deutschland 1918–1943*, Frankfurt am Main 1997, pp. 296f.

<sup>113</sup> Angress, interview. Typically, the older generation of Jewish colleagues still refer to the Research Center for Contemporary History as the “Jochmann Institute.”

<sup>114</sup> Mosse to Jochmann, March 4, 1970, Jochmann’s estate, LBI correspondence 1966–1994.

<sup>115</sup> Rürup, interview.

<sup>116</sup> Schulin, interview.

Monika Richarz could plunge deep into the world of German-Jewish exile and its Weimar culture. At the time her status as the first German to work formally at the New York LBI was anything but self-evident; before mutual curiosity was given free rein she was tested carefully; slowly but surely, a warm-hearted "grandfather-granddaughter relationship" with many a New York emigré developed.<sup>117</sup> We can only speculate that this was easier for Richarz as a woman. We should note that almost all those involved "completed" the contact-making process through visiting semesters in Israel – interestingly this was also the case for historians located on the margins such as Vierhaus and Ritter.

And still, despite all the network-building and friendships, time and again events, actions, or utterances could emerge that demonstrated how thin the ice really was: in retrospect it thus seems surprising that the murder of Hermann Greive in 1984 at the University of Cologne by a female student who had converted to Judaism, her stated motive being his teaching Jewish history as a non-Jew, was never reflected on in relation to the abysses and traumas embedded in the German-Jewish relationship. The apparent mental illness of the perpetrator appears to have made a concerted effort at repression easier, but perhaps insecurity in regard to their self-understanding also played a role on the German side, for finally one was and is asked rather often why one had chosen this particular field of research among so many others.<sup>118</sup>

But the many smaller irritations and tensions at work on a less dramatic level were themselves rarely reported. A small disagreement between Jochmann and Paucker in 1986 can here serve as evidence for their existence: in a letter to Hans Seidenberg, Jochmann had complained about the tenor of the major 1985 LBI conference in Berlin as follows:

In public an impression is created that aside from the Leo Baeck Institute no one in the Federal Republic is concerned with the history of German Jewry and of German-Jewish coexistence. I was not the only one with this nasty taste [*fataler Geschmack*] in my mouth, others were also galled [*verdrossen*] by this. No one demands great expressions of thanks, but that the basis for the success of such a conference in Berlin was partly laid by German colleagues, spurring forward work in this area and at times seeing it through with substantial sacrifice of time and money, should at least have been mentioned."<sup>119</sup>

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<sup>117</sup> Richarz, interview.

<sup>118</sup> See the seemingly only discussion of the case: Erika Wantoch, "Wahn, wo ist dein Sinn?" in *Profil*, vol. 10, March 5, 1984, pp.56–60; Suchy, interview; Herzig, interview.

<sup>119</sup> Jochmann to Seidenberg, November 25, 1985, Büttner's papers, LBI-Freunde und Förderer.

Paucker responded by indicating he was sure no one in the LBI had meant to hurt the Germans' feelings; to the contrary, the conference had in fact proceeded "with the strongest participation of German colleagues." Clearly Jochmann had not perceived that, as Paucker discreetly suggested, from the Jewish perspective this fact was "in itself a tribute."<sup>120</sup>

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If the 1985 conference was indeed a sign of trust and self-sureness, this was all the more the case for the founding of a "working committee," the *Wissenschaftliche Arbeitsgemeinschaft des Leo Baeck Instituts in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*, expressly meant to "function as a substitute for an LBI not existing in Germany."<sup>121</sup> For a long time now, the German government benefactors (the ministries of the interior and culture) had repeatedly voiced the wish for a separate branch of the institute in Germany – an idea remaining unthinkable for many and thus generating heated debate. There was some certainly not unjustified concern that a German institute would slowly but surely begin to compete financially with the other three branches. A first "conceptual meeting regarding the founding of a working committee by representatives of the LBI and historians of German-Jewish history in the Federal Republic of Germany" took place in November 1985, in connection with the Berlin conference. Now, however, first reservations emerged on the German side, which meanwhile had developed a small independent network of facilities devoted to German-Jewish history; with the network's representatives having their own fears that their autonomy would be threatened by the very working committee they had come together to plan, all they were willing to approve was a consultative board without its own research program.<sup>122</sup>

Perhaps this was the reason that Werner Mosse, asked four years later once more to sound out the Germans, turned directly and exclusively to Reinhard Rürup.<sup>123</sup> The central idea emerging from the ensuing meeting between Mosse, Paucker and Rürup was that the *Arbeitsgemeinschaft* should be an LBI facility but decide the "contents and organization of its work" independently,

<sup>120</sup> Paucker to Jochmann, January 5, 1986, *ibid.*

<sup>121</sup> Minutes of the "Konzeptionsgespräch zur Gründung einer Arbeitsgemeinschaft von Vertretern des LBI und Historikern der deutsch-jüdischen Geschichte in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland," November 1, 1985, Jochmann's estate, LBI-Freunde und Förderer, p. 4. Present at the meeting were Wolfgang Benz, Moshe Elat, Peter Freimark, Stefi Jersch-Wenzel, Werner Jochmann, Monika Richarz, Reinhard Rürup, Julius Schoeps and Herbert Strauss.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>123</sup> Werner Mosse would tirelessly push forward the concept of a working committee in both Germany and the LBI's international board, as he himself states in his memoirs: see Mosse, "Self-Discovery," pp. 152f.; Rürup, interview; see also Mosse to Jochmann, September 20, 1989, Jochmann's estate, LBI-Freunde und Förderer.

along with those accepted as new members. A member of the LBI would be on the board and the committee would itself be represented on the international board of the institute. In this manner Rürup and Richarz would become the first non-Jewish and the first German members of the international board. Although no large-scale research projects were to be undertaken, conferences were acceptable, along with promoting the work of younger scholars and popularizing the results of research. The membership was to be kept small and would be limited to those "who have already worked with the LBI." Finally, the whole arrangement was to be organized "as inexpensively as possible," with a modest sum from the "Friends and Sponsors."<sup>124</sup> The founding conference took place on December 7 and 8 in Frankfurt; with Wolfgang Benz, Ludger Heid and Barbara Suchy, three German colleagues actively working in the field participating, while Berding, Kocka, Hans Mommsen, Ritter and Vierhaus were present as historians "favorably disposed" towards the project. Together with Jochmann, Jersch-Wenzel, the chairman Rürup, and vice-chairwoman Richarz, Vierhaus was elected to the board, where Mosse represented the LBI.<sup>125</sup>

The timing of this additional major move towards Germany could not have been more dramatic: just now the largest historical political change in Europe since the end of the Second World War was unfolding. It is thus anything but a coincidence that the first activities of the *Arbeitsgemeinschaft* were oriented towards the five new German states formerly comprising the German Democratic Republic. Three weeks after reunification, a first working meeting was held with historians from the former GDR but because of the ensuing *Abwicklung* – the dismissal from their positions of many former East German academics – these contacts were not maintained.<sup>126</sup> At the international working meeting organized by the LBI in Leipzig a year later, colleagues from the east were hardly present.<sup>127</sup> The *Arbeitsgemeinschaft's* first

<sup>124</sup> Reinhard Rürup, Aufzeichnung über die Gespräche, die ich vom 22.–24. Juli 1989 in London mit Herrn Mosse und Herrn Paucker über die Gründung einer Wissenschaftlichen Arbeitsgemeinschaft des Leo-Baeck Instituts in der Bundesrepublik [WAG] geführt habe, n.d. [July 1989], Richarz's private papers, re WAG.

<sup>125</sup> Minutes of the founding meeting of the Wissenschaftliche Arbeitsgemeinschaft des Leo-Baeck Instituts in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, December 28, 1989, *ibid.*; see also the article by Jörg Hackeschmidt, "Jüdische Geschichte vor 1933 – Ein Stiefkind. Das Leo Baeck Institut intensiviert seine Arbeit in Deutschland," in *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, December 30, 1991.

<sup>126</sup> See the Program and the Minutes of the meeting, October 23, 1990, Richarz's papers, re WAG. Arnold Paucker had already tried to establish contacts with GDR historians in the 1960s: Paucker, interview. One result was the cooperation between Konrad Kwiet and Helmut Eschwege that finally led to the volume *Selbstbehauptung und Widerstand. Deutsche Juden im Kampf um Existenz und Menschenwürde 1933–1945*, Hamburg 1984.

<sup>127</sup> See the Program and the Minutes of the meeting, October 27, 1991, Richarz's papers, re WAG.

major project, agreed on despite the initial agreement not to undertake such projects, was planned in this venue: it was the preparation of a voluminous catalog of "Sources on the History of the Jews in the Archives of the New German States." Directed by Rürup and Jersch-Wenzel and housed in the Historical Commission, this project offered several younger scholars (including Michael Brenner, Andreas Reinke and Barbara Strenge) short-term positions; following its completion it was extended to the Polish archives.<sup>128</sup>

Fred Grubel, and with him the New York LBI, now became the driving force behind this "eastern activity." Grubel had worked hard for Interior Ministry funding, a considerable amount of which was certainly meant to have such an eastern direction; in 1992 he even backed the establishment of an LBI research center in Leipzig.<sup>129</sup> In part because of massive objections from the *Arbeitsgemeinschaft* – and to Grubel's great disappointment – this plan would not be realized.<sup>130</sup> Instead, a guest professorship program was set up for the new states, allowing several LBI members to teach German-Jewish history in eastern German universities. In 2001, prompted in part by the experience of the guest professors, the LBI's international board decided to expand its educational activities, establishing, together with the *Arbeitsgemeinschaft*, a commission located in the Jewish Museum in Frankfurt to produce orientation aids for school syllabuses and textbooks.<sup>131</sup>

Since the working committee's other members were "sparing...with constructive work," in the 1990s the initiative for further projects was mainly in the hands of its board.<sup>132</sup> The board, and more specifically Rürup and Richarz, initiated the sessions on German-Jewish history at the *Historikertage* and the committee's participation in several international conferences. In re-

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<sup>128</sup> See the original project outline, March 6, 1991, *ibid.*; the reports in *LBI Information*, vol. 5/6 (1995), pp. 89–91; and *ibid.*, vol. 8 (1999), pp. 78–81. Stefi Jersch-Wenzel and Reinhard Rürup (eds.), *Quellen zur Geschichte der Juden in den Archiven der neuen Bundesländer*, 6 vols., Munich 1996–2001; and the follow-up project: *idem* (ed.), *Quellen zur Geschichte der Juden in polnischen Archiven*, Munich 2003.

<sup>129</sup> See Entwurf der Eingabe zur Errichtung einer wissenschaftlichen Arbeitsstelle des LBI in der BRD, March 1992, Richarz's papers, re *WAG*.

<sup>130</sup> See Rürup to Grubel, March 6, 1992; Grubel to Katz, Mosse and Rürup, March 26, 1992, Jochmann's estate, LBI-Freunde und Förderer; see also Grubel, *Schreib das auf*, pp. 315f. A small consolation for Grubel was the establishment of the "electronic presence" of the LBI in Germany, the catalog of the New York library and archives thus being made accessible in Leipzig in 1995 and in Frankfurt and Cologne a year later; see *LBI Information*, vol. 5/6 (1995), p. 77.

<sup>131</sup> See Minutes of the LBI international board meeting, May 23/24, 2001, Richarz's papers, re *WAG*; and the result: "Deutsch-jüdische Geschichte im Unterricht. Orientierungshilfen für Lehrplan und Schulbucharbeit sowie Lehrerbildung und Lehrerfortbildung," Appendix to *LBI Information*, vol. 10 (2003).

<sup>132</sup> Richarz to Rürup, October 10, 1990; see also the polite but continual complaints by Rürup in his letters to the *WAG* Board members: for example, June 17, 1996; April 30, 1997, Richarz's papers, re *WAG*.

cent years, these conferences have increasingly reflected a comparative perspective on Europe, in the context of the chair for Jewish history and culture at the University of Munich.<sup>133</sup>

Reinhard Rürup was especially interested in promoting colloquia for doctoral students and conferences for younger historians. On the agenda since the early 1970s, this idea was realized between 1991 and 2001 in Bad Homburg's Reimers Foundation as well as both Israel and Berlin.<sup>134</sup> Within this framework and under the direction of both Rürup and an alternating LBI member, a younger generation of German historians, almost all non-Jewish (with women representing a roughly 60 percent majority), had the chance to present their work, discuss their theses, and come in contact with other historians interested in the same issues. As the expressions of thanks inscribed in dissertations from this period indicate, this activity had a strong – if naturally varying – impact, and this in two respects: on the one hand, doctoral students who frequently worked in isolation now had a chance to see both their methods and the problems they focused on confirmed or criticized in intellectual exchange – hence their work stabilized in a decisive professional phase. On the other hand, they found themselves brought into a communicative structure within the German-Jewish historians' community – a structure that would solidify with time and from which networks and friendships have emerged until today. In 1998, a participant in the first colloquium, Michael Brenner, took over the chairmanship of the *Arbeitsgemeinschaft*.<sup>135</sup> The colloquia and conferences have been carried forward under his direction, moving to Schloss Elmau and Tutzing after the Reimers Foundation's closure in 2001 and continuing in Berlin and Israel, as well as in Leipzig. It seems clear that they represent the *Arbeitsgemeinschaft's* most enduring success. Keeping in mind that at the start no one thought more than one conference would take place, not only the quantity and breadth of the presented

<sup>133</sup> To date, the *Arbeitsgemeinschaft* has organized sessions at the *Historikertage* in 1992, 1994, 1996, 2000 and 2002. Monika Richarz herself planned the first major conference on *Landjudentum*, taking place at the University of Bielefeld in 1992: see Monika Richarz and Reinhard Rürup (eds.), *Jüdisches Leben auf dem Lande. Studien zur deutsch-jüdischen Geschichte*, Tübingen 1997 (Schriftenreihe wissenschaftlicher Abhandlungen des Leo Baeck Instituts 56). The WAG co-organized the LBI Conference in Rome in 1993, the IGdJ Conference on Glikl in Hamburg in 1996, the Conference on 1848 in Frankfurt in 1998; the Elmau Conference on Languages in 1999, the Tutzing Conference on France and Germany in 2001 and the Judaism as *Wissenschaft* Conference in Berlin in 2003: see the reports in *LBI Information*, vol. 4 (1994), pp. 29–41; *ibid.*, vol. 8 (1999), pp. 76f; *ibid.*, vol. 9 (2001), pp. 80–82; *ibid.*, vol. 10 (2003), pp. 75–78.

<sup>134</sup> See the project outline 1990, Richarz's papers, re WAG; and the programs of the colloquia 1991–2002, *ibid.*, Brenner's private papers, re WAG; and Rürup's first report in *LBI Information*, vol. 4 (1994), pp. 43–48.

<sup>135</sup> See Rürup's report on 10 years of the *Arbeitsgemeinschaft's* activities, in *ibid.*, vol. 8 (1999), pp. 62–71.



projects, but above all their quality, is impressive. Notably, in the last several years a clear trend towards internationalization has been manifest, above all through participants from both Eastern Europe and Israel, along with an extension of the thematic spectrum to the postwar period – a tendency that will certainly be amply reflected in the LBI's coming activities.<sup>136</sup>

Reinhard Rürup once stressed that in the end the colloquia only encapsulated and confirmed a trend whose sources lay elsewhere.<sup>137</sup> The rapidly growing German interest in German-Jewish history in the 1980s and, especially, the 1990s has already been the subject of much discussion. Certainly, a shift in historical paradigms played a role here: there was a desire to establish an “*in situ* history” and an increasing inquiry into identity and mentality instead of class and conditions of production. Put otherwise: this tendency can hardly be understood without taking account of the rise of cultural history and the history of daily life.<sup>138</sup> At the same time, we should not underestimate psychological and generationally determined motives that cannot simply be shoved aside under the “guilt complex” catch-phrase. Rather, the terms of precisely such a reduction can be reversed by inquiring into the “narcissistic surplus” aimed at through a preoccupation with German-Jewish history.<sup>139</sup> It is common knowledge that in present-day Germany, German-

<sup>136</sup> See the programs of the colloquia 1998–2002, Brenner's private papers, re *WAG*.

<sup>137</sup> See Reinhard Rürup, “Die Faszination der deutsch-jüdischen Geschichte. Eine neue Generation von Historikerinnen und Historikern in der Bundesrepublik,” in *LBI Information*, vol. 5/6 (1995), pp. 92–95.

<sup>138</sup> At the same time, almost a whole generation of German historians is missing from the German-Jewish scene, i.e. those who, driven by their own political agenda, enthusiastically embraced a historiography of the working class and of resistance in the 1970s. Thus, it is perhaps not by chance that the only representative of this “missing generation” developed a deep interest in the history of the field: Christhard Hoffmann (born 1952). See also *idem*, *German-Jewish Encounter*, p. 287. On the other hand this means that among the first of this “new generation,” there are quite a few who had to acquire their knowledge of German-Jewish history more or less autodidactically, until the arrival of more widespread opportunities to pursue “Jewish Studies” in the 1990s.

For the older generation of social historians' approach, Arno Herzig's overview of the social history of the Jews, that deals mainly with antisemitism, is a telling example, see *idem*, “Juden und Judentum in der sozialgeschichtlichen Forschung,” in Wolfgang Schieder and Volker Sellin (eds.), *Sozialgeschichte in Deutschland*, Göttingen 1987, pp. 108–132. For the “cultural turn,” see Samuel Moyn, “German Jewry and the question of identity,” in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 41 (1996) pp. 291–308.

<sup>139</sup> To an even greater extent this would refer to German research on the Holocaust and postwar period, which seems to have recently experienced a kind of “moralistic turn.” Such a development is exemplified in the work of Nicolas Berg, whose *The Holocaust and the West German Historians* combines sometimes stunning findings and convincing analysis with gestures of generational moralistic superiority that, at least for this author, are sometimes inappropriate. In this respect Henry Wassermann's effort to reduce a “specific obsession” of this “new generation” with antisemitism to a

Jewish history is written mainly, if not only, by non-Jews. Thus, if we wish to take the impulses released by the new cultural history seriously, critical reflection upon one's own standpoint, including, among other things, that standpoint vis-à-vis the LBI, seems indispensable. This observation is not meant as an argument for a psychoanalytically grounded process of "critique and self-critique," but it is meant as a word of caution when it comes to glossing over the differences – under the sway of generational change – not only separating Jewish from non-Jewish Germans but also influencing their work as historians, their perspectives and motivations.<sup>140</sup>

Such a reflective process seems possible precisely because the history of the LBI in Germany has been such a success story – because in a sense there is far more ground under one's feet now than there was forty years ago. One of the first and most important goals of those who took the first steps then towards their German colleagues appears to have been achieved. Although on the level of handbooks and narrative syntheses, the integration of German-Jewish history into general history continues to be inadequate, on a level below this – that of seminars, conferences, research projects – matters are far more advanced. And this process could be carried forward, if those catalyzing it, the younger historians working in German-Jewish history as one of several domains, were to occupy suitable academic positions. At present, already it is possible to enroll in "Jewish Studies" programs in several German universities with different orientations, and there are some institutes devoted exclusively to German (or German-Jewish) history.<sup>141</sup>

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"guilt complex" would appear to miss the point: see *idem*, "On the Construction of Antisemitism," in *Aschkenas*, vol. 13, no. 1 (2003), pp. 237–255; and the critique, albeit from a different angle, by Stefan Rohrbacher: Henry Wassermann, "Die deutsche Kollektivschuld und das Ausbleiben des Messias," in *ibid.*, vol. 13, no. 2, pp. 509–512. The only historian who appears to have explicitly analyzed the "narcissistic surplus" gained by Germans dealing with Holocaust victims' history is Michael Zimmermann, in "'Jetzt' und 'Damals' als imaginäre Einheit. Erfahrungen in einem lebensgeschichtlichen Projekt über die nationalsozialistische Verfolgung von Sinti und Roma," in *Bios*, vol. 4 (1991), pp. 225–242. For a recent discussion of the psychological elements at work here, see Franziska Lamott, "Trauma als symbolisches Kapital. Zu Risiken und Nebenwirkungen des Trauma-Diskurses," in *psychosozial*, vol. 26 (2003), pp. 53–62.

<sup>140</sup> A first appeal in this direction was made by Christoph Schulte, "Über den Begriff einer Wissenschaft des Judentums," in *Aschkenas*, vol. 7, no. 2 (1997), pp. 277–302; and in the 2003 Conference Judaism as Wissenschaft, organized by Andreas Gotzmann and Christian Wiese. It may not be an accident that both appeals stem from the field of *Judaistik*, which when defined as part of modern religious and cultural studies tends to be more open to innovative intellectual currents than is the old school of historiography – at least in Germany.

<sup>141</sup> See the sometimes controversial evaluations by Moshe Zimmermann in "Jewish History"; Reinhard Rürup, "An Appraisal of German-Jewish Historiography," in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 35 (1990), pp. xv–xxiv; Shulamit Volkov, "Reflections on German-Jewish History. A Dead End or a New Beginning?" *ibid.*, vol. 41 (1996),

And yet, the ties of this younger generation to the LBI are no longer so clear: where some historians still feel themselves “scholarly foster-children” of the LBI and a smaller number have been honored with membership on the London institute’s board,<sup>142</sup> others now cultivate their own contacts with colleagues in Israel, the USA and Great Britain, hence are only loosely linked to the network of the LBI. In addition, it is unclear whether the *scholarly* interest in Jewish history will be maintained in Germany, now that the field has become academically established. From this perspective, in another retrospective look at the LBI in another fifty years, the location in 2002 of copies of the New York institute’s archives in Berlin’s Jewish Museum – preceded by yet another discussion about the possible founding of a German LBI office – will perhaps have a paradigmatic character.<sup>143</sup>

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pp. 309–320; John Grenville, “Die Geschichtsschreibung der Bundesrepublik über die deutschen Juden,” in *Studien zur jüdischen Geschichte und Soziologie. Festschrift Julius Carlebach*, ed. by the Hochschule für Jüdische Studien, Heidelberg 1992, pp. 195–205; and most recently Stefan Rohrbacher, “Jüdische Geschichte,” in Brenner and Rohrbacher (eds.), *Wissenschaft vom Judentum*.

<sup>142</sup> Michael Brenner, “Perspektiven der Wissenschaftlichen Arbeitsgemeinschaft des Leo Baeck Instituts,” in *LBI Information*, vol. 8 (1999), p. 73. The London board members are Rainer Liedtke, Till van Rahden, and Nils Roemer.

<sup>143</sup> See Michael A. Meyer, “Some thoughts on the LBI and Berlin,” n.d. [1999], and the subsequent correspondence between the members of the international executive, Richarz’s papers, file “WAG”; see also the essay by Aubrey Pomerance in this volume.

# Coordination, Confrontation and Cooperation: The International Board of the Leo Baeck Institute

Aubrey Pomerance

Less than two years after the founding of the Leo Baeck Institute, the chairman of its London branch, Robert Weltsch, referred to the institute in a letter to its president Siegfried Moses as a “geographically split, highly complicated organization.”<sup>1</sup> Coming at a time when the institute’s future was far from certain, Weltsch’s terse remark not only hinted at the demanding task of coordinating the institution’s activities in a manner congenial to the needs and aspirations of each of its individual branches, spread over three continents, but also at the difficulties that would inevitably be encountered by an international board committed to this end. Fifty years on, the Leo Baeck Institute remains a complex organization; the past five decades have witnessed numerous challenges in the course of tackling the various problems it has encountered in securing its existence, achieving its goals, and maintaining cooperation and communication between its branches.

Since the founding of the LBI in 1955, its international board has convened at over 40 working conferences, executive meetings and informal gatherings to discuss its projects, finances, publications and other activities, at the level of both the institute as a whole and its individual branches. This examination of the international board and its deliberations will focus on organizational aspects, on cooperation and confrontation between the three branches, and on the finances of the entire institute, as well as on a small number of key issues debated within the board that had a decisive influence on the work, character and development of the institute as a whole.

## The Structure of the Board

At the inception of the Leo Baeck Institute and during its first years of operation no reference was made to an international board, but only to a central board. In 1954, the Council of Jews from Germany, the founding body of the

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<sup>1</sup> Robert Weltsch to Siegfried Moses, January 13, 1957, *LBI Archives New York at the Jewish Museum Berlin (LBIJMB)*, Robert Weltsch Coll.

LBI, envisioned two governing bodies to oversee the scholarly program and finances of the institute, a research and publication board and an administrative board. The former was to be made up of three individuals from England, Israel and the United States and to be supported by an advisory research committee in each of the three countries. The administrative board, on the other hand, was to comprise three representatives from each of the Council's sections in England, Israel and the United States. Together these two boards were to appoint an executive secretary and two joint secretaries. The general secretariat of the institute was to be located in Jerusalem, with two further secretariats in London and New York. Rabbi Leo Baeck was to be named the institute's honorary president.<sup>2</sup>

There were further deliberations on the institute's organisation at its constitutional meeting in Jerusalem in May 1955, and at the next gathering there in December. At the latter meeting, considerable stress was laid on Jerusalem being the institute's branch responsible for its major decisions and overall activities. The role of the board members from London and New York in the decision process was discussed in detail; agreement was reached that all board members of the three branches would be able to participate in the principal decisions made by the central board in Jerusalem.<sup>3</sup>

In an introductory article in the first volume of the *Year Book* that appeared following the death of Leo Baeck, Siegfried Moses, chairman of the central board and president of the institute, clearly defined its organizational structure, which by and large reflected the arrangement foreseen by the Council:

The management is entrusted to two Boards which have one joint chairman: the Research and Publications Board which determines the fields and subjects to be considered, the persons to be commissioned, the schedule and priorities, and which lays down the policy for the scientific activities; and the Administrative Board which is responsible for the administration and finances of the Institute, as well as for its organizational management and coordination between the secretariats in Jerusalem, New York and London.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Leo Baeck Institute, Outline of work and research program, *LBI New York*, LBI Office Records.

<sup>3</sup> Minutes of the central board meeting in Jerusalem, December 1 and 3, 1955. The minutes of a small number of international board meetings are found among the office records of the Leo Baeck Institute New York, which also houses incomplete minutes of the board meetings of the London (1956–1979) and Jerusalem (1956–1987) branches, along with those of the New York branch itself. I would like to express my thanks to the LBI New York for granting me access to all of these files. I am also grateful to the International President of the LBI, Michael A. Meyer, for providing me with copies of the minutes of the international board meetings not available in New York.

<sup>4</sup> Siegfried Moses, "Leo Baeck Institute of Jews from Germany," in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 1 (1956), p. xii.

Together these two boards formed the central board, which was responsible for all of the major decisions considering the institute's operations. Each branch, however, "acts independently before and after any decision is taken. It considers ideas which are put forward and conducts negotiations with scholars and authors within its area; once a project has been adopted by the Central Board, the required action falls back on the originating center, which keeps in constant touch with the other two centers."<sup>5</sup> Advisory committees were also established in each of the three branches.

Despite the understanding reached at the institute's initial meetings, the question of Jerusalem as the seat of the central board, its relationship to the branches in London and New York, and indeed the entire decision-making process were sources of basic controversy from the outset. It must be noted that no official statute or other regulation was ever drawn up that formally determined the roles of the three centers and central board. Within a year of the institute's existence it had become clear that the individual branches were engaging in independent research projects and activities that had not been submitted to the central board for discussion and approval. In the eyes of the London branch, New York had in fact by and large become independent, a re-evaluation of the institute's structure thus being essential.<sup>6</sup> Jerusalem's pivotal role was consequently re-examined at ensuing meetings; at the gathering of the three branches in New York in October of 1958, the following conclusions were reached and accepted: that the centralization of activities had been curtailed by the independent activities of the individual branches and that only in exceptional cases could the central board question decisions made by them; and that the unified approach of the three institutes was likewise reduced, with New York operating differently from Jerusalem and London.<sup>7</sup>

These developments were, not surprisingly, perceived in Jerusalem as a threat to the unity of the institute, and in order to avoid the three branches becoming totally separate institutions a set of minimal demands was drawn up and circulated to the three centers. These called for joint consultations on research and publication projects – albeit leaving the final decision in most cases in the hands of the relevant branch; a unified approach to the overall plan and standard of publications; a shared feeling of responsibility; and a constant flow of information between the branches on their individual intentions, successes, and failures.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. xi-xii.

<sup>6</sup> Weltsch to Moses, December 10, 1957, *LBIJMB*, Robert Weltsch Coll.

<sup>7</sup> Minutes of the LBI Jerusalem board meeting, November 27, 1958, p. 1.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2. These proposals also appear in the synopsis of the institute's organization contained in the draft report of activities 1954–1959, drawn up by S. Adler-Rudel in August of 1959 in preparation for the international board meeting in London in September of the same year.

By the time the international conference convened in London in September 1959, attended by more than half of the members of all three individual boards, a process of *de facto* decentralization had taken place. At the previous Jerusalem board meeting in July, Siegfried Moses had acknowledged that the original conception of the central board had not been implemented and that in fact the joint meetings of the three branches represented the institute's highest decision-making body.<sup>9</sup> The London meeting can thus be seen as the birthplace of the international board (or *Gesamtboard*, as it was sometimes referred to). Next to no mention was made of a central board during this conference, and the term essentially disappears from the institute's terminology. It had become clear to all that the international meetings, which with few exceptions took place annually for the next twenty-five years, would serve as the stage where the work of all three branches would be presented and discussed and key decisions pertaining to the institute as a whole and its joint programs decided upon.

The London gathering formulated a number of resolutions laying the basis for future cooperation between the three branches. Each center was free to pursue and assign research projects as it individually wished, with such projects and publications the sole responsibility of the individual branches. Outlines of the undertakings of an individual branch were to be communicated to the other two centers, which could then respond within a space of six weeks. A unified approach to editorial principles in publications was to be maintained and contracts with publishers exchanged. No publication was, however, to follow if one of the branches raised serious objections.<sup>10</sup>

Siegfried Moses's expressed hopes that further discussion of the nature of the relationship between the three branches would no longer be necessary following the London conference nevertheless proved illusory, the issue in fact being raised time and again at further meetings. Jerusalem objected strongly to the description of its role as described in the first issue of the *LBI News* published by the New York branch in June of 1960, as "mainly to plan and to prepare the Hebrew Publications of the Institute in addition to the great work of the *Germania Judaica*."<sup>11</sup> At a meeting of the London board attended by the international president shortly thereafter, the issue of the authority of the individual branches was raised again; in particular the right of veto set out one year earlier was called into question. Noting that "the original centralization of the institute had indeed been abandoned," Hans Liebeschütz argued that the final decision with regard to publications had

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<sup>9</sup> Minutes of the LBI Jerusalem board meeting, July 22, 1959, p. 2.

<sup>10</sup> Report of the international meeting in London on September 6 and 7, 1959, compiled in Jerusalem, November 1959, Resolutions of the conference, p. 20.

<sup>11</sup> *LBI News*, vol. 1, no. 1 (1960), p. 1 and Minutes of the LBI Jerusalem board meeting, July 20, 1960.

also to lie with the local boards,<sup>12</sup> a position that despite being debated in the coming years in the end reflected reality. (At the international meeting in Geneva in 1966, the right of each branch to oppose the publication of one of the other branches on serious grounds was reasserted; at the same time it was noted that such a situation had in fact never arisen nor would in the future.) In October 1963 Ernst Simon, member of the Jerusalem Board, posed the question “whether we are one Institute or a very loose federation of three different institutions who have the same name.” In essence, the answer was to be found in the very question itself. As a response, Schalom Adler-Rudel, secretary of the Jerusalem board, reiterated yet again the view that the conception of the LBI formulated at its founding had been unworkable, adding, “I too believe that we have different functions to fulfill in the different countries. Weltsch, Kreutzberger and I are subject to the local conditions.” At the same gathering, the LBI president acknowledged the independence of the three branches, begrudgingly concluding that the institute had to accept “the negative sides of the development” while pointing out that these could possibly be reduced through exchange of information at an early stage of planning and the communication of objections, “regardless of whether these can be considered or not.”<sup>13</sup>

To the present day, the problem of the lack of communication between the branches runs like a thread through the minutes of the international board, with all being exhorted time and again to exchange information and above all inform the other centers of proposed projects and publications in advance of the international meetings. On the one hand, improved communication was deemed essential for the coordination of the institute’s efforts and in order to avoid both overlapping between the three branches and unnecessary work and expenditure;<sup>14</sup> on the other hand, it was clear that the individual centers did not wish to be confronted with their counterparts’ *faits accomplis*.

The communication difficulties notwithstanding, the intensity of the international board’s deliberations on the wide range of the institute’s activities

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<sup>12</sup> Minutes of the LBI London board meeting, September 27, 1960.

<sup>13</sup> All quotes from the Minutes of the LBI Jerusalem board meeting with the participation of members from London and New York, October 21, 1963.

<sup>14</sup> In a memo on the international meeting in London in 1968 to the executive committee of the LBI New York, its director Fred Grubel noted that “it has happened in the past that authors whose manuscripts were turned down for good reasons by one institute, approached another and involved the second institute again in lengthy discussions and investigations. These time-consuming efforts could have been spared if it had been known that a sister institute had already been concerned with the same project.” At the same time, Grubel reported that the call for a strengthening of the relationship between the three institutes would “not involve any administrative centralisation,” revealing the anxieties that still existed in that respect within the New York board.



attests to a continued commitment to coordinate the three branches' activities and to overcome their differences as much as possible. The structure of the international meetings has remained fairly constant over the years, including reports by the individual branches, discussion of the *Year Book*, debates on research and publication projects, reviews of the international conferences, the outlining and implementation of long-range plans, and discussion of overall financing. Since the mid-1960s, the activities of the LBI in Germany, the support and active involvement of the younger generation, and the cooperation of the institute and its branches with other institutions have all figured prominently at the international board's meetings. Most of their minutes have taken the form of summaries, with verbatim records of exchanges existing for a smaller number of meetings from the institute's early years. The minutes of all meetings until 1991 were recorded in German, thereafter in English.

Until the end of the 1980s, summaries of the international board meetings were published in the New York branch's newsletter, the *LBI News*, which first appeared in June 1960. A resolution passed at the working conference in Geneva in 1966 called for the journal's transformation into a medium representing the entire institute, to be published in both English and German for the sake of informing an expanded membership. This resulted in the inclusion of reports on the activities of the Jerusalem and London branches; although the envisioned change was not realized, these informative communications from the sister institutions continued to appear until the winter/spring edition of 1975/76. Reports on the work of all three branches would only be published together again in 1991, with the founding of the German-language *LBI Information*, edited by the *Gesellschaft der Freunde und Förderer des LBI* in Frankfurt.

Nevertheless, a diminishing role for the international board's gatherings in the course of the 1980s is manifest. Despite the assertion by the vice-president of the New York LBI, Fritz Bamberger, in 1981 that "the need for such international meetings has quite evidently not lessened,"<sup>15</sup> representatives of the three branches in fact convened less often in the 1980s than at any other time in the institute's existence. In 1983 communication problems between the three branches were again referred to in minutes of the Jerusalem board, with its president, Jacob Katz, calling for the LBI not to dispense with the international meetings for financial reasons.<sup>16</sup> Conferences did take place the following two years, but were then not held between October 1985 and March 1989. Still, the LBI launched its most ambitious project during that period: a comprehensive history of German Jewry, once defined as the "final

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<sup>15</sup> Minutes of the LBI New York board meeting, December 3, 1981.

<sup>16</sup> Minutes of the LBI Jerusalem board meeting, February 9, 1983.

aim” at the institute’s founding. All three branches cooperated on its development, with contributions from members of each of the boards.

### The International Board’s Leadership

In its first 50 years of existence, the LBI’s international board has enjoyed a remarkably stable leadership. Leo Baeck was named the institute’s honorary president at its founding, but was only able to attend two meetings, both in London. Following Baeck’s death, Siegfried Moses, chairman of both the Jerusalem board and the institute as a whole, took over the presidency, likewise succeeding Baeck as president of the Council of Jews from Germany. Moses conveyed a natural authority as testified by the many leading positions he held throughout his life, and throughout his presidency he enjoyed the widespread respect and admiration of the members of the entire LBI.<sup>17</sup> Siegfried Moses guided the organization through its initial phase, remaining active at its helm until his death in 1974, aged 87. He was succeeded by Max Gruenewald, first president of the New York branch. Alongside Gruenewald, Hans Tramer from the Jerusalem Board – and like Gruenewald a founding member of the institute – was appointed vice-president. Tramer only held this position briefly, as he died at the start of 1979, the vice-presidency only being reoccupied a decade later by Fred Grubel. In contrast, Max Gruenewald served as president until 1991, when he stepped down at the age of 90; he was then named honorary president. During his seventeen-year reign the institute had experienced remarkable growth, the most noteworthy developments during this period being the initiation of work on the above-mentioned history of German Jewry and the great increase of activities within Germany, this culminating in the founding of the *Wissenschaftliche Arbeitsgemeinschaft* in 1989. Nonetheless, Gruenewald, a more modest and shy personality than Siegfried Moses, played a far less active role in the operations and expansion of the LBI than had his predecessor. This already became apparent at the start of his presidency, when the task of developing a five-year plan for all three branches was undertaken by Max Kreuzberger,<sup>18</sup> who since leaving his position as director of the New York branch in 1967 had been serving as a general consultant to the institute. At the same time, Gruenewald was in many respects overshadowed by Kreuzberger’s energetic successor Fred Grubel.

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<sup>17</sup> As a reflection of this esteem see the essays published in Hans Tramer (ed.), *In zwei Welten. Siegfried Moses zum 75. Geburtstag*, Tel Aviv 1962.

<sup>18</sup> Memorandum entitled “Bemerkungen zur Arbeit der drei Leo Baeck Institute im nächsten Jahrfünft,” *LBI New York*, LBI Office Records.

Gruenewald's resignation marked an inevitable turning point in the history of the international board. With the election of Michael A. Meyer as his replacement, the leadership of the LBI was for the first time in the hands of an individual who had not experienced life in Germany as an adult, as he himself pointed out upon taking up the position. (Born in Berlin in 1937, Meyer had emigrated in 1941 with his parents to the United States.) At the outset of his presidency of the international board, Meyer outlined his proposals for the future work of the institute. These included a re-evaluation of the *Year Book* and *Bulletin*; the inclusion of pre-eighteenth-century German-Jewish history as part of the institute's research focus; a stronger focus on the German-Jewish experience during World War II; increasing the number of younger scholars in the inner circle of the LBI; establishing closer relationships with other institutes engaged in research on German-Jewish history; and, connected to this, the creation of a strong base in Germany.<sup>19</sup>

Like his predecessors, Meyer laid great stress on the need for the LBI to work as one institute with different branches. At the international board meeting in 1997, six years into his term as president, he insisted that, "we should see ourselves as one unit, with the welfare of all constituents in mind. There is no need to approve each activity, but coordination is called for." In this context, he pointed out that "the position of International President should not be seen merely as official figurehead, but by the same token also not that of an officer with unlimited power, but rather as coordinator of the different centers of the LBI and its affiliated organizations."<sup>20</sup> In part, these remarks reflect the position's rather tenuous nature: its powers are indeed limited – in matters of dispute, for example, it does not possess a vote of its own, let alone a veto – and its main task has involved coordination and, over the past few years in particular, working towards consensus on major issues discussed at the international gatherings. In any event, in the thirteen years since he took office, most of Meyer's suggestions have been carried out, both the LBI as a whole and the *Wissenschaftliche Arbeitsgemeinschaft* displaying remarkable productivity. (It is here worth noting that Meyer has recently initiated and co-edited a major undertaking of the international LBI, the now completed six-volume edition of Leo Baeck's writings,<sup>21</sup> though his desire to hold an international LBI conference on Baeck has not yet been realized.) However, his wish for closer cooperation has proven elusive: Meyer's presidency has witnessed no small share of dissent between the individual branches, particularly with respect to the institute's future and the establishment of a branch in Berlin.

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<sup>19</sup> Minutes of the LBI international board meeting, Leipzig, October 27 and 28, 1991.

<sup>20</sup> Minutes of the LBI international board meeting, London, September 21 and 22, 1997.

## Finances

At its very outset, the LBI was confronted with an uphill battle to acquire the funds needed to finance its operations. A first year budget of \$ 120,000 was foreseen by the Council of Jews from Germany; this sum was meant to be provided by the Conference on Jewish Material Claims against Germany. With only \$ 42,000 being granted by the Claims Conference, funding from other sources was necessary, but proposals to use funds from the Jewish Restitution Successor Organisation (JRSO) for the entire LBI were rejected.<sup>22</sup> Hopes to obtain funding from the Jewish Trust Corporation also proved unfounded. As it turned out, the first year budget of \$ 45,000 was not fully spent – a unique occurrence reflecting both the organizational challenges faced by the institute at its inception and the brief amount of time it had had to launch its activities.

Over the following years the New York and London branches were financed through Claims Conference funding and the Jerusalem branch through JRSO funds allotted to Israel. Already at an early stage, more than half of the institute's total budget was allocated to the New York branch, the Jerusalem branch receiving an additional third and London some fifteen percent. As funding from both the Claims Conference and JRSO would only be available for a few years, it was imperative to find other sources. By the beginning of the 1960s, the New York branch was thus already receiving two-thirds of its budget from such sources, foremost the Gustav Wurzweiler Foundation.

Among the early attempts to broaden the institute's financial support was the founding of "societies of friends and supporters" in all three branches, as well as in West Germany. The LBI also appealed to Germany's Jewish communities for considerable support, going so far as to anticipate allocation of a certain percentage of each community's budget to the scholarly activities of the institute<sup>23</sup> – an anticipation that remained unfulfilled. In January 1961, Max Kreutzberger wrote to the chairman of the Central Council of Jews in Germany (*Zentralrat*), Hendrik van Dam, asking for financial assistance for the LBI and noting that, "I believe you agree with me that the Jews living in Germany cannot remain indifferent to the development of such an undertaking."<sup>24</sup> His request for a general donation of \$ 50,000, a contribution of \$ 100,000 towards financing the mortgage on the townhouse into which the

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<sup>21</sup> *Leo Baeck Werke*, ed. by Albert H. Friedländer *et al.*, 6 vols., Gütersloh 1998–2003.

<sup>22</sup> Minutes of the governing board of the Council of Jews from Germany, March 23, 1955, *LBI Jerusalem*, file 1072.

<sup>23</sup> Note on the discussions of the LBI in London on August 27 and 30, 1962.

<sup>24</sup> Max Kreutzberger to H. van Dam, January 10, 1961, *Zentralarchiv der Juden in Deutschland*, B 1/7 550.

New York branch had moved, and an otherwise unspecified annual subsidy was, however, not granted, despite further correspondence and personal meetings in New York and Germany between both Kreuzberger and Siegfried Moses and van Dam. The *Zentralrat* did grant 20,000 German marks to the institute from the *Nordwestdeutsche Gemeindefonds*; together with funds from the Claims Conference this was used to help cover the publication costs of Selma Stern's *Der Preussische Staat und die Juden*.<sup>25</sup>

With less support coming from the *Zentralrat* and the German-Jewish communities than had been hoped for, initial efforts were undertaken in 1962 to obtain funding from the German government. At the beginning of the year, Siegfried Moses held a number of meetings in Germany to establish which agencies or ministries might provide such funding. From the outset, the LBI emphasized that any German financial assistance should not be politically motivated or be meant as a gesture of moral reparation; the institute would "in principle only approach authorities who view our work as a valuable contribution to German historiography that deserves to be supported."<sup>26</sup> Within that framework, the institute had high expectations. Negotiations were undertaken with the cultural section of the German foreign ministry, the interior ministry and the *Deutsche Städtetag*. As any funds forthcoming from German governmental sources could only be channeled through a representative body of the LBI in Germany, the above-mentioned *Gesellschaft der Freunde und Förderer des Leo Baeck Instituts*, founded in Frankfurt in 1958, had now been registered as an official association.

Although the German government responded positively, the sums that were offered were less than had been hoped for. Initial funding in 1962 was provided by the cultural section of the foreign ministry – 30,000 marks for the London and New York branches – and a further 10,000 marks from the interior ministry, which agreed to support the institute on an annual basis. This subsidy was increased over the ensuing years, reaching 80,000 marks in 1967.<sup>27</sup> Some German officials hoped that the financial aid would lead to greater activity of the institute in Germany; beyond that, as one memorandum put it, a "diversity of wishes should be brought into play in order to lead the Leo Baeck Institute to establish a branch in the Federal Republic (preferably in Berlin). If larger subsidies can be made available, minor pressure

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<sup>25</sup> Selma Stern, *Der Preussische Staat und die Juden*, 8 vols. (incl. Index ed. by M. Kreuzberger), Tübingen 1962–75 (Schriftenreihe wissenschaftlicher Abhandlungen des Leo Baeck Instituts 7–8, 24, 32).

<sup>26</sup> Note on the discussions of the LBI in London, August 27 and 30, 1962.

<sup>27</sup> *Bundesarchiv Koblenz*, B 106/333 618 2/2I. The funds from the Interior Ministry were distributed fairly equally among the three branches of the LBI and used to pay a portion of the salaries of the secretaries and towards administrative costs of all three branches, as well as for the fees paid to research assistants and editors of various publication projects.

should be applied to this effect.”<sup>28</sup> The institute politely but firmly resisted such advances, recommending at its international meeting in 1966 that in negotiations with Germany it be emphasized “that the reservations towards the establishment of an institute in Germany are based upon the fact that here two essential preconditions are lacking: the Jewish scholarly background necessary for the effectiveness of such an institute and the possibility of financially securing a permanent undertaking of this kind in an objective and independent manner.”<sup>29</sup>

This financial assistance from the German government notwithstanding, the institute’s overall expenditures had increased significantly, and with them a not insubstantial budget deficit, which in 1966 had reached nearly \$ 800,000. A major increase in German funding was thus seen as essential. Fortunately, the LBI was being offered strong support from many individuals within the German ministries. Among these was Karl-Günther von Hase, then State Secretary in the German government’s press and information office and later German ambassador in London; von Hase was instrumental in gaining support from Chancellor Kurt Georg Kiesinger for an increase in government funding to the LBI. His January 1967 memorandum to Kiesinger provides an interesting insight into the assessment by German government officials of the LBI at this still early stage in its history:

The Leo Baeck Institute (New York, London, Tel Aviv [sic]) has since 1956 systematically conducted research on the history of German Jewry and has produced a substantial number of scholarly publications. These have illustrated the high degree of interaction between German Jews and the German people [*dem deutschen Volke*] and thus significantly contribute throughout the world to a differentiation between the National Socialist period and the preceding centuries of German history. The experts, and in particular the historians participating in this major scholarly program in New York, London, and Tel Aviv as well as in the Federal Republic, stem mostly from Central Europe, predominantly from Germany, and are therefore particularly interested in research in this field. The majority of them are, however, well advanced in years, and the Leo Baeck Institute is therefore increasing its efforts in order to make use of the personal knowledge and profound expertise of these scholars. For this purpose the Leo Baeck Institute has to date annually received 50,000 DM from the federal budget, in 1966 70,000 DM. It is clear that such a major research undertaking cannot be sufficiently financed by these funds. ... The minor subsidies provided so far have been furnished by the Interior Ministry. In concurrence with the Federal Ministry of the Interior, I therefore take the liberty of drawing your attention to this delicate problem, as it appears necessary to me that despite all cost-cutting measures a certain degree of generosity is appropriate with respect

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<sup>28</sup> Memorandum of Hans Stercken, Press and Information Office, September 18, 1964, *Bundesarchiv Koblenz*, B 145/6577.

<sup>29</sup> Results of the working conference in Geneva, August 22 to 25, 1966, p. 3.

to such a difficult political matter of worldwide significance, as one would be unable to attain the desired and surely useful effect at a later point in time. Should you be of a similar opinion, then a directive from you could prompt the responsible department to consider accordingly whether the Leo Baeck Institute could be helped over the short term.<sup>30</sup>

The chancellor quickly responded to von Hase's memorandum, penning the following note to interior minister Paul Lücke in February:

It has been brought to my attention that the very useful research of the Leo Baeck Institute will be considerably delayed due to a lack of sufficient funds. For political reasons I believe that it is most desirable that the work that has commenced on the history of German Jewry can soon be successfully completed. I would therefore be grateful if you would examine whether the subsidies provided by the federal budget of the Interior Ministry could be increased, despite the tense budgetary situation.<sup>31</sup>

Kiesinger's request did not go unheeded,<sup>32</sup> although a substantial increase in funding did not follow immediately but only in 1969, when subsidies more than doubled from 90,000 to 200,000 German marks, and then by further smaller sums over the following five years. The full weight of this assistance was underlined at a meeting of the international board in London in August 1969, where it was confirmed that it would insure the basic existence of the institute over the following years.<sup>33</sup> Since 1966, the institute had also received substantial allotments from the final distribution of funds by the JRSO to the Council of Jews from Germany, amounting to nearly 300,000 marks per annum for a period of five years, of which the LBI New York received 50 %, Jerusalem 32 % and London 18 %. In 1967, these combined sums allowed the board to create a central fund in Zurich that was to be used for financing special activities and the work of younger scholars.<sup>34</sup>

Alongside German governmental support, the LBI looked to further sources in the country for the funding of special projects. Thus, for example, Max Kreutzberger was able to acquire 500,000 marks from the *Volkswagen Stiftung* between 1966 and 1970 for the expansion of the library holdings, for acquiring and restoring periodicals, and for the production and publication

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<sup>30</sup> *Bundesarchiv Koblenz*, B 145/6577.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>32</sup> Kiesinger was the first and only German Federal Chancellor who had been a member of the NSDAP. One can only speculate whether this fact had any affect on his voicing support for the LBI.

<sup>33</sup> Resolutions and results of the working conference in London, August 25 and 26, 1969.

<sup>34</sup> Resolutions of the working conference in London, May 18 to 22, 1967. This central fund, initially 500,000 marks, would amount to only 46,000 dollars in 1991, a sum that it was agreed should be saved for "a really rainy day." Minutes of the meeting of the LBI international board meeting, Leipzig, October 27 and 28, 1991.

of a catalog that would appear in 1970.<sup>35</sup> During the same period the Axel Springer Fund of the New York LBI was established; over the following twenty years this was to become one of the New York branch's major financial sources. Beyond this, in 1969 an initiative of the *Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft* and the German Consulate in New York, funded by the Thyssen foundation, led to a project involving a survey by a German scholar of the LBI's memoir collection. The scholar chosen was Monika Richarz, who began her work in 1972; she would later become deputy head of the *Wissenschaftliche Arbeitsgemeinschaft*.

These efforts marked an expansion of German financial assistance for the LBI that has continued to the present day, a support without which the institute could not survive. Annual funding from the interior ministry and the *Ständige Konferenz der Kultusminister der Länder* increased to a million marks by the end of the 1990s, covering the operating costs of the London and Jerusalem branches, as well as funding the *Arbeitsgemeinschaft* and the *Freunde und Förderer* in Germany. Over the past three decades, countless publications, research projects and scholarly conferences of all three branches have been subsidized by a wide range of German foundations, both industrial and commercial (e.g. the Fritz Thyssen, Robert Bosch, and Volkswagen foundations and that of the Deutsche Bank), as well as by foundations affiliated with the major political parties (e.g. the Christian Democrats' Konrad Adenauer foundation and the Friedrich Ebert foundation of the Social Democratic Party). Funds have also been forthcoming from various German ministries and governmental agencies: the *Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung*, the *Kultusministerkonferenz der Länder*, the *Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung*, the *Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft* and the *Deutsche Akademische Austauschdienst*.

Notwithstanding such assistance, the institute's exploration of further funding possibilities has proceeded apace. The international board has, however, not approved all suggestions made to this end. In 1997 it rejected a proposal by the Jerusalem branch to employ a professional fund-raiser,<sup>36</sup> as well as an initiative by the New York LBI six years later to create its own foundation in Germany.<sup>37</sup> At the same time, it has continued to stress the need for better coordination of efforts by the different branches to acquire German funding. More recently, hopes of establishing an endowment through restitution funds received by the Claims Conference from unclaimed Jewish prop-

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<sup>35</sup> *Bundesarchiv Koblenz*, B 106 333 004/8. The resulting catalog appeared as *Leo Baeck Institute New York, Bibliothek und Archiv. Katalog*, ed. by Max Kreutzberger (with Irmgard Foerg), vol. 1, Tübingen 1970 (Schriftenreihe wissenschaftlicher Abhandlungen des Leo Baecks Instituts 22).

<sup>36</sup> Minutes of the LBI international board meeting, London, September 21 and 22, 1997.

<sup>37</sup> Minutes of the LBI international board meeting, Berlin, September 14 and 15, 2003.



erty in former East Germany were not realized; efforts to obtain funds in Germany for such an endowment are ongoing.

### The Relationship of the International Board to Germany

Although a fully-fledged branch of the LBI has never been established in Germany, over the decades the country has become a major center for the institute's activities and, as indicated, a significant source of financial, material and personal resources. In retrospect a gravitation towards Germany appears inevitable, but for the LBI's founders and the first generation of its members and contributors, almost all of whom had fled Nazi Germany to Palestine, Great Britain and the United States, the process of establishing a relationship with the postwar West German government and with the country's institutions and scholars was a cautious and gradual one, discussed extensively by the institute's international board.

The issue of the LBI and Germany was first raised briefly at the international meeting held in London in 1959, with discussions concentrating on the institute's relationship to the Jewish communities in Germany and on the *Gesellschaft der Freunde und Förderer*. At the meeting in New York a year later, Robert Weltsch noted that there were German scholarly institutions, private organizations and publishing houses that were devoting their attention to the same historical topics at the center of the LBI's activities. The institute, Weltsch indicated, had by and large disregarded these efforts; it was often surprised by the appearance of a publication or by other notable developments in Germany. Hence a basic question that had arisen was what position the LBI should take in the future: whether and how it should establish contacts in Germany with governmental and other public organizations, private institutions and with representatives of the Jews in the country. Weltsch also drew attention to the possibility of German funding, an important consideration in view of the eventual end of support from the Claims Conference and the JRSO. On the German side, a number of city administrations sponsoring work related to the history of the Jews in their municipalities had contacted the LBI London, and courses on German-Jewish history were being given at various universities. In short, much was happening in Germany, and it would have been foolish for the LBI to ignore the developments. Weltsch proposed that from a geographical standpoint the London branch would be best suited for organizing initial contacts with Germany: "We must be clear that this will be a rather broad and complicated but potentially fruitful task."<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Minutes of the international working conference in New York, October 10 and 11, 1960, appendix 4, remarks of Robert Weltsch on the LBI's attitude to scientific institutions in Germany.

Initial moves towards such cooperation were undertaken in conjunction with the preparation of the anthology *Entscheidungsjahr 1932*, which appeared in 1965 and included contributions by five German historians: Hans Paul Bahrtdt, Hans-Joachim Kraus, Hans-Helmuth Knütter, Karl Thieme and P.B. Wiener.<sup>39</sup> The establishment of a working group of Jewish and non-Jewish historians active in Germany was proposed at the working conference of the international board in Geneva in 1966, and the London branch was given responsibility for its organization. It was hoped that the resulting historians' committee would turn into an honorary board serving as an advisory council to the LBI. Preparations for this council were placed in the hands of Hans Liebeschütz and Robert Weltsch, with a list of potential members drawn up together with the Jerusalem and New York branches. Around this time, the international board agreed that studies by non-Jewish German scholars should be allowed to appear in the institute's *Schriftenreihe*,<sup>40</sup> the first such volume being Horst Fischer's *Judentum, Staat und Heer in Preußen im frühen 19. Jahrhundert*, published in 1968 as the twentieth volume of the series. In March of the same year, fourteen German historians were invited to attend a meeting with members of the London board in Berlin. This initiative proved fruitful, with a number of the participants becoming members of the advisory council shortly thereafter and half of the participants preparing contributions for the anthologies being edited by the London branch.

The establishment of the advisory council marks the start of increased activity by the LBI in West Germany – activity described in detail in Stefanie Schüler-Springorum's contribution to this volume. In the following years, working conferences with German historians were organized by the London LBI in Berlin, Hamburg, and London itself, as well as within the 1974 *Historikertag* in Braunschweig. The idea of creating a working center of the institute in Germany was first raised at the international meeting in 1973; that same year however, the board reiterated its conviction that the financial and other requirements for such a step did not exist.

The basic developments outlined above were reflected in a decision by the board at its meeting in London in 1981 to form an advisory council of scholars, politicians, and individuals from both financial and religious circles for the Frankfurt *Gesellschaft der Freunde und Förderer des Leo Baeck Instituts*, this body's task being to support the LBI's general program and activities. The council's scholars were to form a special committee meant to strengthen the

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<sup>39</sup> In his preface to the anthology, p. ix, Werner Mosse expressed the hope "that Germans would themselves one day confront the confounded questions addressed here," adding that the fact "that several of them have so willingly participated in this study by a non-German institution" was "greeted with delight."

<sup>40</sup> Results of the working conference in Geneva, August 22 to 25, 1966.

institute's ties with the German scholarly world. The council represented a joint project of the institute's three branches, with the practical organization placed in the hands of the Jerusalem branch and the *Gesellschaft der Freunde und Förderer*.<sup>41</sup> The LBI's first international conference on German soil – Self-Assertion in Adversity: The Jews in National Socialist Germany, 1933–1939 – was held in Berlin in October 1985 and underlined the strong engagement of the institute in the country; the participation of both Chancellor Helmut Kohl and Bundespräsident Richard von Weizsäcker demonstrated the recognition the institute had attained. Finally, in 1989, upon the initiative of the London branch that had stood at the forefront of the institute's first contacts in Germany some thirty years previously, the *Wissenschaftliche Arbeitsgemeinschaft* was founded, fulfilling the wishes of many both within the LBI and the scholarly and political communities in Germany.

### The Archives

Among the salient points of contention in the early years of the institute's existence was the establishment of the archives at the New York branch. In its outline of the LBI's research program, the Council of Jews from Germany had stated that one task of the institute would be "to ensure the collection and preservation of documents and other historic material."<sup>42</sup> This goal was already put into question at the October 1955 meeting in London, mainly by Gershom Scholem, who insisted that the institute should in fact have no archival function in view of its relationship to *Yad Vashem*.<sup>43</sup> Curt Wormann, another member of the Jerusalem Board, reported that in fact an agreement had been reached between the two institutions, ensuring that *Yad Vashem* would not engage in publications falling within the LBI's sphere and that the LBI would help *Yad Vashem* collect material for its archive. A similar agreement was envisioned with the Historical Society in Jerusalem.

At the December meeting of the institute, the issue was discussed anew. Scholem, again stressing that the LBI could not "burden itself" with archives, suggested that any archival material offered to the LBI should only be accept-

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<sup>41</sup> Minutes of the working conference of the LBI, London, 13 to 15 September, 1981.

<sup>42</sup> Leo Baeck Institute, Outline of work and research program, LBI New York, LBI Office Records.

<sup>43</sup> It is interesting that in a letter to Max Kreutzberger written on July 19, 1955, Robert Weltsch, while stating that the May founding conference's minutes do not present a real picture of the proceedings, mentions plans for the establishment of a research bureau at the Jerusalem branch with an archive and library. *LBIJMB*, Robert Weltsch Coll.

ed on condition that it then be given on loan to the Historical Society. Max Kreutzberger, director of the New York branch, disagreed and argued that such material should be retained by the institute. Siegfried Moses noted that some archival material was not obviously related to *Yad Vashem's* research focus, while Robert Weltsch pointed out that the suggested transfer arrangement was likely to affect the willingness of some donors to give material to the LBI. Jerusalem board member Dolf Michaelis proposed that material should indeed be collected for an LBI archive, but that the collection should be transferred to *Yad Vashem* when the LBI had completed its work and dissolved itself. In the end, Siegfried Moses, having earlier confirmed that the LBI did not intend to create a publicly accessible archival collection, offered a rather ambiguous proposal: that any material given to the LBI be made available as a loan to the Historical Society, in so far as the donor approved. The proposal was unanimously accepted.<sup>44</sup>

One result of this early debate was that no mention was made of any plan to create an LBI archival collection in Siegfried Moses's outline of the institute's program in the first volume of the *Year Book*. Moses did, however, indicate that, "the Institute encourages Jews from Germany to write their memoirs, provided they are in some way remarkable or – wholly or partly – typical life stories."<sup>45</sup> Such memoirs, he added, would be collected by the institute, studied as potential source material, and sometimes published. Two years later, the archive and library at the New York branch was well established, despite continued opposition among some members of the Jerusalem board who viewed an archive as a deviation from the institute's main objectives. Nevertheless, the policy embraced by New York received support from other Jerusalem board members as well as from London; at the international board meeting in London in September 1959 the importance of the publicly accessible archive was underscored by a resolution passed calling for a closer examination of the archive's holdings and publication of both documentary material and analytic studies in the *Year Book* and the *Bulletin*.

Four years later Max Kreutzberger reported that the archive had for the first time received outside help from London's Arnold Paucker and Robert Weltsch; Jerusalem had also contributed many memoirs collected from German-Jewish emigrants in Israel. At a meeting in Geneva in August 1966, it was emphasized that the New York library and archive belonged to the entire institute, and that it was the place to where all collected material should be transferred. Over the ensuing years, the archival collection continued to grow steadily, its status being taken up again at an international meeting held in London in autumn 1975 – the first meeting chaired by the institute's new president, Max Gruenewald. Upon Kreutzberger's appeal for

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<sup>44</sup> Minutes of the board meeting in Jerusalem, December 3, 1955.

<sup>45</sup> Siegfried Moses, "Leo Baeck Institute of Jews from Germany," p. xviii.

increased efforts to expand the collection, a resolution was adopted calling upon the Jerusalem and London branches to devote more energy towards acquiring archival material. The growth of the New York archive over the following years in part reflects such efforts.

In early 1976, the LBI Jerusalem published a call in the periodical *Mitteilungsblatt. Wochenzeitung des Irgun Olej Merkas Europa* for the donation of material to the institute. Strikingly, at subsequent meetings of the Jerusalem board this step was called into question by members affiliated with Israeli archival institutions (Paul Alsberg and Alex Bein from the Israeli State Archives, Daniel Cohen from the Central Archives for the History of the Jewish People, and Michael Heymann from the Central Zionist Archives), who stressed that original archival material located in Israel must not be transferred to another country. A decision was in any event arrived at not to create a separate archive in the Jerusalem branch, and it was noted that nothing had yet come of the published appeal.<sup>46</sup> Nevertheless, over the following years a small but growing archive was in fact established at the Jerusalem LBI.<sup>47</sup> As a result, the international working conference held in London in September 1981 issued instructions that the Jerusalem and New York branches should reach an agreement on the deposit of important library and archival material; whether such an agreement was reached is unclear.<sup>48</sup> In 1984 the Israeli State Archive requested that the Jerusalem LBI register its archival collection as a private archive, catalog its holdings, and provide a list of them to the state archive; a copy was also forwarded to New York.<sup>49</sup> Although a state of competition for archival material did not arise between the New York and Jerusalem branches, some members of the Jerusalem branch voiced discontent when the archive of the Council of Jews from Germany was transferred to the New York LBI.<sup>50</sup>

In 1985 the Institute was confronted with a further archival issue, namely the plan to establish a *Zentralarchiv zur Erforschung der Geschichte der Juden in Deutschland* (Central Archive for Research of the History of the Jews in Germany) at the *Hochschule für Jüdische Studien* in Heidelberg. Despite the strong opposition of the LBI to this step – which in light of its leading role in the field viewed the creation of such an institution as unnecessary and as a

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<sup>46</sup> Minutes of the LBI Jerusalem board meeting, March 10, 1976.

<sup>47</sup> LBI Jerusalem report of activities for March 1980 – June 1981; see further the minutes of the board meetings in the following years.

<sup>48</sup> The Minutes of the LBI New York board meeting, December 3, 1981, p. 2, indicate that at the international working conference “it was decided to coordinate the collection of books and archival materials between LBI New York and Jerusalem following the principle that LBI New York be and remain the center of such collections for the entire institute.”

<sup>49</sup> Report of activities of the LBI Jerusalem board for 1984.

<sup>50</sup> Minutes of the LBI Jerusalem board meeting, December 22, 1983.

potential competitor – and despite discussions between the institute and the German Interior Ministry, the plan went ahead, illustrating the LBI's inability to influence the *Zentralrat der Juden in Deutschland*, upon whose initiative the *Zentralarchiv* was founded. This in turn led to a call within the LBI to improve relationships with the *Zentralrat*, in the hope that the institute would at least have some say in the development of the new archival institution. At the same time, criticism was raised in Jerusalem of the New York branch for its uncompromising stance towards the *Zentralrat*.<sup>51</sup> Interestingly, the entire matter surrounding the establishment of the *Zentralarchiv* finds no mention whatsoever in the minutes of the New York board meetings.

Discussions surrounding the LBI archives again came to the fore at the international board meeting held in Berlin in November 1999, with initiatives taken by the New York branch to create some sort of entity of the institute in Berlin's Jewish Museum being intensely debated. Whereas the freedom of the individual branches to pursue working alliances with institutions in their own countries and abroad was widely accepted within the institute, a unilateral effort to establish a further LBI presence in Germany was bound to meet with strong opposition. As indicated in Mitchell Hart's article in this volume on the New York branch, by the time the Berlin meeting took place, negotiations with the museum's director Michael Blumenthal were well advanced. Two issues were on the agenda at this meeting: whether to found a fully-fledged independent branch of the institute in Berlin; and whether to establish a branch of the New York archives there, either as an alternative to the first possibility or in addition to it. The latter proposal was discussed first, and although differences arose with regard to the deposit of original materials in Berlin – the majority being against this, including the president of the New York branch, Ismar Schorsch – establishing a branch for microfilm copies of the archival holdings was unanimously accepted. In the course of this discussion, representatives of the Jerusalem branch argued for such copies also being deposited in Jerusalem – a proposal that to date has not been pursued.

Creating a fourth institute branch was another matter altogether. In general, it was clear that no such decision could be reached without consulting the executives of the individual branches, with Jerusalem president Robert Liberles noting "that he had no mandate from the Jerusalem LBI to approve far-reaching decisions concerning a Berlin LBI."<sup>52</sup> Michael Brenner added that discussions among members of the *Arbeitsgemeinschaft* would likewise be essential. Several participants voiced concern about the impact of an institute branch in Berlin on the annual German funding of the international LBI, and

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<sup>51</sup> Minutes of the LBI Jerusalem board meeting, December 19, 1985.

<sup>52</sup> Minutes of the LBI international board meeting, Berlin, November 1 and 2, 1999.

questions were raised concerning the financing of such a branch. Finally, doubts were expressed regarding both the autonomy and efficacy of a branch operating within the Jewish Museum.

The resolution emerging from this meeting expressed a readiness on the part of the institute to establish such a branch, as long as secure and independent funding could be obtained – funding that did not endanger the subsidies provided to the institute as a whole – and as long as suitable facilities could be provided at no cost to the institute. The resolution contained a proposal for negotiations between the presidents of both the international LBI and the New York branch on the one hand, and the director of the Jewish Museum Berlin on the other – these negotiations to be followed by consultations between all three branches of the institute and the *Arbeitsgemeinschaft*. In the end the New York LBI dropped plans for a fourth branch of the institute in Berlin, opting for the creation of a branch of the archives, as already approved by the international board.

### The LBI and the Generational Shift in German-Jewish History

At the LBI's inaugural meeting in May 1955, Hans Reichmann predicted a lifespan of five to eight years for the institute. Siegfried Moses was somewhat more cautious – uncertain whether the ultimate goal of the institute, a comprehensive history of German Jewry, could be realized after only four or five years or whether “such an ambitious project will have to wait for a great historian who does not depend on a personal contact with the generation of Jews who emigrated from Germany.”<sup>53</sup> In contrast to the expectations of these and other founding members, the LBI did not cease to exist after a short number of years. Almost all of the founders were between fifty and seventy years old when the institute was created; they were acutely aware that their own contribution towards preserving the heritage of German Jewry would be limited. Consequently, one of the key issues preoccupying the international board has been the need to attract a younger generation of scholars, for the sake of both continuing the work of the LBI and rejuvenating the membership of the individual boards.

Already at the international meeting in 1963, Schalom Adler-Rudel observed that it was becoming increasingly difficult to find suitable authors for the LBI's publications. Although a small number of interested young historians originating from Germany were present in Israel, very few were willing to devote themselves entirely to German-Jewish history. Rudel's colleague Hans Tramer was more optimistic, stating that a number of contributions by younger authors had appeared in the *Bulletin*, which was under his

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<sup>53</sup> Moses, “Leo Baeck Institute of Jews from Germany,” p. xiii.

editorship. In England, a general lack of interest in the institute's work was apparent, but developments in New York had been more encouraging. Whereas at the outset it had been next to impossible to find interested young people, seven years later six historians were continually working at the New York branch.<sup>54</sup>

With the more positive assessments having in fact proved rather overly optimistic, the need for more contributors and younger members was focused on at the 1966 working conference in Geneva as an urgent issue. The board members of all three branches were urged to increase their efforts to find adequate contributors and locate professors and institutions to whom the LBI could turn. Three years later, the problem of attracting a younger generation of researchers was considered more serious than that of finances. As a result, a call was made for all branches to organize symposia and lectures that would attract younger scholars. And for the first time, the possibility of holding seminars in Germany for young lecturers and students was considered.<sup>55</sup>

The main result of these deliberations was the first international conference of the LBI in Jerusalem, held in English and Hebrew in June 1970, devoted to "Research into the History of Central European Jewry from the Emancipation to its Destruction." The printed program echoed the discussions within the international board, stating that "a special and important goal of the conference is to interest further scholars – especially of the younger generation – in the institute's work and to engage them in fulfilling its goals."<sup>56</sup> The extent to which the conference had succeeded in this regard was already discussed at the international board meeting immediately following its conclusion, the general consensus being positive. Robert Weltsch urged his colleagues to see the conference as a turning point in the institute's history, emphasizing that "the leadership must be passed on to the 50, 30 and 20 year olds" – who, however, naturally needed the guidance of the founding members. Michael Bamberger from the New York LBI agreed, arguing that the problem was not so much one of attracting younger academics as giving them more responsibility. Both men also stressed that such individuals would bring different attitudes and approaches to the institute.<sup>57</sup>

At the same meeting representatives of all three branches reported on the progress they had made in respect to the problem under discussion. Arnold Paucker, who in 1959 had himself had become director of the London LBI at the age of 39, confirmed that the London board had indeed won a number of

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<sup>54</sup> Minutes of the LBI international board meeting, Jerusalem, October 21, 1963.

<sup>55</sup> Resolutions and results of the working conference in London on August 25 and 26, 1969.

<sup>56</sup> Program of the Conference on the Research into the History of Central European Jewry from the Emancipation to its Destruction, June 21 to 24, 1970.

<sup>57</sup> Minutes of the LBI international board meeting, Jerusalem, June 28, 1970.



younger members. For its part, the New York branch had reached an agreement with three American universities for students to do research at the archive, and Jerusalem had agreed in principle with the Hebrew University to collaborate in publishing dissertations. The positive nature of these developments was confirmed at the next working conference, held in London in May 1971: the LBI Jerusalem had now established contacts with both the Hebrew University and Tel Aviv University, and New York was preparing a second international conference on “Typologies of German Jewry,” to be held in the form of seminars. (The venue for this conference, which took place in 1973, was Columbia University’s Arden House outside of New York City.) The growing interest in the institute’s activities on the part of younger German historians was also noted, and the possibility was raised of strengthening contacts. Only in England did conditions seem unfavorable for attracting students and younger academics.<sup>58</sup>

Among other sources, the institute’s publications point to the success of the efforts of the three branches over the following years. An ever-increasing number of volumes published in the *Schriftenreihe* were by younger authors, as was the case with contributions to the LBI’s anthologies and the *Year Book*. In an article marking the twenty-fifth anniversary of the institute, Ismar Schorsch revealed that the average age of *Year Book* authors had dropped from 60 in 1956 to 48 1/2 in 1978, and that the number of authors who were professional historians had more than doubled.<sup>59</sup> In view of this development, the Jerusalem conference can indeed be seen as a turning point in the LBI’s history. In New York, two annual fellowships for younger scholars were established in 1980 (one of the first recipients being Marion Kaplan, who later became associate director of the New York institute); in the same year, a working group of young Israeli historians of German Jewry was founded under the aegis of the Jerusalem LBI.

The rejuvenation process among the leadership of the three branches, their boards and committees, and as such within the international board itself, took somewhat longer. Throughout the 1970s the need to increase efforts in this direction was reiterated at the board’s meetings. As mentioned, the London LBI took on Arnold Paucker in 1959; in New York, however, Fred Grubel was, at 59, only eight years younger than his predecessor Max Kreutzberger when he took over the branch’s directorship in 1967. Indeed until the end of the 1970s next to no younger representatives took part in the international board meetings, and most members of the international executive were still founding members of the institute. A resolution was

<sup>58</sup> Results of the working conference of the LBI in London, May 4 to 6, 1971.

<sup>59</sup> Ismar Schorsch, “The Leo Baeck Institute: Continuity and Desolation,” in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 25 (1980), pp. ix–xii. By the 1990’s the average age of the *Year Book*’s contributors had generally fallen further, and most recently, in 2003, it was 42.

passed in 1978 calling on the three branches to add younger historians to their leading committees within a year.<sup>60</sup> The results were evident in the international meeting in Jerusalem in 1980: among the new recruits (albeit in their 40s) were Julius Carlebach and Peter Pulzer in London, Ismar Schorsch and Guy Stern in New York.<sup>61</sup> Three of the founding members in attendance at the 1978 meeting had since passed away: Max Kreutzberger, Ernst Hamburger and Hans Tramer. As the institute celebrated its twenty-fifth anniversary a second generation of scholars and leaders had slowly begun to come to the fore.

As a reflection of this process, the age issue faded from discussions within the international board in the course of the 1980s, which witnessed an ever-growing interest in German-Jewish history in the USA, Israel and, in particular, in Germany. In the following decade, one of the most significant developments was the establishment by the *Arbeitsgemeinschaft* – chaired until 1999 by Reinhard Rürup, himself one of the youngest German historians to have become affiliated, at the end of the 1960s, with the LBI – of colloquia for Ph.D. students. Over the past 15 years nearly 250 such students have participated in the colloquia; a large number of them have contributed to the *Year Book*, to the *Jüdische Almanach* – founded by the Jerusalem LBI in 1993 as the *Bulletin's* successor – and to various conference volumes, with others publishing their theses in the *Schriftenreihe*. Through these colloquia and the many scholarly conferences organized by the *Arbeitsgemeinschaft*, a generation of younger German historians has had contact with and contributed to the work of the LBI – a development that will certainly continue. In addition, a conference every two years for young German and Israeli historians was established in 1995 by the Jerusalem branch in conjunction with the *Arbeitsgemeinschaft*; a year earlier the international board set up a highly successful three-year project for guest professors that saw historians of German Jewry from abroad teaching at universities in the new (formerly eastern) German states.

Over recent years the filling of many key positions within the different branches has reflected the rejuvenation process described above. At the end of the 1980s, Shlomo Mayer, at the time in his late 40s, became director of the Jerusalem branch and Robert Liberles took over its presidency in 1997 at the age of 53 (he would serve in this capacity for six years). In New York, the retirement of Fred Grubel in 1995 marked the end of an era: Carol Kahn Strauss, in her fifties, has served as executive director of the New York branch for the past decade, with Frank Mecklenburg, now 54, serving as head of

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<sup>60</sup> Minutes of the working conference of the LBI in New York, September 10 to 13, 1978.

<sup>61</sup> Minutes of the working conference of the LBI in Jerusalem, March 17 to 19, 1980.

research. In London, Arnold Paucker retired after 42 years as director, being succeeded in 2001 by the 35 year old Raphael Gross, who has since also become co-editor of the *Year Book* (together with John Grenville, one of the remaining distinguished figures in the London branch to have fled from Germany as a youth). Finally, in Germany, Georg Heuberger, then 47, took over at the helm of the *Freunde und Förderer* in 1993, while Michael Brenner at age 34 became head of the *Arbeitsgemeinschaft* in 1998.

### Conclusion

As the international board prepares to meet in Jerusalem to mark the institute's fiftieth anniversary, the individuals representing the institute's three branches, the *Arbeitsgemeinschaft*, and the *Freunde und Förderer* embody how much has changed at the LBI over the past half-century: the few still-active members born in pre-war Germany, individuals who as teenagers or young adults experienced life under Nazism, have been joined by descendants of German Jews born in the United States or Israel, Jews born and raised in Switzerland and the Federal Republic of Germany, non-Jewish Germans, and Jews of non-German descent. This development itself reflects the growth of research into German-speaking Jewry. Five decades ago the Leo Baeck Institute stood alone in the field; over the past thirty years it has been joined by a variety of universities and research institutions, for many of whom it has served as an inspiration, and with whom it has worked closely over the years.

The central role acquired by Germany in the 1990s has been mirrored in both the international board's deliberations and a reorientation of the institute's focus. This was underlined by Michael Meyer in 1993 at a meeting of the advisory council of the *Freunde und Förderer*, when he stated that "only in partnership with researchers living and working in Germany can the centers outside of Germany fruitfully continue their work."<sup>62</sup> This observation has been confirmed by the fact that over the past fifteen years, all three branches have undertaken many projects in collaboration with a wide range of German institutions, as well as with the *Arbeitsgemeinschaft*. Thus, for example, the project to take an inventory of Jewish sources in the archives of former East Germany was initiated by the New York branch and realized by the *Arbeitsgemeinschaft* in conjunction with the Historical Commission of Berlin; and both the London and Jerusalem branches have staged seminars and conferences together with the *Arbeitsgemeinschaft*. The present importance of Germany

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<sup>62</sup> Michael A. Meyer, "Jenseits und diesseits des Abgrundes. Die Aufgaben des Leo Baeck Instituts," in *LBI Information*, vol. 4 (1994), p. 7.

for the institute has also been made apparent in the international board's last three meetings having been convened there.

The last few years, however, have not witnessed intensified cooperation between the three branches themselves, all of whom have continue to expand their overall activities. Only a small number of joint projects have been realized, for example the digitization of the first forty volumes of the *Year Book* by the London and New York institutes. This situation has been reflected at the recent meetings of the international board, which have engaged in less discussion about the future course of the institute as a whole, in part being more preoccupied with controversial matters, for example the establishment of a Berlin branch. Yet although the branches continue to maintain a loose federation and enjoy a high degree of autonomy, decisions on major projects and key issues themselves continue to be undertaken collectively. Among such decisions have been the establishment of a schoolbook commission to prepare proposals for a curriculum on German-Jewish history for German schools in order to counteract a widespread German focus on the Holocaust and the one-sided portrayal of German Jews as victims; the goal is to incorporate all periods of German-Jewish history into the curriculum, with a stress on the active, positive role of the Jews in Germany's history.<sup>63</sup> In addition, a research project on the history of the Jewish communities in Germany after 1945 was launched at the last international meeting in Berlin, this to be carried out under the aegis of the *Arbeitsgemeinschaft*. And finally, the decision to undertake a history of the LBI itself and entrust it to outside scholars was also discussed and agreed upon by all three branches and the *Arbeitsgemeinschaft*.<sup>64</sup> When the international board convenes in Jerusalem to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the institute, it can thus look back upon five decades of coordination, confrontation, and cooperation. Its task, however, will not be to dwell on the past, but to address the challenges of the future.

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<sup>63</sup> The issue was first raised at the international board meeting in Berlin in November 1999 with the project being officially adopted by the LBI at the following gathering in Frankfurt in May 2001. In summer of 2003, the commission's proposals were published under the title *Deutsch-jüdische Geschichte im Unterricht. Orientierungshilfe für Lehrplan und Schulbucharbeit sowie Lehrerbildung und Lehrerfortbildung*.

<sup>64</sup> Minutes of the LBI international board meeting in Frankfurt, May 23 and 24, 2001.



## The Lost World of German Jewry: Collecting, Preserving and Reading Memories

Miriam Gebhardt

“Nevertheless the effectiveness of the chest’s contents is solely determined by the ways things are removed from it, the ways things are arranged with it, hence by the manner it is used.”<sup>1</sup>

In the context of the Leo Baeck Institute’s memoir collection, Jürgen Fohrmann’s analogy between the contents of a chest and those of an archive might seem all too easy: in the end, what is at stake is a collection of unique and often tragic life histories, unfolding before, during and after the Holocaust. Almost all those interested in the collection will be moved by the nigh intimate encounter with long-deceased individuals made possible through autobiographical accounts. Nevertheless, the analogy is apt in that it can help us understand the history of an archive that has passed through several markedly different stages in its organization, the uses made of it, and the approaches to its contents. In order to reconstruct this development, it is useful to draw on three theoretical premises addressing the ties between archiving, the material being archived, and the different readings of the material. Firstly, every archive always establishes a border between what belongs and what does not belong. Secondly, the authority involved here limits both the contents and its interpretations. Lastly, such demarcation prepares the ground for stories, genealogies and fields of meaning.<sup>2</sup> Even when the archived material remains unaltered over time, it is subject to a very wide range of treatment; the objects stored in the chest can only become visible and return to cultural circulation through such a transformation into stories and commentaries.<sup>3</sup>

This way of seeing things is in harmony with a constructivist mnemonic theory that can be applied to the archive as an institution for recollection. Just as research on memory has cast doubt on the notion that the past is stored in memory unaltered, the archive cannot be considered as simply the locus

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<sup>1</sup> Jürgen Fohrmann, “‘Archivprozesse’ oder Über den Umgang mit der Erforschung von ‘Archiv,’” Introduction in Hedwig Pompe and Leander Scholz (eds.), *Archivprozesse. Die Kommunikation der Aufbewahrung*, Cologne 2002, p. 21.

<sup>2</sup> Jacques Derrida, *Mal d’Archive: Une impression freudienne*, Paris 1995, esp. pp. 5–35.

<sup>3</sup> Fohrmann, “‘Archivprozesse,’” p. 26.

for preserving past contents that would exist in the same form without the archive.<sup>4</sup> A comment of Derrida is once again apposite here: “No, the technical structure of the archiving archive already determines the structure of the archivable contents in its origins and relation to the future. The archiving produces the event to the same degree it records it.”<sup>5</sup> Departing from such a premise, we can identify three stages emerging since the establishment of the LBI’s memoir collection. Each of these stages is characterized by a specific form of “archival authority” and specific conditions of preservation. As we will see, the corresponding interpretations of the memoirs become evident in both the qualities ascribed to the autobiographical texts and the ways of reading them.

### The First Stage of Archiving: The Definition and Canonization of Memory

As is well known, the motivation for establishing a collection of memoirs by German Jews was a recognition of the fact that, in Max Kreutzberger’s words, “the German-speaking Jewry of Central Europe ... is among the few historical formations with a history stretching back a millennium and more that can be considered definitively finished. ... German-Jewish history must thus be considered ended” – to which he added the question, “but can it now be written?”<sup>6</sup> This question clearly reflects a sense that after their institutional, geographical and, to great extent, personal ties with the Germans had been severed, the German-Jewish survivors of Nazi persecution faced the pressing task of saving at least their cultural memory. But although held by the LBI leadership, this view was not shared by all the German-Jewish emigrants. Hence after the war Kreutzberger sensed a need to forget at work among his contemporaries – a need lending all the more urgency to building an institution such as the LBI. As he put it, “as long as there are witnesses to many of the events, it will still be possible to spark interest in them”<sup>7</sup> – a remark preceded by the following observations :

Other groups of immigrants remembered their origins with pleasure, sometimes even with pride, cultivating and transmitting these memories, not allowing their mother tongue to be forgotten; this pattern basically no longer held for Jews stemm-

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<sup>4</sup> For an overview of memory theory, see Daniel Schacter, *Searching for Memory: The Brain, the Mind, and the Past*, New York 1996.

<sup>5</sup> Derrida, *Mal d’Archive*, p. 34.

<sup>6</sup> Max Kreutzberger, “Bedeutung und Aufgabe deutsch-jüdischer Geschichtsschreibung in unserer Zeit,” in *In zwei Welten. Siegfried Moses zum 75. Geburtstag*, Tel Aviv 1962, p. 630.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 633.

ing from Central Europe. ... It is thus perhaps not surprising that occasionally resistance or even refusal to be confronted by the past, to offer space to the natural impulse to remember, emerges from the same circles that should represent the natural bearers of German-Jewish historical thinking. But what is overlooked here is that the desire to let the past fall into forgetfulness means to finally say yes to the Nazi projects of extermination and extinction. The destruction would only be complete with a deletion of German Jewry from the book of history.<sup>8</sup>

For such reasons, in this undertaking memoir writers initially had an informational role: they were meant to offer authentic subjective witness in a comprehensive historical study of German Judaism, thus complementing the work of the professional historians. From the start, the LBI leaders were not content with waiting for émigrés to deliver salvaged documents to the institute; rather, they arranged house-visits in order to obtain material from aging survivors. The institute employee responsible for the visits was Eva Michaelis, who made clear how laborious the procedure was in a report to Hans Tramer written in 1956. Michaelis complained that not enough material about the LBI was available to avoid long-winded explanations about one's identity and what use could be made of the family papers to hesitant and aged potential donors.<sup>9</sup> In any event, the hope was not only that the German-Jewish survivors would search out their old memoirs from the family papers, but also that they would actively record their memories for archival use. The same report refers to a list of "personalities" to be approached for the purpose of "recording their memories and experiences, with their general and prototypical value."<sup>10</sup>

As the term "personalities" suggests – and as we will see below – the people envisioned here were to have special and "prototypical" life stories. Even if strictly speaking they were not historians of the German-Jewish past, in this view they were still seen as experts who would approach the task of remembering with suitably objective means. In his look back on the first decade of memoir collection, Siegfried Moses located that project within a metaphorical building the LBI had started constructing. Although the memoirs certainly did not constitute the building's pillars, they were nevertheless "valuable, sometimes indispensable construction material" that genuine historians could then use in creating a great historical account of German Judaism.<sup>11</sup>

The functionalization of the memoirs in the service of the LBI's central, ambitious task, the historical memorializing of German Judaism, defined the

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<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 632.

<sup>9</sup> Eva Michaelis, report to Hans Tramer, April 12, 1956, *LBI Jerusalem*, file 1099. My thanks go to Guy Miron for furnishing me with copies of important files from LBI Jerusalem concerning the creation of the memoir collection.

<sup>10</sup> Hans Tramer, "Lebenszeugnisse," *Bulletin des Leo Baecks Instituts*, 8 (1959), p. 179.

<sup>11</sup> Siegfried Moses, *The First Ten Years of the Leo Baeck Institute*, New York 1965, p. 4.



criteria involved in the archiving process – what belonged and what did not. The demarcation of borders is manifest in the section on memoirs in the institute’s “Outline of a Program”:

The institute encourages Jews from Germany to write their memoirs, provided they are in some way remarkable or – wholly or partly – typical life stories. Memoirs of this kind are being systematically collected and sighted, as they come to hand. Such writings can provide important source material for historical research. Memoirs, or extracts from them, which are historically or sociologically of special interest, are to be published.<sup>12</sup>

The life stories considered “remarkable” and “typical” were those capable of offering an exemplary depiction of the German-Jewish heritage. The archive’s first generation, as embodied above all by Max Kreutzberger in our context, offered the following systematic description of what was considered exemplary within German Judaism’s historical heritage:

- The period since emancipation (from the ghetto economy to the world economy, *Wissenschaft des Judentums* ...)
- The problem of cultural symbiosis (German translation of the Bible, achievements in science, German Jews in literature, as preceptors of public opinion – press, publicity)
- Position within the German economy and the Socialist International
- The catastrophe (antisemitism, National Socialism until 1939)
- German Jewry’s influence on world Jewry (political emancipation, assimilation, religious movements, systematization of Jewish thought, German Jews in Israel)<sup>13</sup>

As indicated, the specific approach to the memoir collection both determined and emerged from their archiving. In this respect we have two reference points in the LBI’s early period: the choice of those memoirs the institute considered worthy of publication; and the so-called “Kreutzberger catalog” that appeared in book form in 1970 and represented the apogee of the memoir collection’s first stage. The titles in the publication series both reproduced and set the measure for the autobiographical memory of pre-1938 German Jewry. Among the authors were the Karlsruhe doctor, feminist and Zionist, Rahel Straus; the Hamburg poet and publicist Margarete Susmann; the East Prussian politician and high-ranking Zionist official Kurt Blumenfeld; the engineer Arnold Hindl; the Berlin businessman Georg Tietz, author of a history of the Tietz family who founded the department store “Hertie”;

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<sup>12</sup> Siegfried Moses, “Leo Baeck Institute of Jews from Germany: Outline of a Program,” in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 1 (1956), pp. xi–xviii.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. xv–xvi (minor alterations have been made for the standardization of English usage).

the Stettin Social Democratic journalist Julie Braun-Vogelstein; and the Munich mathematics professor – later the rector of the Hebrew University – Abraham A. Fraenkel. Born in the 1880s, these individuals embody the cultural, economic, and political success of the Jews living in the German-speaking world in the pre-1933 period. Many had been active early on in Zionist activities and others, such as Hindl, could look back on a heroic struggle for survival. We can thus speak of paradigmatic memoirs, because on the one hand they portrayed the political and cultural spectrum of the elite among the German-Jewish emigrants, and on the other hand because their authors belonged to the last generation of Jews to be socialized in Germany in the post-emancipation period and also the last generation for whom it was still possible to spend their most important years as adults there. In this way they were simultaneously witnesses of a relatively harmonious phase in the relationship between Jews and Germans and the end of that relationship.

In the afterword to Rahel Straus's memoirs, published in 1961, Max Kreutzberger formulated a specific view of the German-Jewish past, a view presented throughout the memoirs published by the institute in the early period. His pride is quite openly expressed in his language:

In these memoirs we relive the history of German Judaism in its manifold forms, facets and landscapes. We see German Jews in Napoleon's army, experience their rootedness and good neighborly relations in the country, the rise from modest learning tied to village life to worldly cultivation and citizenship, from financial constraints to great economic renown; great rabbis and scholars recount their lives; chroniclers of small-town life become the narrators and analysts of human problems that affect the world and find worldly fame. Politicians speak of their struggles and engagement in the battle of opinions and everyday politics.<sup>14</sup>

The afterword confirms the "creative power, intuition, capacity for judgment, and measure" of Rahel Straus's memoirs, virtues through which, Kreutzberger suggests, she can be counted among the great critics of contemporary life.<sup>15</sup> In the first stage of the institute's archival efforts, such memoirs were read as an "historical stroke of fortune"<sup>16</sup> – an expression that also makes clear what was not of concern: the everyday, intimate aspects of the lives being recounted. The memoirs' editors at the LBI removed passages they found excessively private, giving the narratives a clearer contour<sup>17</sup> and placing primary emphasis on the public life of the distinguished German-Jewish authors. Those with "archival power" at the early institute, above all Kreutz-

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<sup>14</sup> Max Kreutzberger, Afterword, in Rahel Straus, *Wir lebten in Deutschland. Erinnerungen einer deutschen Jüdin, 1880–1933*, Stuttgart 1961, pp. 301–304.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 304.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 303.

<sup>17</sup> See the above-mentioned report by Eva Michaelis to Hans Tramer, *LBI Jerusalem*, file 1099.

berger, found themselves and their perspective regarding German-Jewish history articulated in great memoirs. The basis of such an approach was the founders' conviction that the lives of certain figures better represented their own cultural values – that these figures acted, as it were, as their representatives, thus clearly distinguishing themselves from ordinary people.

In encapsulated form, the characterizations at work in the 300 memoirs forming the “Kreutzberger catalog” themselves express the first stage of the institute's approach to archiving and reading memories.<sup>18</sup> As Kreutzberger described it, the accepted documents were (1) memoirs by important men and women active in economics, science and scholarship, culture, government, and the rabbinate, along with leading Zionists, prominent Israelis, and various individuals linked to important personalities and able to offer accounts of their activities, as well as the histories of firms and biographies of eminent scholars and (2) unusual accounts of flight, war diaries, and travel reports from earlier centuries.

The most frequent attribution in the “Kreutzberger catalog” is to the effect that an author had an “important position within the Jewish community.” Other topical descriptions are along the following lines:

- “His family belongs to one of the most respected and wealthiest in Swabia, [and] played a special role in Germany's Jewish life after World War I.”<sup>19</sup>
- “The memoirs furnish an overview of Jewish mores and practice at the start of the nineteenth century.”<sup>20</sup>
- “[The memoirs show] how the sons and grandsons open the gates of Frankfurt am Main and the world through their ability and entrepreneurial spirit; how the Epstein company developed into one of the most respected in Frankfurt, growing even more through a linkage with the world-renowned Baer family and its rare book business; how orthodox piety gives way to the Enlightenment and assimilation, with German literature and art being cultivated above all – this atmosphere, in many respects typical of nineteenth-century German Jewry, forms the ever-changing backdrop against which the author's personal experiences are projected.”<sup>21</sup>
- “Although the author is an assimilated Jew who is true to the Kaiser, he anticipates the destruction of German Jewry, but nevertheless decides to hold steadfast with it to the end and perish with it.”<sup>22</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Max Kreutzberger (with Irmgard Foerg) (eds.), *Leo Baeck Institute New York, Bibliothek und Archiv. Katalog*, vol. 1, Tübingen 1970 (Schriftenreihe wissenschaftlicher Abhandlungen des Leo Baecks Instituts 22) (*Kreutzberger Catalog*).

<sup>19</sup> *Kreutzberger Catalog*, p. 409.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 407.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 402.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 387.

- “[His] strong will to live gave the author the strength to survive the terrible ordeal of this [death-] march.”
- “For his children, he records how he led his life and what life has taught him: industry and thrift, piety and patience.”<sup>23</sup>

The “Kreutzberger catalog” was not only a tool for facilitating access to the LBI’s memoir collection; at the same time, it was also an embodiment of both the collection and German-Jewish history in general. It offers a specific historical picture, one maintained by a bourgeois, acculturated majority of German Jews, including most of those who would become leading figures in the LBI during its first decades.<sup>24</sup> Hence the search-tool is here also the user’s signpost, steering the historian towards what had been canonized by the institute’s leaders.

In the first stage of the LBI’s archiving process, the institute’s founders both mirrored and generated the scholarly and collective memory of the German-Jewish past. The orientation towards prominent representatives of their former community and their accomplishments; towards evidence of the fruitfulness of the community’s culture; stories of the rise “from ghetto to villa” and peddler to industrialist; the union of piety with openness to the world, a sense of tradition with liberality, self-awareness with assimilation, rootedness with mobility, and so forth, all these formed a cultural memory that clearly corresponded to specific needs for scholarly and indeed existential identification – those perceived by the German-Jewish emigrants who held authority in the institute’s archives.

### The Second Stage of Archiving: A Revaluation and Expansion of Memory

The “constructedness” of this (and every) archival reception became evident with the institute’s first major scholarly project involving the memoir collection. When Monika Richarz began to examine the collection closely in 1970, she was surprised by the frequent lack of correspondence between the Kreutzberger catalog’s short descriptions and the actual contents of the memoirs.<sup>25</sup> In any event, a new stage in the reading of the autobiographical material was ushered in by Richarz and other scholars at the start of the

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<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 438.

<sup>24</sup> See Miriam Gebhardt, “Historisches Denken im deutsch-jüdischen Familiengedächtnis,” in Ulrich Wyrwa (ed.), *Judentum und Historismus. Zur Entstehung der jüdischen Geschichtswissenschaft in Europa*, Frankfurt am Main and New York 2003, pp. 233–245.

<sup>25</sup> Information supplied by Monika Richarz in conversation with the author, at Tutzing conference, February 23–26, 2004.

1970s. Since with the successful institutionalization of the LBI's archive the threat of an eradication of the cultural memory of German Jewry had been overcome, room for something new – the entrustment to a young, non-Jewish German historian of a major editorial project involving close historical scrutiny of the archives – could now be created.

This second stage had a broader cultural context: the criticism leveled by ethnic minorities and other marginalized groups against existing cultural archives because of their lack of representation – criticism sometimes accompanied by the establishment by such groups of their own archives.<sup>26</sup> The search for “roots” was accompanied by a higher valuation of the differences from the surrounding majority culture, or from the males who held power. It is Boris Groys' view that a degree of self-evident presence within the culture is needed for one or another group to raise its voice. In this manner, a Holocaust generation that had now become securely integrated into various milieux had achieved a new importance within the “cultural hierarchy” of the existing “preservation systems.”<sup>27</sup> For its part, the LBI could now confirm that importance in the framework of a broader revalorization of the private social sphere that had, apparently, begun to emerge within the West's hierarchy of values. For Groys, in the current phase of “modernistic critique,” the “authentic” and “original” are particularly esteemed; the following observation of his can serve to remind us that memoirs epitomize such authenticity:

[Lying behind such esteem is] the belief that reality is in itself differentiated and that human beings are different by their very nature. If all of them sincerely try to “be themselves,” each will in the end be distinct from the other. Beyond this, in every present moment a human being is different than in the past moment. Correspondingly, in every moment human beings will produce something new if they only follow their individual desires, life-impulses, and intuitions.<sup>28</sup>

Thus especially in its role as a system for preserving past private lives was the LBI's memoir collection assured new attention and a new clientele.

For historians in general, memoirs only became a major theme in the early 1980s, with the expansion of social history, which increasingly turned to private attitudes and behavior patterns under the headings of history of daily life, micro-history and historical anthropology.<sup>29</sup> Above all, as the “documen-

<sup>26</sup> See Boris Groys, *Über das Neue. Versuch einer Kulturökonomie*, Frankfurt am Main 1999, pp. 31–32.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 31–32.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 36.

<sup>29</sup> For an example of an essay from this period that still does not address the value of memoirs as historiographical sources and that voices skepticism regarding the oral history movement, see Sybil H. Milton, “Lost, Stolen, and Strayed: The Archival Heritage of Modern German-Jewish History,” in Yehuda Reinharz and Walter Schatzberg, *The Jewish Response to German Culture: From Enlightenment to the Second World War*, Hannover and London 1985, pp. 317–335.

tation of an ego," the memoir has intensified interest in "individual persons, their typical or singular conceptual world and their view of the world in general."<sup>30</sup> Aesthetic vision is no longer exclusively the province of poets and artists, historical insight no longer that of a cultural elite. Relevance is no longer found only in the "authentic," subjective contemplation of important events, which had to be used in addition to so-called "hard" sources like governmental documents.

The historiography of bourgeois society and culture now discovered memoirs as important sources – this because the work of self-explanation and self-identity they presented was above all a bourgeois practice, thus clarifying the societal context from which they emerged, as well as interconnected problems such as sexual hierarchies and hegemony, intergenerational cultural transfer, norms and symbols, and specific experiences, environments value systems and cultural particularities.

In the context of German-Jewish social history, Monika Richarz's three-volume edition of 126 memoirs by largely unknown writers initiated this new archival reception: since its publication, historians have frequently culled information from this source. Since the edition did itself stem from socio-historiographical premises, the texts Richarz published were not chosen as examples of, for instance, literary, economic, social or political accomplishment but for what they reveal regarding the status and transformation of German Jewry, and for the implications of such findings for understanding factors such as forms of cultural reproduction, socialization, patterns of settlement or demographic behavior and so forth. In this manner, the authors themselves receded into the background.

The basis of this new focus was an attribution of new qualities to the memoirs: where earlier, as indicated, the LBI's orientation had mainly been towards qualitative value accorded representative status, the orientation was now towards a subjectivity and authenticity, and with it a new representativity defined in quantitative and not qualitative terms. In the foreword to Richarz's collection, Reinhard Rürup, a guiding force behind the entire project, expressed the view that autobiographical sources form the basis for a yet unwritten social history of post-Emancipation German Jewry. Furthermore, he saw them as offering a "direct encounter with the reality of Jewish life in Germany: they offer images from the Jewish past that in their visibility and vivacity can contribute towards the recuperation of an important element of German history within present-day collective consciousness."<sup>31</sup> Manifestly

<sup>30</sup> See Winfried Schulze, "Ego-Dokumente: Annäherung an den Menschen in der Geschichte?" Introductory observations for the conference on "Ego-Dokumente," in *idem* (ed.), *Ego-Dokumente. Annäherung an den Menschen in der Geschichte*, Berlin 1996, pp. 11–30.

<sup>31</sup> Reinhard Rürup, Foreword to Monika Richarz (ed.), *Jüdisches Leben in Deutschland*, 3 vols., Stuttgart 1976–1982, p. 7.

directed at German readers, Rürup's remarks thus invoke the authenticity of the Jewish memories involved as a precondition for their collective impact.

Now as before, factual credibility was a basic criterion in approaching the historical sources; now as before, a certain degree of skepticism was present in this regard. At the same time, as Richarz explained things, in socio-historical analysis dubious reliability was not the decisive factor,

for at issue here are not so much important individual facts as fundamental social structures that are more difficult to falsify. Naturally one must assume that most authors of a family history embellish its pre-history through the right choices and the omission of dark passages – either from understandable vanity or from concern about the family. But what cannot be so easily stylized in a detailed account are the family's social and cultural milieu, the author's educational horizon, his piety and self-understanding as a Jew, for such things are not only articulated *expressis verbis* but through the record's entire conception.<sup>32</sup>

And here as in an earlier context, we encounter the metaphor of the construction of an edifice in the form of Jewish social history, the memoirs constituting building-blocks needing support from other, more credible source material.<sup>33</sup>

Extending into the present, this second stage of archival reception is narrowly tied to the LBI's second generation, its "program" and sense of history being distinctly different from those of the founding generation. Diane Spielmann has defined the context in reference to "the task of the Second Generation," which, she indicates,

becomes more difficult than that of our parents. In projecting ahead we must perpetuate a "memory" of events we never experienced but only learned of through them and their tales. Obligated to think beyond our own lifetime so that those events will never become trivialized nor become a footnote to history, we thus have thrust upon us the unique responsibility to make what will soon amount to a lesson in history remain a potent and daring force in shaping a collective conscience.<sup>34</sup>

Where the pressing task of the first generation was the construction of a German-Jewish history through carefully directed collection and appeals for material, the second generation was mainly concerned with conveying a tradition. This is apparent, for instance, in remarks of both Steven Lowenstein and Marion Kaplan, these two scholars having promoted a specific form of

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<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>34</sup> Diane Spielman, "Fifty Years after *Kristallnacht*: Another Second Generation Perspective," in Abraham J. Peck (ed.), *The German-Jewish Legacy in America, 1938–1988: From Bildung to the Bill of Rights*, Detroit 1989, pp. 219–221. I am grateful to Diane Spielman for the instructive conversations we had while I was in New York in the summer of 2003.

archival reception with a high degree of success. For Lowenstein, “the German-Jewish heritage is like a family heirloom which I was brought up to cherish.”<sup>35</sup> And Marion Kaplan correspondingly indicates that:

Our religious legacy, as I sense it, is that, like in Germany, religion remained most alive in the family. Whereas in most cases, synagogue attendance fell off ... , celebrations of holidays and lifecycle events occur in the family, and the feeling of being Jewish is often connected with the family (the Jewish mother, the close family, and other clichés already prevalent in Germany).<sup>36</sup>

Both remarks point to a focus – we might even say a shift of values – now centered upon the family and, especially, the mother. This development has been accelerated through various cultural trends that can be summarized by the rubrics “women’s studies” and “finding our fathers.” With the latter phrase, Dan Rottenberg offered a clear starting-point in 1977 to research on family histories. In the same year, the Jewish Genealogical Society was founded; starting in the early 1970s, the LBI News had itself offered information and suggestions regarding such research. In pieces with titles such as “Tracing your Family,” the archive was praised as – taking that piece as an example – “the most important specialized depository of genealogical material pertaining to German Jewry. Hundreds of family trees and family histories, preserved in the LBI archives, some published and others in manuscript form, trace ancestry to the 18<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup> and still earlier centuries.”<sup>37</sup>

Alongside the great memoirs, large family collections now appear: for example those of Rudolf Simonis, Jacob Jacobson, and Berthold Rosenthal, with their hundreds of family narratives, family trees, documentations of birth and marriage, testaments, mohel-books, tax records, and memoirs; these could now also be evaluated in a serial manner as is the case with both social history and the history of mentalities. In this way, the family memoir was moved from a secular space into that of the culture’s accepted archival material, the hierarchical relationship between high culture and popular culture defined as questionable. The earlier approach to the memoirs, oriented as it was around social history, was expanded to include the categories of gender or the history of childhood, or else organized entirely around these categories, as in the work of Marion Kaplan.<sup>38</sup> In her most important book on

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<sup>35</sup> Steven Lowenstein, “The Last Generation of German Jewishness,” in Peck (ed.), *German-Jewish Legacy*, pp. 219–221.

<sup>36</sup> Marion Kaplan, “Fragments of a German-Jewish Heritage,” in Peck (ed.), *German-Jewish Legacy*, p. 194.

<sup>37</sup> Anon., “Tracing your family,” *LBI News*, vol. 18 (Summer 1977), pp. 4–5.

<sup>38</sup> Marion Kaplan, *The Making of the Jewish Middle Class: Women, Family and Identity in Imperial Germany*, New York 1991; *Between Dignity and Despair: Jewish Women in the Aftermath of November 1938*, New York 1996; *idem* (ed.), *Geschichte des jüdischen Alltags in Deutschland vom 17. Jahrhundert bis 1945*, Munich 2003.



middle-class Jewish women in the Wilhelminian period, Kaplan has focused on a previously widely ignored aspect of German-Jewish identity: the role of women and mothers in the transmission and modernization of Jewish tradition.<sup>39</sup>

The first stage of the LBI's archival reception gravitated around the quasi-mythic congeniality – and indeed privileged European Jewish locus – of German-Jewish culture. In the second stage, other questions were directed towards the memoirs: in this author's view, the emphasis was now placed on a familial inheritance understood as the strongest remaining tie to a receding German past. Since because of the temporal and spatial distance, relatively direct contact with the German-Jewish family tradition was no longer self-evident, memories of family traditions – and indeed memories of memories (i.e., of stories told by grandparents) took on great weight. In the themes chosen by the LBI's second generation – the establishment and growth of the German-Jewish middle class, social transformation, family life, the history of German-Jewish women – its own historicity served as an interpretive framework.

### The Third Stage of Archiving: The Communicative Potential and Pluralization of Memory

The LBI's third stage of archival reception does not stand in a purely chronological relation to its counterparts; rather, characterized by a generally faster pace of scholarly production, it represents, once again, a fresh evaluation of the archival contents that began mixing with the earlier approaches in the 1990s. Since then, numerous group-specific ideas of the past and memory-centered subcultures have been competing in the public sphere. It is Lutz Raphael's view that these “are hardly touched by any critical scrutiny of their contents by those with specialized knowledge, indeed rejecting a relativizing of their own historical culture through critical scholarly objections and the production of evidence.”<sup>40</sup> Television has become an ever more important medium for projecting historical images and instilling a sense of collective memory, with themes from modern history – above all from both World Wars and the Nazi period – predominating.

At the same time, the distance from German-Jewish history before the Holocaust has become greater, both because of the simple passage of time and because with the rise of cultural historical theory, the perception of an estrangement between past and present has been intensified. This develop-

<sup>39</sup> Kaplan, *The Making of the Jewish Middle Class*.

<sup>40</sup> Lutz Raphael, *Geschichtswissenschaft im Zeitalter der Extreme. Theorien, Methoden, Tendenzen von 1900 bis zur Gegenwart*, Munich 2003, p. 222.

ment has led to a paradoxical situation: on the one hand there has been an increasing tendency to explore the past in terms of life histories, the general boom in autobiographical literature in both America and Germany being a good example of this; on the other hand, there is a tendency within those disciplines oriented towards cultural studies to insist on the constructed nature of memories, which thus need to be deconstructed. Recollected events from normal, everyday life, its rituals and institutions, thus find themselves dissected with all the methodologies available to make them look exotic and unfamiliar to us.<sup>41</sup>

Untouched by the present-day scholarly mistrust of autobiographical literature's claim to authenticity, popular interest in the genre has continued to grow at a rapid rate. This phenomenon appears to be reflected in the material collected and published by the LBI: since 1955, the memoir holdings have increased exponentially.<sup>42</sup> The material's profile has naturally changed in the process. In the beginning we find memoirs by German Jews alone, then by German-speaking Jews in general, with the holdings finally expanded to take in non-Jewish relations of German-speaking Jews together with their descendants. In other words, where at the start those brought into the LBI's memorial project were German Jews who had usually spent at least most of their life in Germany, meanwhile the desired memoirs and documents are contributed by their children and grandchildren, often motivated mainly by a pragmatic concern with having a place to harbor the continued family archives and less by concerns with German or Jewish culture. A decade after the LBI's founding, three-quarters of the 450 memoirs then in the collection were written in German; at present, among the 1,200 memoirs now in the collection, around three-quarters of them are by Americans, the great majority of the entire holdings having been written after 1945.

When it comes to the scholarly approach to these memoirs, one can gloss the above-mentioned skepticism with a comment by the historians Marcus Funck and Stephan Malinowski:

For historians, the most important potential of autobiographical texts ought not lie in an effort to show the autobiographical author what his life actually was. For the historian, the value of the autobiography begins with the assumption that autobiographical accounts offer insight into the authors' sense of themselves and the world – insight not addressed by the categories of “correct” and “false.”<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> On the individualization of memory, see Clemens Wischermann (ed.), *Die Legitimität der Erinnerung und die Geschichtswissenschaft*, Stuttgart 1996; and *idem*, *Vom kollektiven Gedächtnis zur Individualisierung der Erinnerung*, Stuttgart 2002.

<sup>42</sup> A very incomplete overview of the total number of autobiographical texts in the memoir collection furnishes the following figures: 1957: 150; 1961: 300; 1970: 450; 1976: 600; 1989: 1000; 1995: 1000; 2003: 1200.

<sup>43</sup> Marcus Funck and Stephan Malinowski, “Geschichte von oben. Autobiogra-

Only now, Funck and Malinowski indicate, has historiography begun to acknowledge that read as strictly objective narratives, memoirs can “illustrate any arbitrary hypothesis.”<sup>44</sup> It is likely that the authors are here expressing disappointment over historians having taken so long to follow the lead of other disciplines systematically concerned with autobiographies and memory, such as literary history and psychology.

In any case, the third stage of archival reception does not merely involve a critique of memory-centered narratives and a questioning of their scholarly value. It has also involved an expansion of the above-mentioned categories of subjectivity, authenticity and representativity – and with it an intensified sense of the importance of these ascriptions. With the stress now placed on the linguistic constitution of every self-interpretation, the category of narrativity has come into play. From this perspective, whether stemming from a known or unknown hand, every memoir not only has documentary value but also the character of a cultural representation.

Following one tradition in the sociology of knowledge – a tradition tied to the work of Alfred Schütz and Thomas Luckmann – every individual memory within a culture possesses a general cultural representativity, irrespective of its social representativity. It presents the interior perspective of an individual who must retrospectively endow his experiences with social meaning.<sup>45</sup> From this sociological perspective, such a process is never purely private and arbitrary but rather is embedded in a socializing process, hence part of a “historical conception of the world.”<sup>46</sup>

In the third stage of the LBI’s memoir reception, there has been a manifest effort to offer a new response to the question of relevance. In Monika Richarz’s memoir volumes, only what she refers to as a “fraction” of the LBI’s collection is considered to have relevance, since most of the memoirs are “concerned primarily with genealogy and portrayal of character.”<sup>47</sup> More recently, scholars have leaned towards extending the circle of eligible voices, devoting great attention precisely to the most private material. Each author, then, is taken with the same level of seriousness as a cultural agent. For example, in the analysis of the “mnemonic strategies” used by bourgeois German Jewish memoir writers in the Wilhemian and Weimar periods, the focus of interest is no longer simply on exemplary public figures, intellec-

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phien als Quelle einer Sozial- und Kulturgeschichte des deutschen Adels in Kaiserreich und Weimarer Republik,” in *Historische Anthropologie. Kultur. Gesellschaft. Alltag*, vol. 7 (1999), no. 2, pp. 236–270, here p. 238.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 240.

<sup>45</sup> Alfred Schütz and Thomas Luckmann, *Strukturen der Lebenswelt*, Konstanz 2003.

<sup>46</sup> Thomas Luckmann, *Lebenswelt und Gesellschaft. Grundstrukturen und geschichtliche Wandlungen*, Munich 1980, pp. 123–142.

<sup>47</sup> Richarz, Introduction to *Jüdisches Leben*, vol. 1, p. 18.

tuals, artists<sup>48</sup> – the traditional distinction between popular and high culture having no real sense in the context of broad cultural patterns. A basic premise here is that within a specific historical and social setting, individuals will make use of similar procedures to interpret meaning. Hence it has been possible to identify distinct patterns of recollection in the memoirs of bourgeois German Jews written between 1890 and 1932: typical elements in these memoirs included a representation of mythically invested family founders, a belated reinterpreting of the factors entering into one's marriage, and a tendency to gloss over childhood experiences of antisemitism.

All in all, the third stage of the LBI's archival reception cannot be reduced to a single denominator. Running alongside a plurality of approaches to the memoirs, a focus on the concept of "communicativity" seems to constitute a shared framework: this concept means to denote consideration of the dialogical or communicative character of the archived material, both in the private sense of the archiving of individual memoirs and in the institutional sense of the archiving of forms of cultural memory. Regarding the first sense: memoirs have never represented a process of context-free self-mirroring. In this respect Carola Hilmes observes that, "the narcissistic ego, in particular, will not wish to do without a public."<sup>49</sup> The therapeutically intended autobiography is itself a confrontation with its own time and both imagined and real readers. The present author's own work on around fifty LBI memoirs has underscored the depth of the embedding of individual pre-1933 memoirs in a context of family memory – something often manifest in a direct addressing and instructing of one's descendants. Even at present, viewing oneself in the mirror of family members is a frequent compositional strategy.

In his own treatment of the communicative aspects of memoirs,<sup>50</sup> Guy Miron has offered a distinction between events that are "narrated" and those that are "narrative," in order to stress the influence of what might be termed the mnemonic framework on what is being remembered. Miron here demonstrates the importance of considering the concrete temporal context of the texts in question, the period, locus, and author's lifelong socialization. In this regard, what has become clear is that in any historical reading of a

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<sup>48</sup> See Miriam Gebhardt, *Das Familiengedächtnis. Erinnerung im deutsch-jüdischen Bürgertum 1890–1932*, Stuttgart 1999.

<sup>49</sup> Carola Hilmes, *Das inventarische und das inventorische Ich. Grenzfälle des Autobiographischen*, Heidelberg 2000, p. 339.

<sup>50</sup> Guy Miron, "Autobiography as a Source for Social History: German Jews in Palestine/Israel as a Test Case," in *Tel Aviver Jahrbuch für deutsche Geschichte* 29 (2000), p. 251–281; *idem*, "Ein Blick zurück. Judentum und traditionell-jüdische Erinnerungsmuster deutschstämmiger Juden in Palästina," in Yotam Hotam and Joachim Jacob (eds.), *Populäre Konstruktionen von Erinnerung im deutschen Judentum und nach der Emigration*, Göttingen 2004, p. 197–224; *idem*, *German Jews in Israel: Memories and Past Images* (Hebrew), Jerusalem 2004.

memoir, the time of the text's writing is a crucial factor: there is a categorical distinction between memoirs written before 1933, to a great extent for purposes of self-reflection, confirming a sense of identity, and transmission of one's sense of self and insights to one's descendants, and those written in the face of the destruction of German Jewry.<sup>51</sup> From this perspective, attention needs to be paid to the identity of the memoir's "inner interlocutor": is it the son and heir to the family firm at the end of the nineteenth century, or the granddaughter who understands no German in the mid-twentieth century, or indeed the archivist working in New York? With the communicative turn taken in recent archival reception, the conversation between author and addressee(s) has been taken ever more seriously. As did the LBI's early archivists, Guy Miron devotes attention to the memoirs of Rahel Straus. But he is not interested in this record of memories primarily as an example of great autobiographical literature, nor is he interested in it as the vehicle of socio-historical facts. Rather, it is scrutinized as the momentary snapshot of a specific and incomparable narrative of identity written by a survivor. It is important to note that such a return to individuality and authorship no longer denotes access to a culture manifest in the life of an extraordinary man or woman. Rather, the main emphasis is now on acknowledging each individual as responsible for continuing his or her form of the German-Jewish tradition.

A second perspective centers on the question of how the various archival authorities and modalities of reception communicate with the very material meant to be preserved. Aligned with constructivist insights, a basic premise here is that memories are generated and transformed together with the processes and techniques used in both preservation and reading. Hence the fixed, unchanging substance of the sources has itself been increasingly cast into doubt. Following a turn towards "mnemonic criticism," a critique of the medium has thus now emerged, a basic tenet being that "externality and materiality as the constitutive condition of sensory phenomena"<sup>52</sup> have to be more strongly considered when working with autobiographical texts.

When archivists present criteria for determining whether memoirs are collectible, when they channel life histories into questionnaires or recorded sounds and images, the impact on the subject's memory itself is clear. There is ample documentation suggesting that as an element of cultural memory, the individual act of remembering is shaped by the historical images that surround it. Analogously to the observation that every experience and memory

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<sup>51</sup> See Miriam Gebhardt, "Zur Psychologie des Vergessens: Antisemitismus in jüdischen Autobiographien vor und nach 1933," in Clemens Wischermann (ed.), *Vom kollektiven Gedächtnis zur Individualisierung der Erinnerung*, Stuttgart 2002, pp. 53–64.

<sup>52</sup> Emil Angehrn, *Interpretation und Dekonstruktion. Untersuchungen zur Hermeneutik*, Göttingen 2004, p. 309.

preforms the next one, we can assume that the LBI's preparation and publication of memoirs has an influence on those that are just emerging.

But even the structural preconditions for archiving the texts – preconditions with an influence on the contents and reading of the preserved material – have altered over time. Not only semantic differences exist between the “Kreutzberger catalog” and present-day catalogs of an electronic nature. Media theorists have pointed to the changes affected by technological developments on the very contents of textual material.<sup>53</sup> In this respect a decisive role is played by the interconnection of individual texts through electronic links, with individual memories capable of being placed in ever new organizational and substantive frameworks in a matter of seconds.

Considered from vantage-point of media theory, the individual memoirs have begun to communicate with each other over these links – for example it is now possible to place family members from several generations “at the same table.” This does not only have consequences for the evaluation of individual statements, as for instance when descendants retrospectively describe the values and ways of acting of their own ancestors, thus contributing to or revising their family history with or without those ancestors' memories in front of them.<sup>54</sup> What would appear more important and productive is the new possibility to explore continuities and changes in German-Jewish history over several generations. With the question of the intergenerational transmission of historical images, questions of identity and value and so forth, a new and important chapter in archival reception would be opened.

From this perspective, the LBI's present-day collection of memoirs is hardly comparable with that of thirty or fifty years ago and this is not only because a memoir written in the Kaiserreich by hand and against the backdrop of that age's literary models has little in common with a memoir written in the age of e-mail and Oprah Winfrey. In the following decades, interacting with new structural concepts and approaches to the archive, new forms of memory of the German-Jewish past will certainly emerge at the LBI.

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<sup>53</sup> See, for example, Sybille Krämer, *Medien, Computer, Realität. Wirklichkeitsvorstellungen und Neue Medien*, Frankfurt am Main 1998.

<sup>54</sup> See for example the memoirs of Frank Eyck, (containing also a commentary on the memoirs of his grandmother, Helene Eyck), “A diarist in fin-de-siècle Berlin and her Family: Helene, Joseph and Erich Eyck,” in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 37 (1992), pp. 287–307.



# An International Forum for German-Jewish Studies: The *Year Book* of the Leo Baeck Institute<sup>1</sup>

Christhard Hoffmann

## I

Among the many activities carried out by the Leo Baeck Institute since 1955, it seems fair to regard the publication of its *Year Book* as the most successful. Like a tree continually adding new rings, each new volume demonstrates the productivity and vitality of the LBI's work. In 1955, the institute's founders were doubtful, with good reason, whether three volumes in a row could be published. This makes the appearance of the forty-nine volumes that have appeared since then all the more impressive. Although published by the LBI's London branch, the *Year Book* may be regarded as representative of the institute and its history as a whole. Its volumes mirror the transformation in research topics and interpretive models over the past fifty years and testify to the LBI's development from the cultural forum of a particular émigré group to an international and interdisciplinary research center.

As historians of scholarship have long been aware, periodicals can play an important role in the development of academic disciplines. More easily than institutional bodies themselves, they can address new themes and innovative methodologies. Journals also allow rapid communication among scholars beyond traditional disciplinary and national boundaries. For these reasons, a journal can contribute to the establishment of new fields of research, occasionally even to that of new scholarly disciplines.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> I am grateful to Arnold Paucker for providing me with first-hand information on the topic and for commenting on earlier drafts of this chapter; I would also like to thank the faculty of arts, University of Bergen, for funding the establishment of a database containing information about the articles and authors of the *LBI Year Book*.

<sup>2</sup> For scholarly periodicals in the field of history, see Margaret F. Stieg, *The Development of Scholarly Historical Periodicals*, Alabama 1986; Matthias Middell (ed.), *Historische Zeitschriften im internationalen Vergleich*, Leipzig 1999; Winfried Schulze, "Zur Geschichte der Fachzeitschriften. Von der 'Historischen Zeitschrift' zu den 'zeitenblicken,'" in *zeitenblicke*, vol. 2, no. 2 (2003), January 3, 2005 <<http://www.zeitenblicke.historicum.net/2003/02/schulze.html>>.



The *Year Book* of the Leo Baeck Institute is one example of a journal that was crucial to the genesis and development of a new scholarly discipline. Without the publication, it is unlikely that German-Jewish studies would exist as an international and interdisciplinary field of research in its current form. When the first volume appeared in 1956, only a few sporadic works on German-Jewish history had been published. The *Year Book's* bibliography, which was aimed at including all publications on the modern history and culture of Jews in German-speaking Central Europe, was a key to linking these efforts, scattered as they were by geography and discipline. By listing new works in the field and placing them in systematic order, the bibliography helped to establish the *Year Book* at the new academic discipline's center. Compiled by Annette Pringle and Barbara Suchy since 1990, it has included an average of 1300 new publications annually over the last 15 years.<sup>3</sup> Through the prospect of future volumes, the journal's annual publication itself triggered further scholarly activity; in such light, the *Year Book* can be seen as the institute's pulse – the key to the LBI enduring as a thriving institute.

## II

The institute's founders neither planned nor expected the *Year Book* to attain its central role. At its founding conference in Jerusalem in May 1955, the institute's members had doubts regarding this form of publication. The idea of a yearbook was first raised by Judah Shapiro, the director of the Claims Conference cultural department, and was only adopted into the LBI's application for funding with an eye to the Claims Conference's approval. At bottom, the institute's founders remained doubtful, and this for two reasons: first, the LBI's financing was so precarious that many of the founders were skeptical regarding the possibility of sustained publication (Martin Buber insisted on a minimum three years' tenure for the journal);<sup>4</sup> second, some founding members were concerned that the disparate contents and sometimes random nature of a yearbook would not be suitable for conveying a consistent worldview or definitive insights. As this second objection makes clear, many of the founders were primarily concerned with transmitting the "legacy" of German Jewry to the next generation – in other words, with imparting their own experiences and perspectives in a lasting manner. In light of that objection, the idea that the conclusions reached in one issue could be overturned in another one was particularly disturbing. For institute members like Kurt

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<sup>3</sup> In the early years, compiling the bibliography was done by Ilse Wolff (in 1956), followed by Bertha Cohn (until 1979), and Irmgard Foerg (until 1990).

<sup>4</sup> Minutes of the planning conference of the LBI, May 26, 1955, *LBI London*, file "Minutes 1955–57."

Blumenfeld, who wanted to draw direct and unequivocal Zionist conclusions from German-Jewish history and convey fixed truths, the prospect of a yearbook was thus unappealing. In some circles within the LBI, especially in Jerusalem, this stance prevailed for many years. At best, the skeptics were willing to accept a yearbook provisionally – that is, until personnel and research conditions had improved enough for the LBI to embark upon a comprehensive history of German Jewry.<sup>5</sup>

In spite of this resistance, the *Year Book* soon established its centrality to the institute's program. This was in part due to the uncontested authority of its founding editor, Robert Weltsch, and the practical necessities of the early years. Since the LBI's financing was initially awarded on an annual basis, the newly founded institute needed to justify its existence with rapidly produced publications. A yearbook with ten to fifteen essays would represent the range of the institute's concerns better than a monograph. Efforts to focus each issue on a single topic were soon abandoned. Firstly, the editors quickly realized it would be difficult to find enough specialists for such an approach, however broadly defined the theme. Secondly, the advantages of emphasizing the depth of modern German-Jewish history soon became clear. At the Jerusalem conference, the planning committee suggested that the *Year Book's* first volume focus on the experience of German Jews in the inter-war period. During work on the first issue, however, this idea was modified,<sup>6</sup> and the idea of giving each volume a separate title was abandoned.<sup>7</sup> With the first *Year Book* meeting with wide approval, topical variety became an established principle.<sup>8</sup> The format of a single-theme *Sammelband* was later taken up in a series of four *Schriftenreihe* anthologies designed and published by the London institute.<sup>9</sup>

From its inception, the *Year Book* was multidisciplinary and pluralistic in perspective. Its editors defined history broadly to encompass religious, liter-

<sup>5</sup> See Robert Weltsch, "Looking Back Over Sixty Years," in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 27 (1982), p. 388.

<sup>6</sup> See Robert Weltsch to Selma Spier, March 12, 1956, *LBI London*, file "Correspondence LBI Jerusalem 1955–56."

<sup>7</sup> Weltsch to LBI Jerusalem, May 18, 1956, *LBI London*, file "Correspondence LBI Jerusalem 1955–56."

<sup>8</sup> Tramer to Moses, July 7, 1956, *LBI New York*, LBI Office Records, II 63/1.

<sup>9</sup> See Werner Mosse and Arnold Paucker (eds.), *Entscheidungsjahr 1932. Zur Judenfrage in der Endphase der Weimarer Republik. Ein Sammelband*, Tübingen 1965 (Schriftenreihe wissenschaftlicher Abhandlungen des Leo Baeck Instituts 13); *idem* (eds.), *Deutsches Judentum in Krieg und Revolution 1916–1923. Ein Sammelband*, Tübingen 1971 (Schriftenreihe wissenschaftlicher Abhandlungen des Leo Baeck Instituts 25); *idem* (eds.), *Die Juden im Wilhelminischen Deutschland 1890–1914*, Tübingen 1976 (Schriftenreihe wissenschaftlicher Abhandlungen des Leo Baeck Instituts 33); Hans Liebeschütz and Arnold Paucker (eds.), *Das Judentum in der deutschen Umwelt 1800–1850*, Tübingen 1977 (Schriftenreihe wissenschaftlicher Abhandlungen des Leo Baeck Instituts 35).

ary, economic, political and social topics, and a diversity of experiences, positions and opinions. Importantly, the ideal of ideological neutrality was by no means universally accepted from the outset. In fact, during the institute's first year, its members heatedly debated whether political and ideological orientation should be considered when awarding important research assignments. In a December 1955 board meeting in Jerusalem, Kurt Blumenfeld demanded that projects on contemporary history be awarded on the basis of "Zionist orientation."<sup>10</sup> He was opposed by Hans Liebeschütz, the conscience of the London institute when it came to research, who protested against this "utterly impossible ... and futile demand." Siegfried Moses then worked out a compromise: the institute could not legitimately "demand a Zionist monopoly for certain topics"; however, in addition to authors' scholarly qualifications, their "proximity to the object of investigation" could be considered. (This was phrased more directly in the original version as their "Zionist viewpoint.")<sup>11</sup> Sensitive issues were here being raised that reflected on the institute's self-conception, thus producing a heated discussion of principle. In any case, given the relative scarcity of contributors, this debate on principle ultimately became irrelevant to actual editorial practice, with Zionist positions not being given preferential treatment in either the institute's projects or the *Year Book*, which had emerged as the main publication treating all aspects of German-Jewish history.

In determining the scope and aspirations of the *Year Book*, the editors tried to create a space between "journalism" on the one hand and "pure scholarship" on the other hand. In a Summer 1955 memorandum, Weltsch stated that essays should be "based on thorough research and on source material and should provide a vivid description and scholarly interpretation that will provide an intellectually aware reading public an impression of the peculiar phenomenon that we call 'German Jewry.'"<sup>12</sup> The committee that worked on plans for the first issue repeatedly suggested that the *Year Book* only publish long essays rather than source documents, book reviews, bibliographies or brief notes. However, Weltsch believed that if it included shorter essays, the journal would be able to mediate between the "actual scholarly work of the LBI which should be the systematic writing of history" and a "broader public."<sup>13</sup> Nevertheless, over the years it would become clear that the *Year Book* was largely a forum for professional scholarship.

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<sup>10</sup> See Moses to Jerusalem Board Members, March 12, 1956, *LBI London*, file "Correspondence LBI Jerusalem 1955-56."

<sup>11</sup> Moses to Weltsch, March 14, 1956 and March 16, 1956, *LBI London*, file "Correspondence LBI Jerusalem 1955-56."

<sup>12</sup> Robert Weltsch, Memorandum entitled "Jahrbuch des Leo Baeck Instituts," London, August 1, 1955: *LBI Archives New York*, LBI London Coll. (*Year Book*).

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*; Weltsch to Simon, December 29, 1958, *LBI Archives New York*, LBI London Coll. (*Year Book*).

The language question, whether the *Year Book* essays would be published exclusively in English or partly also in German, was also intensely debated in the early years. The Claims Conference had requested that LBI publications be in English or Hebrew rather than German whenever possible.<sup>14</sup> The *Year Book's* first volume appeared entirely in English, which caused negative reactions in many quarters and led to heated discussions. Moses then raised the issue at the Jerusalem board meeting in December 1956. In a letter to Weltsch, Hans Tramer summarized the most important arguments for allowing contributions in German: first, limiting the journal to English would also limit sales, because the actual reading audience – Jews who had emigrated from Germany – continued to prefer German, something particularly the case with émigré Jews in Europe, Israel and South America; second, allowing German texts would reduce the problems and expenses associated with translation; and third, multilingualism was common in scholarly journals. Tramer added the observation that the Claims Conference would be unlikely to object to the use of German in the institute's scholarly and literary publications.

These arguments carried some weight. Weltsch himself had repeatedly complained to Moses about the difficulties of translation:

Parts of the *Year Book* [vol. 1 (1956)] are at the typesetter. I hope it will at least partially meet expectations. My ears are already ringing with the criticism I anticipate from Scholem and from many others, because it is of course “journalistic” and not “scholarly.” The translations are the most terrible part, and they cost me sleepless nights. I see that the translations are inadequate, but have no idea how they can be improved. These German periods and mystical concepts are impossible to translate.<sup>15</sup> The authors keep trying to convince me that I should publish their essays in German. After I read the translations I just feel like tossing them all into the fire. I'm not an expert in the English language. I notice something is incorrect, but it is not easy for me to correct it.<sup>16</sup>

As editor of the *Year Book*, Weltsch was most directly affected by these difficulties. Nonetheless, he was one of only a few among the older generation who remained a committed defender of maintaining an English-language publication.<sup>17</sup> For Weltsch, the LBI's goal of conveying “something of the intellectual heritage of German Jewry to the younger generation that is being raised in the English language, and so to explain the problem of German-Jewish assimilation – crucial to Jewry in general – in a form that they can

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<sup>14</sup> Gruenewald to Moses, December 6, 1954, Archives of the *Zentrum für Antisemitismusforschung* of the Technical University, Berlin (*ZfA Archives*), AmFed Coll. 17/10.

<sup>15</sup> Weltsch to Moses, March 4, 1956, *LBI Archives New York*, Robert Weltsch Coll.

<sup>16</sup> Weltsch to Moses, March 12, 1956, *LBI Archives New York*, Robert Weltsch Coll.

<sup>17</sup> Weltsch to Gruenewald, February 6, 1957, *LBI London*, file “Correspondence LBI New York 1957.”

understand,” remained paramount.<sup>18</sup> Resistance to an entirely English-language journal continued for some time – even in London where Liebeschütz was an ardent advocate of contributions in German. In the end, Weltsch’s position won out.<sup>19</sup> To defuse the conflict, it was agreed that “one to two essays” per volume could appear in German, “for example when an essay would be difficult to translate into English.”<sup>20</sup> However, apart from the occasional publishing of German sources, only thirteen of the 812 essays that appeared in the *Year Book* through 2004 were published in German. The institute’s German-language *Bulletin* was introduced in 1957 partly in order to lessen the impact of the language problem, particularly affecting older German-Jewish émigrés; in its early years, the *Bulletin* occasionally published the original German version of essays that had already appeared in translation in the *Year Book*. Since the majority of early *Year Book* authors continued to write their essays in German or, at times, in awkward English, the decision to publish the *Year Book* in English also meant that good translators and editors were vital to the journal. Lux Furtmüller, a physicist from Vienna who had worked as foreign language monitor at the BBC, was the most important translator in the early years. Beginning in 1959, Pauline Paucker worked as (unpaid) editor, transforming the *Year Book*’s essays into elegant English.<sup>21</sup> She was joined in 1978 by Silvia Gilchrist. For the past three years, London-based Gabriele Rahaman and Berlin-based Joel Golb have been responsible for the close scrutiny and, when necessary, line-by-line editing of *Year Book* articles.

From the onset, the *Year Book* was – along with the *Schriftenreihe* – the institute’s showcase, serving as the public face of its work. Editorial issues, and especially issues relating to the acceptance and rejection of manuscripts, thus assumed fundamental importance. Were such decisions to be the editor’s exclusive province, or should a special LBI committee also take part? In summer 1955, Weltsch asked for clarification of his authority.<sup>22</sup> Siegfried Moses’s answer was diplomatically vague: “We all are aware of your outstanding qualifications for the position of editor and regard you as such. On the other hand, it is important for the entire circle to believe that it has a role to play in editorial decisions.” Weltsch was encouraged to keep the Jerusalem office (and by

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<sup>18</sup> Weltsch to Alexander Altmann, February 26, 1968, *LBI London*, file “Year Book XVI.”

<sup>19</sup> See, for example, minutes of the LBI London board meeting, August 26, 1962, *LBI London*, file “Minutes 1958–62.”

<sup>20</sup> Minutes of the LBI Jerusalem board meeting, November 20, 1957, *LBI London*, file “Minutes 1955–57.”

<sup>21</sup> See Arnold Paucker, “Erfahrungen und Erinnerungen. Ein Rückblick,” in *idem*, *Deutsche Juden im Kampf um Recht und Freiheit. Studien zu Abwehr, Selbstbehauptung und Widerstand der deutschen Juden seit dem Ende des 19. Jahrhunderts*, Berlin 2003, pp. 355–386, here p. 376.

<sup>22</sup> Robert Weltsch, Memorandum “Jahrbuch des Leo Baeck Instituts.”

extension the entire LBI) informed of the essays under consideration. In doubtful cases, he was urged to obtain a second opinion. In practice, however, Weltsch had sole decision-making authority.<sup>23</sup> Apart from a few isolated exceptions, conflicts over the acceptance or rejection of individual articles were rare. In the 1950s, Weltsch prepared lists of suggested authors and essays that he discussed in detail with Tramer and Max Kreutzberger, and occasionally with other institute members. Later, once the *Year Book* was well established, Weltsch's suggestions were generally adopted without discussion. In the early years, the Jerusalem and New York offices were also involved in practical publication work and were in charge of contact with Israeli and American authors. This procedure proved unwieldy and was soon abandoned.<sup>24</sup>

### III

Although the LBI founders had prepared an extensive research agenda, it soon became apparent that a lack of financial and personnel resources would hamper its implementation. In the first fifteen years, from 1956 to 1970, the formulation of topics for the *Year Book* was dependent more on the supply of articles than on programmatic factors. With the support of Dora Segall as assistant editor, Weltsch tried – in his own view without great success – to recruit essays on specific themes. This often entailed convincing older émigrés, who lived around the globe and had never written anything of a historical nature, to do research on a topic and then write an essay on it – something often requiring a great deal of time and personal supervision. In a few instances the editor spent several years discussing an essay's contents with its author. Weltsch's extensive personal network and years of journalistic experience made him ideally suited for his position. He was especially skillful at editing the style of the “very wide-ranging and more than occasionally dilettantish and awkwardly composed manuscripts.”<sup>25</sup> Sometimes he had to rewrite essays completely. In his introductory essay in each *Year Book*, he also had to integrate the contributions into a coherent whole. In this regard, he later wrote as follows:

In the introductions ... I tried to stress this point [German Jewry's impact on the development of other Jewish communities] while expressing my own ideas in the fashion of traditional Jewish exegesis, i.e. in the form of commentary, *Beurim* and *Tossefoth*, to the various texts which formed the content of the respective volume,

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<sup>23</sup> Siegfried Moses to Robert Weltsch, August 8, 1955, *LBI London*, file “Correspondence LBI Jerusalem 1955–56.”

<sup>24</sup> Kreutzberger to Liebeschütz, March 21, 1957, *LBI London*, file “Correspondence LBI New York 1957.”

<sup>25</sup> Arnold Paucker, “Erfahrungen und Erinnerungen,” p. 377.

thus also pointing out the sometimes inapparent link between the various aspects and subjects.<sup>26</sup>

Weltsch's introductory essays in the first twenty-three issues of the *Year Book* were hailed as "small historiographical masterpieces" and were a key factor in the journal's expanding reputation.<sup>27</sup> Even today, they have lost none of their freshness and importance. What made these essays so unique and interesting? Four factors come to mind:

(1) Weltsch elevated German-Jewish history, starting with the Enlightenment, to a paradigm of modern Jewish history in general, thus heightening its relevance. In his introduction to the first *Year Book*, he opened with a citation from Julius Guttmann, "Germany is the birthplace of modern Judaism."<sup>28</sup> The experiences of German-speaking Jews were thus divested of their particularity and interpreted as a paradigm of a universal process: "German-speaking Jewry has fulfilled a historical role on the way to ... Jewish modernity."<sup>29</sup> Time and again, Weltsch emphasized that the problems Jews faced in coming to terms with modernity in the nineteenth century were still relevant, particularly to the situation of Jews in the United States:

We believe that nothing can help present-day Jewry in its confusion ... except clear thinking based on the study of the recent past. The history of nineteenth- and twentieth-century Jewry, not misused as a sounding board of propaganda or distorted for the purpose of self-justification, but providing an insight into objective facts and entanglements and an understanding of the development of ideas, is the indispensable precondition of Jewish self-analysis from which a more constructive all-Jewish *Weltanschauung* may grow. German-speaking Jewry is certainly not the only factor worth investigating, but in some respects, especially in the period of enlightenment and emancipation, its history reflects perhaps in the purest form the problems from which springs present-day Jewish intellectual perplexity.<sup>30</sup>

(2) Weltsch's argument that German-Jewish history was the foundation of modern Jewry was conveyed as more than a pithy and perhaps somewhat casual observation. Rather, he bolstered the argument with concrete historical examples, borrowing key concepts from intellectual, social and political history: emancipation, liberalism, nationalism, socialism, Zionism, migration,

<sup>26</sup> Weltsch to Gerson Cohen, December 2, 1974, *LBI London*, file "Year Book XX."

<sup>27</sup> Arnold Paucker, Preface/Introduction to *LBI Year Book*, vol. 37 (1992), p. xvii; Hans Tramer, "Zum Geleit," in Hans Tramer and Kurt Loewenstein (eds.), *Robert Weltsch zum 70. Geburtstag von seinen Freunden*, Tel Aviv 1961, p. 9; Gerson D. Cohen, "German Jewry as a Mirror of Modernity," Introduction to *LBI Year Book*, vol. 20 (1975), pp. xif.

<sup>28</sup> *Idem*, Introduction to *LBI Year Book*, vol. 1 (1956), p. xix.

<sup>29</sup> *Idem*, "Ten Years after Leo Baeck," Introduction to *LBI Year Book*, vol. 11 (1966), p. xx.

<sup>30</sup> *Idem*, Introduction to *LBI Year Book*, vol. 3 (1958), p. xix.

assimilation and so forth. In this manner, Weltsch provided a structural framework and periodization for his idea of German-Jewish history.<sup>31</sup> He also used such structuring concepts in his explanation of the differences between East European and West European Jewry. Where these differences were often essentialized as an antagonism between an authentically Jewish and an “assimilationist” path of development, Weltsch was interested in the different background conditions in East and Central Europe and the concomitantly diverse paths of transformation of their Jewries.<sup>32</sup> His universal and comparative perspective is particularly apparent in his abstract definition of modern German-Jewish history as a “classic example of an intellectual sophisticated minority group suddenly integrated into another dominant cultural structure.” German-Jewish history thus became comparable to other phenomena of migration, acculturation and assimilation in the post-colonial world.<sup>33</sup>

(3) In his approach to the history of German Jewry, Weltsch was guided by the aim of overcoming the traditional ideological divisions of modern Jewish life, including the division between liberalism and Zionism and that between Eastern and Western Jewry. This aim led him to adopt a sociological perspective and place great emphasis on the structural foundations of modern Jewish development. At the same time, he laid great stress on the historicist maxim that each era needs to be understood within its own context and judged by its own criteria.<sup>34</sup> Weltsch hoped this combination of a reconstruction of the past as it “really was” alongside a historicization and relativization of contemporary interpretive ideologies would permit a new post-ideological approach to German-Jewish history. This approach, he believed, could defuse the historiographical differences within the institute while opening new research perspectives. That Weltsch was the first to propose many topics taken up by historians years or even decades later is a highly remarkable fact.

Another consequence of Weltsch’s approach was his realization that the legacy of German Jewry could not be understood in terms of immortal values or a timeless “essence.” Instead, it could only be understood as contextual, changeable, and transitory, in other words, historically. Weltsch’s radical anti-essentialism resulted from his effort to bridge the ideological chasms informing Jewish history. It also corresponded to ruptures within his own life: as a disillusioned Zionist, he no longer felt able to defend the idea of absolute truth.<sup>35</sup> This basic skepticism made Weltsch an impartial commentator and

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<sup>31</sup> See, for example, *idem*, Introduction to *LBI Year Book*, vol. 2 (1957), p. xxvi.

<sup>32</sup> *Idem*, Introduction to *LBI Year Book*, vol. 1 (1956), pp. xixf.

<sup>33</sup> *Idem*, Introduction to *LBI Year Book*, vol. 16 (1971), p. vii.

<sup>34</sup> See, for example, *idem*, Introduction to *LBI Year Book*, vol. 23 (1978), pp. viif.

<sup>35</sup> See, for example, Weltsch to Kreutzberger, February 17, 1977, *LBI Archives New York*, Robert Weltsch Coll.



an ideal first editor of the *Year Book*. Looking back at recent events, he concluded that both the assimilationists and the Zionists had been afflicted by “illusions” and “self-righteousness.”<sup>36</sup> He was convinced that the “true” history of German Jewry would emerge from future research located beyond party lines and the “pitfalls of over-simplification.”<sup>37</sup> Weltsch also warned of the danger of judging German-Jewish history, with its catastrophic outcome, with the hindsight of subsequent generations rather than in terms of its own context and standards.<sup>38</sup>

Weltsch revealed a keen pleasure in challenging established ideological orthodoxies and accentuating historiographical paradoxes. For example, he pointed out that Gabriel Riesser, condemned by pre-war Zionists as an “assimilationist,” was viewed positively by Israeli scholars in the 1960s. Weltsch’s conclusion was that “personal virtues appear sometimes more important than the details of a political program. In retrospect, party differences shrink to almost ephemeral dimensions.”<sup>39</sup> He likewise argued that the German-Jewish student association Viadrina, founded in 1886, an association that adhered to assimilationist tenets while engaging in dueling to defend itself against antisemitic slander, was one of the forerunners of the Israeli army: “Today the State of Israel takes particular pride in its army and world Jewry is proud of Israel’s military skill. To hit back when offended became one of the pillars of modern Jewish sentiment. Perhaps one could say that this started in 1886.”<sup>40</sup> Weltsch also tried to remove the ideological baggage weighing down the understanding of assimilation. He emphasized that “all Jewish trends in nineteenth-century Germany – including, of course Jewish nationalism – were influenced by German and European thought” and were “products of assimilation.”<sup>41</sup> Assimilation was the result of a “natural process.”<sup>42</sup> And he was proud of the fact that the *Year Book* was not markedly Zionist in orientation, despite most of the institute’s leaders being Zionist in its early years.<sup>43</sup>

<sup>36</sup> Robert Weltsch, Introduction to *LBI Year Book*, vol. 1 (1956), p. xxx.

<sup>37</sup> *Idem*, Introduction to *LBI Year Book*, vol. 5 (1960), p. xviii; see also *ibid.*, vol. 8 (1963), p. xi; *ibid.*, vol. 11 (1966), p. xvii; *ibid.*, vol. 14 (1969), p. xx.

<sup>38</sup> *Idem*, Introduction to *LBI Year Book*, vol. 23 (1978), p. viif; *ibid.*, vol. 14 (1969), p. xix.

<sup>39</sup> *Idem*, Introduction to *LBI Year Book*, vol. 7 (1962), p. xiii.

<sup>40</sup> *Idem*, Introduction to *LBI Year Book*, vol. 3 (1958), p. xxiv.

<sup>41</sup> *Idem*, Introduction to *LBI Year Book*, vol. 5 (1960), p. xi; Introduction to *LBI Year Book*, vol. 1 (1956), p. xx.

<sup>42</sup> *Idem*, “Siegfried Moses: End of an Epoch,” in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 19 (1974), p. viii.

<sup>43</sup> See George L. Mosse, “Ende einer Epoche? Das Leo Baeck Institut nach dem 2. Weltkrieg,” in *LBI Information*, vol. 5/6 (1995), pp. 7–15, here p. 11. See also Simon to Weltsch, December 17, 1958, *LBI Archives New York*, LBI London Coll. (*Year Book*): “The volume [vol. 3] is more German-Jewish than Zionist, and that is quite alright in light of the objective historical situation that we must depict. We should avoid any tendency, even our own ...”

(4) Weltsch's introductions, as stated, were exceptional because of his universal perspective, his ability to pose stimulating questions, and his impartial judgment. In addition, his depiction of complex historical phenomena like nineteenth-century nationalism and the nationalities question in the Austro-Hungarian dual monarchy was exemplary.<sup>44</sup> However, his true, acknowledged masterpieces were his biographical sketches, with their focus on important historical figures and well-known writers, artists and scholars – Stefan Zweig, Fritz Haber, Giacomo Meyerbeer, Franz Oppenheimer, Rahel Varnhagen<sup>45</sup> – in order to define features common to an era of emancipation, assimilation, and antisemitism. Although many of these figures had left the Jewish community through conversion, Weltsch argued that a “Jewish factor” continued to guide their life and work. Meyerbeer was thus of interest to Weltsch not as a composer, but rather as “one of the public figures who illustrate in an exemplary way the social and psychological side of the Jewish problem in the second generation of assimilation.”<sup>46</sup> The German-Jewish philosopher Fritz Mauthner, who called himself “nothing but German” while at the same time noting that his mind retained “a characteristic style that might be called Jewish,” made Weltsch reflect on the question of the “Jewish element” in writers and poets and the larger issue of what was Jewish “at a time when visible religion has almost disappeared.”<sup>47</sup>

Weltsch's introductions thus demonstrated a productive method for exploring German-Jewish history.<sup>48</sup> Inwardly, that is with reference to the German Jews, he conveyed a feeling for the greatness and importance of that history without ever allowing space for outdated partisan and apologetic arguments or for an outmoded sense of German-Jewish superiority within the world Jewish community. Outwardly, that is with main reference to the Jewish world, he pointed to the history's paradigmatic character for modern Jewry as a whole, emphasizing its relevance to the present. It is also worth noting that the thoughtful, self-critical tone of the introductions, the openness they revealed to new arguments and viewpoints, was part of the secret of their success.

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<sup>44</sup> Robert Weltsch, Introduction to *LBI Year Book*, vol. 2 (1957), pp. xiff.; *ibid.*, vol. 4 (1959), pp. xvii–xx; *ibid.*, vol. 16 (1971), pp. x–xiii; *ibid.*, vol. 21 (1976), pp. viii–xiii.

<sup>45</sup> Weltsch, Introduction to *LBI Year Book*, vol. 3 (1958), pp. xiv–xix; *ibid.*, vol. 8 (1963), pp. xi–xv; *ibid.*, pp. xxiii–xxv; *ibid.*, vol. 9 (1964), pp. xiii–xviii; *ibid.*, pp. xxiv–xxviii; *ibid.*, vol. 14 (1969), pp. xii–xiv.

<sup>46</sup> *Idem*, Introduction to *LBI Year Book*, vol. 9 (1964), p. xiii.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 8 (1963), p. xxv.

<sup>48</sup> See Reinhard Rürup, “An Appraisal of German-Jewish Historiography,” in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 35 (1990), p. xv.

## IV

Who were the authors who wrote for the *Year Book* during its first fifteen years? Most (approximately seventy percent) were written by émigré authors born before 1915 who had been socialized and educated in German-speaking Central Europe. Most had a university degree, usually a doctorate, but only a few were professional historians. Of the sixty-eight contributors to the *Zeitschrift für die Geschichte der Juden in Deutschland* between 1929 and 1938, only nine of them later published in the *Year Book*, a statistic underscoring the rupture within Jewish historical studies after Weimar.<sup>49</sup> The founding members had intended to mobilize the broader academic world, a project at first meeting with limited success. Of the eighty-four names that the Council had listed as potential contributors to the LBI in its application to the Claims Conference in late 1954, only thirty-two would become *Year Book* authors.<sup>50</sup> To Weltsch's great disappointment, it proved difficult to recruit major academic personalities, even from within his own circle.<sup>51</sup> Only a handful of essays were written by the Jerusalem professors who were often described as the institute's intellectual elite: Ernst Simon would write three essays, Gershon Scholem two, and Hugo Bergman one. The exception among these older academics was Hans Liebeschütz – not, as it happens, from Jerusalem – whose thirteen essays have made him the most productive *Year Book* author to date.

Given the dearth of professional historians, contributors to the first fifteen *Year Books* had to be recruited from the larger German-speaking Jewish émigré community. These included many former leaders within German Jewry – people who thus often had unique experiences and insights. According to the institute's founders, its most important task was to record for posterity and critically reflect upon the experiences of witnesses to the end of German Jewry. As the first volume demonstrates, the LBI could draw on the most distinguished such witnesses: Max Gruenewald, who co-founded the *Reichsvertretung* in 1933 and was a member of its presidential committee from 1936 to 1938, wrote on the organization's beginnings; Ernst Simon, who headed the *Mittelstelle für jüdische Erwachsenenbildung* with Martin Buber, on "Jewish Adult Education in Nazi Germany as Spiritual Resistance"; Nahum Glatzer, who worked closely with Franz Rosenzweig

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<sup>49</sup> See Christhard Hoffmann, "Deutsch-jüdische Geschichtswissenschaft in der Emigration. Das Leo-Baeck-Institut," in Herbert A. Strauss, Klaus Fischer, Christhard Hoffmann and Alfons Söllner (eds.), *Die Emigration der Wissenschaften nach 1933. Disziplinengeschichtliche Studien*, Munich, London, New York and Paris 1991, pp. 257–279, here p. 266.

<sup>50</sup> Research Plan of the LBI [Fall 1954], *ZfA Archives*, AmFed Coll.

<sup>51</sup> Weltsch to Moses, November 18, 1957, *LBI Archives New York*, Robert Weltsch Coll.

and Martin Buber in Frankfurt, on the “The Frankfort *Lehrhaus*”; Hans Gärtner, one of the leading Zionist pedagogs in the 1930s and (co)-director of the Theodor Herzl School in Berlin, on Jewish schools in the Nazi era; the journalist and theater critic Herbert Freeden, who had worked as a dramaturge with the Jewish Cultural Association from 1933 to 1939, on “A Jewish Theater under the Swastika”; Margaret Edelman-Mühsam, who was the deputy chief editor of the *C. V.-Zeitung* until it was banned, on the “The Jewish Press in Germany”; and Nathan Stein, for many years the chairman of the *Oberrat der Israeliten Badens*, on that organization’s history.<sup>52</sup> By mobilizing the surviving generation of witnesses, the LBI succeeded in preserving elements of the lost world of German Jewry. According to Siegfried Moses, the contributors were thus supplying the building blocks for a comprehensive future history of modern German Jewry.<sup>53</sup>

In contrast to a purely scholarly journal like Guido Kisch’s *Historia Judaica*,<sup>54</sup> the essays in the first fifteen *Year Book* volumes were largely based on the collective experience of German-speaking Jews; they can be considered the expression of a *Gedächtnisgemeinschaft* – a memorial community.<sup>55</sup> Unavoidably, the resulting history was subjective in tenor, only partially fulfilling the *Year Book*’s standards of objective scholarship. The LBI leadership frequently, and at times vehemently, debated this methodological dilemma. In a presentation on the institute’s research at an October 1960 LBI conference in New York, Hans Tramer emphasized the survivors’ emotional resistance to an “objective recording” of the past. He argued that the institute needed to distinguish more clearly between “true historical writing” and “something along the lines of a memorial book”:

The illumination of the history we experienced ourselves, especially because it underwent an arbitrary and abrupt rupture and now survives in a kind of harmonizing reminiscence, will always be the most difficult. The history that was lived and experienced in some fashion is actually still not past; it is too “close,” it has marked us too deeply, it is not yet “distant.” And, often, it represents simply “the good old days.” The end as well as the events themselves both call forth emotions that burden the truth.<sup>56</sup>

<sup>52</sup> See *LBI Year Book*, vol. 1 (1956), p. vii.

<sup>53</sup> Siegfried Moses, “The First Ten Years of the Leo Baeck Institute,” in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 10 (1965), p. xii.

<sup>54</sup> See my contribution on the founding of the LBI in this volume.

<sup>55</sup> For the concept of memorial community, see Jan Assmann, *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis. Schrift, Erinnerung und politische Identität in frühen Hochkulturen*, Munich 1992, p. 30 (with reference to Pierre Nora); see also the contributions of Ruth Nattermann and Guy Miron in this volume.

<sup>56</sup> Hans Tramer, “Some principal comments on the research work of the LBI” [summary of the paper held in October 1960 in New York], *LBI London*, file “Minutes 1958–62”; see also the Minutes of the LBI Jerusalem board meeting, December 21, 1960, *ibid.* Tramer reported about the controversial discussion following his paper and

In a retrospective on the institute's first ten years, Siegfried Moses also mentioned the methodological difficulties created by a concept of history based primarily on personal experience and memory. Unlike Tramer, however, Moses believed undue personal and emotional distortion could be overcome by adhering to the institute's guidelines, which stated that "in describing the achievements and the structure of German Jewry any bias, and in particular any apologetic or crypto-apologetic tendency, must be excluded."<sup>57</sup> Historical scholarship grounded in life experience could, he believed, benefit from that authenticity – from the author's knowledge of context and a feeling for the general atmosphere of the time. Indeed, he was convinced that *only* the generation of surviving witnesses could grasp the import of German-Jewish history: because of their "special involvement and concern," the German Jews were "better qualified than mere outsiders to understand what had happened, to assess it, and commit it to memory."<sup>58</sup> New research on the workings of human memory has cast doubt on such a belief that witnesses to history are superior to impartial researchers in their judgment and interpretation.<sup>59</sup> Nevertheless, the efforts of surviving German Jews to record their own history and transmit it to the next generation remains a humanly and intellectually impressive achievement. Particularly in Tramer's work, the methodical insights linked to these efforts were innovative and productive. In any event, the possibilities and limits of a memory-based historiography – a topic of enduring importance for both historians in general and historians of the Holocaust in particular – was itself the focus of critical reflection at the LBI.<sup>60</sup>

The first phase of the *Year Book* was dominated by biographical essays and institutional history. In some of the early volumes, between half and three-quarters of the essays were biographies of prominent figures such as writers, artists, bankers, politicians, philosophers, historians and rabbis. The majority of the journal's early contributions fell under rubrics such as "Men and Epochs," "Profiles of 20th Century Jews" and "German Jews of Eminence,"<sup>61</sup> this tendency reflecting deliberate editorial policy. In 1958, Robert Weltsch declared that the *Year Book* aimed to honor all the "most important

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concluded: "It seems this topic elicits such a strong emotional reaction from all sides that it may well be too soon to discuss it at all."

<sup>57</sup> Siegfried Moses, "The First Ten Years," p. xii.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, p. xi.

<sup>59</sup> See Daniel L. Schacter, *Searching for Memory: The Brain, the Mind, and the Past*, New York 1996; Johannes Fried, *Der Schleier der Erinnerung. Grundzüge einer historischen Memorik*, Munich 2004. See also Arnold Paucker, "Preface/Introduction," in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 37 (1992), pp. xviiff.

<sup>60</sup> See in addition Hans Tramer, "Lebenszeugnisse," in *Bulletin für die Mitglieder der Gesellschaft der Freunde des Leo Baeck Instituts*, vol. 2, no. 8 (1959), pp. 173–179; *idem*, "Briefsammlungen und ihre Bedeutung für die historische Forschung," in *Bulletin des Leo Baeck Instituts*, vol. 4, no. 15 (1961), pp. 169f.

personalities of German-Jewish intellectual life” so that the “personal would be linked with the factual,” and so that “the intellectual productivity of the German-Jewish synthesis in thought and deed would be portrayed by means of the person in question.”<sup>62</sup> As Weltsch showed in his introductions, the biographical approach was particularly suited for illustrating the link between acculturation and Jewish self-assertion in the era of emancipation. The complex pattern of influence and interaction between German and Jewish culture, the problem of Jewish identity in modern secular society, and the phenomenon of unusual German-Jewish cultural productivity could, he believed, be decoded more easily within the microcosm of a single life than in a general survey.

The *Year Book's* focus on leading personalities appealed to German Jewry's yearning for a positive self-image, its need to identify with a great heritage, and its desire to confirm its own importance. Many of the biographical articles focused on prophets of modernity – scientists, artists, intellectuals, bankers and politicians – who had made a name for themselves both inside and outside the Jewish world. These included figures like Karl Marx, Sigmund Freud, Franz Kafka, Gustav Mahler, Arnold Schoenberg, Max Liebermann, Walter Benjamin, Aby Warburg, Fritz Haber, Albert Ballin, Rudolf Mosse and Walther Rathenau, to name but a few.<sup>63</sup> Other articles focused on important personages within German Jewry: rabbis such as Paul Nathan, Joseph Carlebach, Moritz Gudemann, Benno Jacob and Leo Baeck;<sup>64</sup> Jewish

<sup>61</sup> These examples are taken from *LBI Year Book*, vol. 3 (1958); vol. 5 (1960); vol. 17 (1972).

<sup>62</sup> Weltsch to Bamberger, December 8, 1958, *LBI Archives New York*, LBI London Coll. (Year Book V).

<sup>63</sup> Arthur Prinz, “New Perspectives on Marx as a Jew,” in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 15 (1970), pp. 107–124; Ernst Simon, “Sigmund Freud, the Jew,” in *ibid.*, vol. 2 (1957), pp. 270–306; Felix Weltsch, “The Rise and Fall of the Jewish-German Symbiosis: The Case of Franz Kafka,” in *ibid.*, vol. 1 (1956), pp. 255–278; Hartmut Binder, “Franz Kafka and the Weekly Paper ‘Selbstwehr,’ ” in *ibid.*, vol. 12 (1967), pp. 135–148; Peter Gradenwitz, “Gustav Mahler and Arnold Schoenberg,” in *ibid.*, vol. 5 (1960), pp. 262–286; Heinrich Strauss, “On Jews and German Art: The Problem of Max Liebermann,” in *ibid.*, vol. 2 (1957), pp. 255–269; Gershom Scholem, “Walter Benjamin,” in *ibid.*, vol. 10 (1965), pp. 117–136; Hans Liebeschütz, “Aby Warburg (1866–1929) as Interpreter of Civilisation,” in *ibid.*, vol. 16 (1971), pp. 225–238; Rudolf Stern, “Fritz Haber – Personal Recollections,” in *ibid.*, vol. 8 (1963), pp. 70–102; Eduard Rosenbaum, “Albert Ballin,” in *ibid.*, vol. 3 (1958), pp. 257–299; Werner E. Mosse, “Rudolf Mosse and the House of Mosse 1867–1920,” in *ibid.*, vol. 4 (1959), pp. 237–259; Eduard Rosenbaum, “Reflections on Walther Rathenau,” in *ibid.*, pp. 260–264; Robert E. Pois, “Walther Rathenau's Jewish Quandary,” in *ibid.*, vol. 13 (1968), pp. 120–131.

<sup>64</sup> Ernst Feder, “Paul Nathan, the Man and his Work,” in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 3 (1958), pp. 60–80; Haim H. Cohn, “Joseph Carlebach,” in *ibid.*, vol. 5 (1960), pp. 58–72; Kurt Wilhelm, “Benno Jacob, a Militant Rabbi,” in *ibid.*, vol. 7 (1962), pp. 75–94; Ismar Schorsch, “Moritz Gudemann – Rabbi, Historian and Apologist,” in *ibid.*, vol. 11 (1966), pp. 42–66; Josef Fraenkel, “Moritz Gudemann and Theodor Herzl,” in *ibid.*,

scholars and thinkers such as Moses Mendelssohn, Leopold Zunz, Abraham Geiger, Zacharias Frankel, Salomon Ludwig Steinheim, Moses Hess, Moritz Lazarus, Heyman Steinthal, Hermann Cohen, Max Wiener, Julius Guttmann and Martin Buber;<sup>65</sup> historians such as Isaak Markus Jost, Heinrich Graetz, Ismar Elbogen and Eugen Täubler;<sup>66</sup> political pioneers and officials of various associations such as Gabriel Riesser and Ludwig Holländer;<sup>67</sup> and Zionist businesspeople such as Salman Schocken.<sup>68</sup> The biographical subjects were partly selected for their importance to German-Jewish history, and partly on the basis of the availability of suitable authors. Many of the authors had known or worked with their subjects. By focusing on outstanding figures and their work, the LBI created its own German-Jewish “canon.” The use of such figures to illustrate the essence and self-awareness of German Jewry dated back to pre-war commemorative culture, examples including the jubilee celebrations of Moses Mendelssohn and the related heroicization of the pioneers of Jewish emancipation.<sup>69</sup>

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pp.67–84; “In Memoriam Leo Baeck,” in *ibid.*, vol. 2 (1957), pp. 3–34; Hans Liebeschütz, “Between Past and Future – Leo Baeck’s Historical Position,” in *ibid.*, vol. 11 (1966), pp. 3–27.

<sup>65</sup> Nathan Rotenstreich, “On Mendelssohn’s Political Philosophy,” in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 11 (1966), pp. 28–41; Nahum N. Glatzer, “Leopold Zunz and the Revolution of 1848,” in *ibid.*, vol. 5 (1960), pp. 122–139; Alexander Altmann, “Zur Frühgeschichte der jüdischen Predigt in Deutschland (Leopold Zunz als Prediger),” in *ibid.*, vol. 6 (1961), pp. 3–59; Michael A. Meyer, “Jewish Religious Reform and Wissenschaft des Judentums – The Positions of Zunz, Geiger and Frankel,” in *ibid.*, vol. 16 (1971), pp. 19–43; Heinz Moshe Graupe, “Steinheim und Kant,” in *ibid.*, vol. 5 (1960), pp. 140–176; David Baumgardt, “The Ethics of Lazarus and Steinthal,” in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 2 (1957), pp. 205–217; Nathan Rotenstreich, “Moses Hess and Karl Ludwig Michelet,” in *ibid.*, vol. 7 (1962), pp. 283–288; Robert Raphael Geis, “Hermann Cohen und die deutsche Reformation,” in *ibid.*, vol. 4 (1959), pp. 81–90; Hans Liebeschütz, “Hermann Cohen and his Historical Background,” in *ibid.*, vol. 12 (1967), pp. 3–33; Hans Liebeschütz, “Max Wiener’s Reinterpretation of Liberal Judaism,” in *ibid.*, vol. 5 (1960), pp. 35–57; Fritz Bamberger, “Julius Guttmann – Philosopher of Judaism,” in *ibid.*, vol. 5 (1960), pp. 3–34; Ernst Simon, “Martin Buber and German Jewry,” in *ibid.*, vol. 3 (1958), pp. 3–39.

<sup>66</sup> Georg Herlitz, “Three Jewish Historians: Isaak Markus Jost – Heinrich Graetz – Eugen Täubler,” in *LBI Year Book* vol. 9 (1964), pp. 69–90; Reuwen Michael, “Graetz and Hess,” in *ibid.*, pp. 91–121; *idem*, “The Unknown Heinrich Graetz – From his Diaries and Letters,” in *ibid.*, vol. 12 (1967), pp. 34–56; Erwin Rosenthal, “Ismar Elbogen and the New Jewish Learning,” in *ibid.*, vol. 8 (1963), pp. 3–28; Selma Stern-Täubler, “Eugen Täubler and the *Wissenschaft des Judentums*,” in *ibid.*, vol. 3 (1958), pp. 40–59.

<sup>67</sup> Moshe Rinott, “Gabriel Riesser – Fighter for Jewish Emancipation,” in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 7 (1962), pp. 11–38; Alfred Hirschberg, “Ludwig Hollaender, Director of the C.V.,” in *ibid.*, pp. 39–74.

<sup>68</sup> Siegfried Moses, “Salman Schocken – His Economic and Zionist Activities,” in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 5 (1960), pp. 73–101.

<sup>69</sup> See Christhard Hoffmann, “Constructing Jewish Modernity: Mendelssohn Jubilee Celebrations within German Jewry, 1829–1929,” in Rainer Liedtke and David

Institutional history— the focus on individual clubs and associations, organizations and institutions – also played an important role in the *Year Book*. This was above all a reflection of social reality, for Jewish life in Germany had been characterized by exceptional institutional diversity and organizational innovation. The historiographic reconstruction of this institutional life, completely destroyed after 1933, was thus an act of piety. It was also an expression of pride in German Jewry's unique cultural achievement: the development and preservation of modern Jewish identity, together with an acceptance of diversity through a range of possible political and religious affiliations. There was a strong awareness that especially in the academic, pedagogical and social spheres, many German-Jewish organizations had served as models for similar organizations in other countries.

In the first phase of the *Year Book*, most of the essays devoted to institutional history were written by those who had participated in that history. Weltsch took care that the essays were not written in too partisan a manner. He also tried to represent the range of viewpoints at work within German Jewry's institutions. For example, volume three of the journal included an essay on the first Jewish student association, the assimilationist *Kartell Convent*. The following year's issue included an essay on the Zionist student movement.<sup>70</sup> In a brief series on rabbinical colleges, an essay on the liberal *Hochschule für die Wissenschaft des Judentums* was balanced with a memoir of the orthodox *Rabbinerseminar*.<sup>71</sup> This patchwork composition of the German-Jewish past from fragments of individual memory, clearly subjective in its approach, may well have been the only way to avoid the ideologically charged disputes of the past. As a result of this compromise, acknowledging the validity of all the various associational viewpoints, the founding generation had little interest in challenging traditional interpretations, at least in ideologically sensitive areas. They greeted the "objectivizing" approach of younger researchers with misgivings and mistrust. In the late 1960s, Arnold Paucker submitted his new findings on the *Centralverein's* work of Jewish self-defense.<sup>72</sup> Paucker was then asked to collaborate with Eva Reichmann

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Rechter (eds.), *Towards Normality? Acculturation and Modern German Jewry*, Tübingen 2003 (Schriftenreihe wissenschaftlicher Abhandlungen des LBI 68), pp. 27–52; Guy Miron, "The Emancipation 'Pantheon of Heroes' in the German-Jewish Public Memory in the 1930s," in *German History*, vol. 21, no. 4 (2003), pp. 476–504.

<sup>70</sup> Adolph Asch and Johanna Philippson, "Self-Defence in the Second Half of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century: The Emergence of the K.C.," in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 3 (1958), pp. 122–139; Walter Gross, "The Zionist Students' Movement," in *ibid.*, vol. 4 (1959), pp. 143–164.

<sup>71</sup> Richard Fuchs, "The 'Hochschule für die Wissenschaft des Judentums' in the Period of Nazi Rule," in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 12 (1967), pp. 3–31; Isi Jacob Eisner, "Reminiscences of the Berlin Rabbinical Seminary," in *ibid.*, pp. 32–54.

<sup>72</sup> Arnold Paucker, "Der jüdische Abwehrkampf," in Mosse and Paucker (eds.), *Entscheidungsjahr 1932*, Tübingen 1966, pp. 405–499; *idem.*, *Der jüdische Abwehrkampf*



on a history of the association. In a personal letter to Weltsch, Siegfried Moses expressed serious reservations:

Eva Reichmann certainly has the right to write the history of the *Centralverein* as she sees it. If the idea is that Paucker's work on the project will make the history of the *C. V.* more objective in some way, then this is unjustified ... . In any case, an effort at objectivity is not even desired. It is much better when Eva Reichmann's viewpoint determines the form and tendency of the *C.V.*'s history in a clear and unequivocal fashion.<sup>73</sup>

Siegfried Moses's reaction would probably not have been as pointed had he not mistakenly believed that Paucker was a secret *Centralverein* supporter. Moses also worried that Paucker, who had been the director of the London institute since 1959, would be taken as representing the LBI's official opinion. In spite of the unique factors at work in this situation, the incident spotlights the lines of conflict between an older generation whose world-view was still defined by the Jewish party-formations of the Weimar Republic and a younger generation that was no longer anchored in Jewish organizational life and could approach such issues in a more impartial manner. The passing of the old guard in the course of the 1970s finally made it possible for the institute to consider the history of Jewish institutions and associations – especially the *Centralverein* and the *Zionistische Vereinigung* – in an independent manner that did not shy away from controversy. With this development, the “departmentalization” that had dominated the early years of German-Jewish history, with each group writing on just its own institutions and ideologies, had also come to an end.<sup>74</sup>

## V

In keeping with the atmosphere of the times, the second half of the 1960s was a period of transition at the LBI. Ideological tensions between Zionists and the *Centralverein* advocates had been suppressed during the early years in

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*gegen Antisemitismus und Nationalsozialismus in den letzten Jahren der Weimarer Republik*, Hamburg 1968.

<sup>73</sup> Moses to Weltsch, January 3, 1969, *LBI Archives New York*, Robert Weltsch Coll.; Eva Reichmann was an official at the Berlin office of the *Centralverein* from 1924 to 1938.

<sup>74</sup> See, for example, the debates and articles on Jewish self-defense in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 33 (1988), pp. 95–177. Some of the most prominent historians of the *Centralverein* have been Israeli. See, for example, Evyatar Friesel, “The Political and Ideological Development of the *Centralverein* before 1914,” in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 31 (1986), pp. 121–146; *idem*, “The *Centralverein* and the American Jewish Committee – A Comparative Study,” in *ibid.*, vol. 36 (1991), pp. 97–126; Avraham Barkai, “*Wehr Dich!*” *Der Centralverein deutscher Staatsbürger jüdischen Glaubens (C. V.) 1893–1938*, Munich 2002.

the interests of cooperation; they now became increasingly visible.<sup>75</sup> The founding members were extremely worried about the institute's uncertain future. When Buber died in 1965 at the age of eighty-seven, Moses was seventy-eight, Weltsch seventy-four, Kreutzberger and Gruenewald sixty-five, Tramer sixty. When the LBI was founded, it was assumed that it would not outlive its creators. But a decade later, the institute had not yet started work on many of its original projects, including the comprehensive history of German Jewry from the Enlightenment to 1933. A number of founding members were deeply concerned about the gap between reality and these original ideals, Weltsch often being seized by feelings of resignation and failure. In letters written to Shalom Adler-Rudel and Max Kreutzberger in April 1966, he described the LBI as a "quixotic attempt to hold on to something that can't be held on to."<sup>76</sup> The institute was a "façade" and a "fraud." Rather than conducting systematic scholarly work, it had engaged in "glorified journalism," "caprice" ["*zufällige Dinge*"], and "dilettantism."<sup>77</sup> The situation was so dire that it would be best to prepare for the LBI's "dignified dissolution."<sup>78</sup>

These outbursts of resignation should not be taken at face value. In 1966, the same year that Weltsch lamented that the LBI had failed to attract historians and other experts, the *Year Book* comprised essays written almost entirely by specialist historians. More importantly, these authors included representatives of the older generation (Hans Liebeschütz), the middle generation (Jacob Katz, Jacob Toury and Nathan Rotenstreich), and the younger generation (Herbert Strauss, Arnold Paucker, Ismar Schorsch and Michael Meyer). Weltsch actively and successfully worked to recruit younger scholars like George Mosse, Werner Mosse and Reinhard Rürup to the *Year Book*.<sup>79</sup> He had little patience for the skeptical reserve with which the Jerusalem leadership under Moses had greeted figures at the London institute such as Werner Mosse and Paucker. In a letter to Tramer, Weltsch wrote: "I am too old. Younger people now need to steer things. But we are possessed by a peculiar kind of psychosis that we do not need young people. Can you not

<sup>75</sup> See Gershom Scholem, "Wider den Mythos vom deutsch-jüdischen Gespräch," in *LBI Bulletin*, vol. 7 (1964), pp. 278–281; *idem*, "Noch einmal: Das deutsch-jüdische 'Gespräch,'" in *ibid.*, vol. 8 (1965), pp. 167–172; Siegfried Moses, "Weltanschauliche Unterschiede im deutschen Judentum," in *ibid.*, pp. 346–351; Eva Reichmann, "Zur Klärung in eigener Sache," in *ibid.*, vol. 8 (1966), pp. 342–344.

<sup>76</sup> Weltsch to Kreutzberger, April 7, 1966, *LBI Archives New York*, Robert Weltsch Coll.

<sup>77</sup> Weltsch to Adler-Rudel, April 5, 1966, *LBI Archives New York*, Robert Weltsch Coll.

<sup>78</sup> Weltsch to Kreutzberger, April 7, 1966, *LBI Archives New York*, Robert Weltsch Coll.

<sup>79</sup> With respect to Rürup, see Weltsch to Ernst Hamburger, February 17, 1969, *LBI London*, file "Year Book XIV."

see that the tiny little circle of old withered men is falling apart?"<sup>80</sup> And in a letter to Siegfried Moses, he warned that

If the LBI is to continue its work, and I do believe this is possible ... then we have to come to terms with the fact that the work of the second generation will have an entirely different face ... The young academics of today with whom we are trying to establish contact have a completely different style. As long as we can, we want to "supervise" them, preferably unnoticed. But if we do not grant them their independence at some point, then we need to begin to prepare for the dissolution of the LBI in a timely fashion.<sup>81</sup>

Problems also emerged in relation to the changing of editors, although here the difficulties were largely defused by pragmatism and a willingness to compromise. In 1970, Weltsch wrote to Moses saying that he wished to retire as *Year Book* editor.<sup>82</sup> Arnold Paucker, who had already occasionally worked on the journal while directing the institute, was the logical successor. Moses, however, would only agree to appoint Paucker as managing editor. A compromise resulted, Weltsch remaining the official editor and continuing to write each volume's introductions while in reality, Paucker served as the journal's day-to-day editor.<sup>83</sup> This arrangement naturally required a great deal of self-denial and adaptability from Paucker, his work remaining largely invisible to the outside world, despite an occasional word of thanks in an introduction. Paucker did have a free hand over editorial decisions. After Moses's death in 1974, it was only a question of time before the "theater," as the LBI's new international president Max Gruenewald termed the arrangement, was ended.<sup>84</sup> When Weltsch moved to a nursing home in Israel in 1978, he retired from the *Year Book* for good, continuing to be listed as "Founder Editor" on the journal's masthead while Paucker received his first official mention as "co-editor." Finally, in 1981, ten years after he had become the journal's *de facto* editor, he received that designation "officially" in its twenty-sixth volume.

Paucker had been nearly fifty years old when he began that editorial work in 1970.<sup>85</sup> Raised in a liberal bourgeois family in Berlin, he had been forced by the Nazi threat to take an interest in politics at a young age: influenced by

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<sup>80</sup> Weltsch to Tramer, January 30, 1970, *LBI Archives New York*, Robert Weltsch Coll.

<sup>81</sup> Weltsch to Moses, January 9, 1969, *LBI Archives New York*, Robert Weltsch Coll.

<sup>82</sup> Weltsch to Moses, June 2, 1970, *LBI Archives New York*, Robert Weltsch Coll.

<sup>83</sup> Arnold Paucker, interview with the author, London, April 23, 2003.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>85</sup> On Paucker's life, see Arnold Paucker, "Mommensenstrasse to Devonshire Street," in Peter Alter (ed.), *Out of the Third Reich: Refugee Historians in Post-war Britain*, London, New York 1998, pp. 175–193; *idem*, "Erfahrungen und Erinnerungen"; Reinhard Rürup, "Arnold Paucker – Historiker und Zeitzeuge der deutsch-jüdischen Geschichte," in Paucker, *Deutsche Juden im Kampf um Recht und Freiheit*, pp. ix–xxii.

the youth movement, he joined the Zionist *Werkleute* organization in 1933 and briefly belonged to the illegal *Kommunistischer Jugendverband*. In 1936, he emigrated to Palestine, where he spent several years in Ben Shemen, a youth village and agricultural school. Later he worked as a casual laborer in Jerusalem. From 1939 to 1941, he was again a member of the *Kommunistischer Jugendverband* in Palestine. From 1941 to 1946, he was a volunteer in the English army, participating in the liberation of Italy and the Allied occupation of Bologna at the end of the war. After a long stay in Italy and the United States, Paucker settled in England in 1950, studying Germanic languages and literature at the University of Birmingham under Roy Pascal, the leading British Germanist at the time. He completed his graduate studies in 1959 at the University of Nottingham with a master's thesis on *The Yiddish Versions of the German Volksbuch*.

Because of his left-wing, consciously anti-fascist politics, his experiences in the liberation of Europe, his position as an "outsider" vis-à-vis the various established streams of Judaism, and an academic specialization in Yiddish language and literature, Paucker was initially at a remove from the institute's rather conservative leadership. When he became director of the London institute in 1959, his first concern was familiarizing himself with the new milieu. With Weltsch and Eva Reichmann as his mentors, he shifted his intellectual focus to German-Jewish history, with a special emphasis on the resistance of German Jews to Nazism and antisemitism. His major book on this topic, which amounted to a second thesis, appeared in 1968; it would be the basis for a doctorate in history from the University of Heidelberg in 1975.<sup>86</sup>

Paucker edited twenty-three *Year Books* between 1970 and 1992, with Silvia Gilchrist as assistant editor from 1978 to 1992. His volumes of the publication display obvious traces of his historical interests. In his first *Year Book* volume, one article addresses the resistance of German Jewry to Nazism, another an eighteenth-century liturgical topic related to the Yiddish language.<sup>87</sup> In later issues, Jewish-self defense was a steadily presented topic, as was the role of the *Centralverein* in Germany's pre-Nazi period.<sup>88</sup> Another prominent concern was the oft-forgotten role of German-Jewish soldiers in the Allied battle against fascism.<sup>89</sup> Generally speaking, Paucker accorded more room to topics that been given short shrift during the journal's first

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<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, p. xviii.

<sup>87</sup> Helmut Eschwege, "Resistance of German Jews against the Nazi Regime," in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 15 (1970), pp. 143–182; Siegfried Stein, "Liebliche Tefilloh – A Judaeo-German Prayer Book printed in 1709," in *ibid.*, pp. 41–72.

<sup>88</sup> See especially *LBI Year Book*, vol. 33 (1988), pp. 95–128; *ibid.*, vol. 36 (1991), pp. 47–169.

<sup>89</sup> Arnold Paucker, "Preface/Introduction," in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 37 (1992), pp. xxivf. See also the section on "German and Austrian Jews in the Fight against National-Socialist Germany," in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 40 (1995), pp. 3–62.

phase, including the Nazi period and the history of Jewish emigration after 1933. His sense of German-Jewish history was shaped by a twentieth-century experience of persecution. This history took in everyone in the German-Jewish “community of fate” – “all those who were descended from the Jewish group, who had been seen by the outside world as Jews, and who had suffered the Jewish fate.”<sup>90</sup> Consequently, during Paucker’s tenure the *Year Book* also published essays on topics like the persecution of Jewish Christians in the Third Reich:<sup>91</sup> a controversial decision at the time, and one that, with an exception made for a few historical personages such as Karl Marx, Heinrich Heine and Friedrich Julius Stahl, would have been completely unthinkable for the institute’s founding generation.

Paucker’s most important achievement was opening the journal to the larger academic world and shaping it into the leading research journal in German-Jewish history. The scholarly character of the *Year Book* was further enhanced by a substantial increase of academic interest in this history at the start of the 1970s, especially in the United States. In 1969, the first panel on German and Austrian Jewry was presented at the American Historical Association’s annual meeting, the *Year Book* publishing the talks and comments in their entirety.<sup>92</sup> From this point on, the directors of the New York and London institutes, Fred Grubel and Arnold Paucker, regularly attended the AHA annual meetings to present the institute’s work and attract panels, presentations, and authors to the *Year Book*. The LBI’s first conference, focused on “Exploring a Typology of German Jewry,” was held at Columbia University’s Arden House in April 1973; the proceedings were subsequently published in the *Year Book*,<sup>93</sup> as were those of the first panel on German Jewry and antisemitism at the biennial convention of West German historians held in Braunschweig in 1974.<sup>94</sup> Hence the journal now offered sections devoted to single topics; at the time, such proceedings included contributions from many distinguished historians, the sections thus displaying very high scholarly standards. In the course of his tenure, Paucker also saw two important changes in the role of the *Year Book*’s editor.<sup>95</sup> In the early years, this had essentially involved encouraging surviving German Jews to participate in the

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, p. xix.

<sup>91</sup> Werner Cohn, “Bearers of a Common Fate? The ‘Non-Aryan’ Christian ‘Fate-Comrades’ of the Paulus-Bund 1933–1939,” in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 33 (1988), pp. 327–366; Ursula Büttner, “The Persecution of Christian-Jewish Families in the Third Reich” and Jeremy Noakes, “The Development of Nazi Policy towards the German-Jewish ‘Mischlinge’ 1933–1945,” in *ibid.*, vol. 34 (1989), pp. 267–354.

<sup>92</sup> “A Symposium on Central European Jews,” in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 16 (1971), pp. 155–184.

<sup>93</sup> “Typology of German Jewry,” in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 19 (1974), pp. 3–135.

<sup>94</sup> “Historians, Conventions,” in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 20 (1975), pp. 3–46.

<sup>95</sup> For the following, see Robert Weltsch, “Looking Back Over Sixty Years,” in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 27 (1982), p. 389.

institute's work. Now, a central concern was staying abreast of international research developments and, connected with this, assimilating new topics and approaches in an open and creative manner. As a result of such developments, it was under Paucker's directorship that the *Year Book* emerged as the most important journal devoted to German-Jewish history, maintaining a near-monopoly in this domain until the start of the 1990s, and revealing a special openness to the work of historians at the start of their careers – another of Paucker's main goals. Since most dissertations in German-Jewish history were being written in the United States, the fact that the journal was published in English was now a great advantage.

In the face of such manifest success, sharp criticism was still occasionally being leveled at both the LBI and the *Year Book* in the 1970s. Probably the sharpest criticism was leveled by the important Holocaust historian Raul Hilberg – in a possible follow-up to his conflict with the LBI in the 1960s connected to the controversy over Hannah Arendt's book on Eichmann – over what he saw as widespread Jewish passivity when facing destruction.<sup>96</sup> In a review of volume 15 of the *Year Book*, appearing in the prestigious *American Historical Review*, Hilberg dismissed the LBI as “an organization dedicated to nostalgic research in the history of German Jewry”:

[T]he exploration of their [the German Jews'] cultural past is almost akin to salvaging treasures from a sunken ship. The stories, raised from the bottom – cleaned, polished, and handled with loving care – are assembled into yearbooks, outfitted with bibliographies, indexes and glossy photographs and given an inspiring theme. .... Actually, the current yearbook is about people, most of them old friends well known to the authors and familiar to prospective readers ... . Five of the ten authors in this volume are more than seventy years old.<sup>97</sup>

Hilberg's polemic, meant to discredit the *Year Book* as a refuge of parochial, museological history, was directly countered in the *American Historical Review* by a number of his colleagues.<sup>98</sup> In any event, the transformations in the *Year Book* over the course of the 1970s would render any remaining grounds for such criticism obsolete.

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<sup>96</sup> See the contribution of Jürgen Matthäus in this volume.

<sup>97</sup> Raul Hilberg, “Review of *LBI Year Book XV*,” in *The American Historical Review*, vol. 77 (1972), pp. 1473f. Approximately 15 years earlier, the “new hagiology” of Leo Baeck was being criticized from an Orthodox Jewish perspective, see Alexander Carlebach, “Review of *LBI Year Book II* (1957),” *Jewish Review*, no. 301, May 9, 1958: “Orthodox Jews from Germany ... are entitled to resist the attempt to set up the image of Leo Baeck, a leader of Reform and Liberalism, as the spiritual head and representative of German Jewry.”

<sup>98</sup> See J. S. Conway, “Review of *LBI Year Book XVI*,” *The American Historical Review*, vol. 78 (1973), pp. 1580f.; John C. Fout, “Review of *LBI Year Book XVII*,” in *ibid.*, vol. 79 (1974), pp. 803f.

## VI

As the nature of the *Year Book* changed, so too did its contributors, the ranks of émigrés born before 1915 continuing to decline. By the beginning of the 1970s, the proportion of authors who were not émigrés at all had also grown, with most coming from the United States. In training and academic orientation, the trend among *Year Book* authors was towards increasing professionalization and specialization:<sup>99</sup> in the 1950s, an average of seventy-two percent of *Year Book* authors had a higher degree, forty-eight percent of these holding Ph.D.s and twenty-four percent advanced degrees in fields like law and medicine. In the 1980s, ninety-two percent had a higher degree, eighty-five percent of these being Ph.D.s. Likewise, in the first five years of the *Year Book*, twenty-two percent of authors taught at colleges or universities; in the 1980s the figure was sixty-four percent. Between 1956 and 1960, twelve percent of authors were professors of history; in the 1980s, this figure had grown to forty-five percent. The changes of the 1970s also resulted in an increase in the total number of authors writing for the *Year Book*, and a corresponding decrease in the number of essays written by each individual author. The émigrés who were writing in the 1950s had felt a special loyalty to the journal, which was often their only forum for publication; in contrast, the specialists who began to fill its pages in the 1970s also published in many other academic forums.

The various changes taking place within German-Jewish history studies in the 1970s, including a general increase of interest in the field, had emerged mainly in America, one of its main sources being the rise of academic ethnic studies, leading to the founding of Jewish studies departments at many universities. The modern history of German Jewry had now taken on a range of meanings within the academy. In a general context, it offered the example of a minority group whose encounter with a majority culture took forms ranging from widespread inclusion to the most extreme possible exclusion. In the context of German history, the destruction of German Jewry always played at least an implicit role in the debate over the *Sonderweg* theory – the theory of a special, characteristically belated German path to modernity. And in the context of Jewish studies, the history of German Jewry could serve as a paradigm for the possibilities and problems of the modern Jewish Diaspora.

In contrast to the Zionist-dominated postwar period, scholars were now emphasizing the positive aspects of German-Jewish history, particularly what it suggested regarding the possibilities for developing and preserving Jewish identity in a modern pluralistic society. Profiting from such academic developments, the institute in turn established doctoral seminars, academic lec-

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<sup>99</sup> See Ismar Schorsch, "The Leo Baeck Institute: Continuity amid Desolation," in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 25 (1980), pp. ix–xii.

tures and conferences,<sup>100</sup> its ties to American universities facilitated by the presence there of a number of German-Jewish émigrés including George Mosse, Fritz Stern, Herbert Strauss, Werner Angress, Guy Stern, Ismar Schorsch and Michael Meyer. Although the academic and sociological environment was each time different, these figures did have a number of dynamic counterparts in both Great Britain – Werner Mosse, Peter Pulzer, Julius Carlebach and Siegbert Praver – and Israel – Jacob Katz, Jacob Toury and Uriel Tal; and importantly, starting in the mid-1960s, there was also collaboration with West German historians, including Werner Jochmann, Reinhard Rürup, Ernst Schulin, Hermann Greive, Stefi Jersch-Wenzel and Monika Richarz. The emerging global academic network in German-Jewish history continued to expand over the years, forming a reliable pool of scholars from which the inner core of *Year Book* authors could be recruited.

It is difficult to detect a topical trend or emphasis in the journal's articles appearing between 1970 and 1992 – something resulting from both the increasing specialization of contributors and the broad range of articles. Nevertheless, a few tendencies are apparent:

(1) In the preceding period, the focus had been, as we have seen, on a reconstruction of Jewish life in Germany through examples from German-Jewish institutions and biographies. In this second period, increasing attention was paid to political and social conditions. For example, German policies on Jews and antisemitism were now systematically examined for the first time. What factors characterized the history of Jewish emancipation in Germany? Why did the “Jewish Question” remain virulent even after the success of emancipation? What were the causes for the rise of antisemitic movements at the end of the 1870s? How widespread were antisemitic attitudes in German society? Importantly, even though German Jewry remained the center of focus, such questions could not be answered in terms of the history of Germany's Jewish minority, rather requiring consideration of the nation's broader nineteenth- and twentieth-century social history. This insight led the *Year Book* to incorporate more essays on general German history, especially with regard to the social and political background of minority policies, the “Jewish Question,” and antisemitism. The research involved here tended to center on the *Kaiserreich*, its political and social structures understood to have

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<sup>100</sup> See Kreuzberger to Selma Stern, February 4, 1973, *UB Basel*, Stern's papers, D 14/90: “We have begun to hold a number of seminars this winter for graduate students and junior faculty in the local universities, when possible. The demand is so great at times that the number of participants makes holding a seminar impossible. We had between 150 and 200 registrations for some of the seminar presentations. This is a sign that interest in the problem of German-Jewish history is growing. My sense is that it is today regarded as a kind of paradigm for the historical path of Western Jewry.” See also Shulamit Volkov, “Reflections on German-Jewish Historiography: A Dead End or a New Beginning?” in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 41 (1996), pp. 309–320, here pp. 312f.



paved the way for Germany's special twentieth-century path. In the 1970s, the *Year Book* pioneered the historical study of emancipation and antisemitism; much of the work now seen as seminal first appeared there.<sup>101</sup>

(2) The interpretive framework of German-Jewish history was increasingly guided by scientific models, ideas and theories derived from the social sciences, especially modernization theory and the idea of acculturation. As noted above, in the 1950s and 1960s Weltsch's introductions had paved the way for this new methodology. Now his theoretical outline would be shored up and expanded through empirical studies. In the United States, this development proved especially productive within ethnic studies, where it resulted in a new understanding of the acculturation and integration processes in immigration history. Where the normative concepts of "Anglo-Saxon conformity" and the "melting pot" presumed a complete dissolution of the original culture through the assimilation process, more precise studies of immigrant groups suggested that ethnic identity was often preserved and even strengthened in the form of an "ethnic revival" taking place over a fairly long time-span.<sup>102</sup> The concept of "cultural pluralism," denoting a preservation of immigrant cultures and ethnicities together with political and economic integration, was an expression of this new perspective.<sup>103</sup> The concept was frequently tied to a critique of the assimilation concept, focused on both its normative content and its determinism.

In place of assimilation, the concept of acculturation now rose to dominance.<sup>104</sup> Such developments within American immigration and minority

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<sup>101</sup> Examples are Reinhard Rürup, "Emancipation and Crisis: The 'Jewish Question' in Germany 1850–1890," in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 20 (1975), pp. 13–26; Shulamit Volkov, "Antisemitism as a Cultural Code: Reflections on the History and Historiography of Antisemitism in Imperial Germany," in *ibid.*, vol. 23 (1978), pp. 25–46; Werner T. Angress, "The German Army's 'Judenählung' of 1916 – Genesis – Consequences – Significance," in *ibid.*, pp. 117–138; Peter Pulzer, "Why was there a Jewish Question in Imperial Germany?" in *ibid.*, vol. 25 (1980), pp. 133–146; Ian Kershaw, "The Persecution of the Jews and German Popular Opinion in the Third Reich," in *ibid.*, vol. 26 (1981), pp. 261–290.

<sup>102</sup> See the classic studies of Nathan Glazer and Daniel P. Moynihan, *Beyond the Melting Pot*, Cambridge, MA 1963; *idem* (eds.), *Ethnicity: Theory and Experience*, Cambridge, MA 1975.

<sup>103</sup> Milton M. Gordon, *Assimilation in American Life: The Role of Race, Religion and National Origins*, New York 1964, pp. 85 and 132ff. On Gordon's concept, see Raymond A. Mohl, "Cultural Assimilation versus Cultural Pluralism," in George E. Pozetta (ed.), *Assimilation, Acculturation, and Social Mobility*, New York and London 1991, pp. 187–196; Fred R. Wacker, "Assimilation and Cultural Pluralism in American Social Thought," in *ibid.*, pp. 311–320.

<sup>104</sup> On the concept of assimilation in the American context, see Russel A. Kazal, "Revisiting Assimilation: The Rise, Fall, and Reappraisal of a Concept in American Ethnic History," in *American Historical Review*, vol. 100 (April 1995), pp. 437–471; Christhard Hoffmann, "Zum Begriff der Akkulturation," in Claus-Dieter Krohn,

studies had a strong influence on the historiography of late-eighteenth-century and nineteenth-century Jewish integration and acculturation in Germany. There was, to be sure, no immediate response to Gordon R. Mork's suggestion in 1977 that "an important new dimension in our understanding of Germans and Jews will result if we try to think of Jews as *cultural immigrants* into German society during the nineteenth century and the reception which they received from the German gentile population as essentially a nativist welcome."<sup>105</sup> For a time, the concept of acculturation would in fact only be applied to the history of German-Jewish migration.<sup>106</sup> Starting a half-decade later, a series of detailed and differentiated books and articles appeared that borrowed concepts from other fields, including urban studies and gender studies, to analyze Jewish acculturation in Germany and Austria.<sup>107</sup> This work suggested that far from becoming completely absorbed into German society, German Jews continued to form a subculture with its own institutions, associations and networks. Although having adapted to the bourgeois culture of their environment, it was now argued, they did so within Jewish social and communal structures, with a German-Jewish parallel society thus emerging. In other words, German Jewry had acculturated while avoiding total assimilation.

This new understanding of German-Jewish acculturation was naturally reflected in the articles appearing in the *Year Book*. Rather than focusing in the manner of the Zionist-influenced founding generation on signs of inner decay and the dissolution of traditional communal institutions, historians were now exploring the self-determination of German Jewry within a modernizing and pluralizing environment. Even the *Centralverein*, which many Zionists had regarded as the incarnation of assimilationism, was being described as having strengthened Jewish group identity through its political ac-

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Patrik von zur Mühlen, Gerhard Paul and Lutz Winckler (eds.), *Handbuch der deutschsprachigen Emigration 1933–1945*, Darmstadt 1998, pp.117–126; see also the contribution of Till van Rahden in this volume.

<sup>105</sup> Gordon R. Mork, "German Nationalism and Jewish Assimilation: The Bismarck Period," in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 22 (1977), pp. 81–90, here p. 82.

<sup>106</sup> See Herbert A. Strauss, "The Immigration and Acculturation of the German Jew in the United States of America," in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 16 (1971), pp. 63–95.

<sup>107</sup> See Marsha L. Rozenblit, *The Jews of Vienna, 1867–1914: Assimilation and Identity*, Albany, NY 1983; Shulamit Volkov, "Jüdische Assimilation und Eigenart im Kaiserreich," in *Geschichte und Gesellschaft*, vol. 9 (1983), pp. 331–348; David Sorkin, *The Transformation of German Jewry, 1780–1840*, New York 1987; *idem*, "Emancipation and Assimilation: Two Concepts and Their Application to the Study of German Jewish History," in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 35 (1990), pp. 17–33; Marion Kaplan, "Tradition and Transition: The Acculturation, Assimilation, and Integration of Jews in Imperial Germany. A Gender Analysis," in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 27 (1982), pp. 3–35; *idem*, *The Making of the Jewish Middle-Class: Women, Family and Identity in Imperial Germany*, New York 1991. See also Trude Maurer, *Die Entwicklung der jüdischen Minderheit in Deutschland (1780–1933). Neuere Forschungen und offene Fragen*, Tübingen 1992.

tivism, especially its defense of Jewish civil rights.<sup>108</sup> Where the Zionist approach had defined all forms of assimilation as involving a profound loss of Jewish identity, the new approach stressed the possibilities inherent in cultural encounter and the novel forms of Jewish community and identity emerging from it: for example, the Reform movement and *Wissenschaft des Judentum*.<sup>109</sup> Overcoming the rigid duality of a model juxtaposing assimilation and community, the new research emphasized a concurrence of acculturation and self-assertion, the coexistence of assimilation and community.<sup>110</sup> This emphasis was manifest in one chapter-title in *German-Jewish History in Modern Times*, "Becoming German, Remaining Jewish."<sup>111</sup>

(3) Another feature of the new research characteristic of the second phase was a systematic turn to topics that had been neglected in the early years. For example, although the LBI founders had included Nazi persecution and the Jewish response in their initial research agenda and the first *Year Book* had contained a section of essays on the topic, until the end of the 1970s it would be largely neglected. Following the LBI conference in Berlin in 1985 and the fiftieth anniversary of the November pogroms, the journal strengthened its focus on the history of German Jewry within the Third Reich – a focus that was carried forward in the 1990s.<sup>112</sup>

The *Year Book's* first phase was marked by an emphasis on the intellectual history of German Jewry. This emphasis was now balanced by a turn back to political and social history.<sup>113</sup> Strikingly, new socio-historical methods were bolstering Weltsch's own original opposition to essentialist theories of German Judaism, while underscoring the variety of the Jewish life that had been part of German history. The 1973 Arden House Conference and the three-

<sup>108</sup> Evyatar Friesel, "The Political and Ideological Development of the *Centralverein* before 1914," in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 31 (1986), pp. 121–146.

<sup>109</sup> See, for example, Michael A. Meyer, "Jewish Religious Reform and *Wissenschaft des Judentums* – The Positions of Zunz, Geiger and Frankel," in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 16 (1971), pp. 19–44; Ismar Schorsch, "The Emergence of Historical Consciousness in Modern Judaism," in *ibid.*, vol. 28 (1983), pp. 413–438.

<sup>110</sup> See Jonathan Frankel, "Assimilation and the Jews in Nineteenth-Century Europe: Towards a New Historiography?" in *idem* and Steven J. Zipperstein (eds.), *Assimilation and Community: The Jews in Nineteenth-Century Europe*, Cambridge 1992, pp. 1–37, here pp. 4ff.

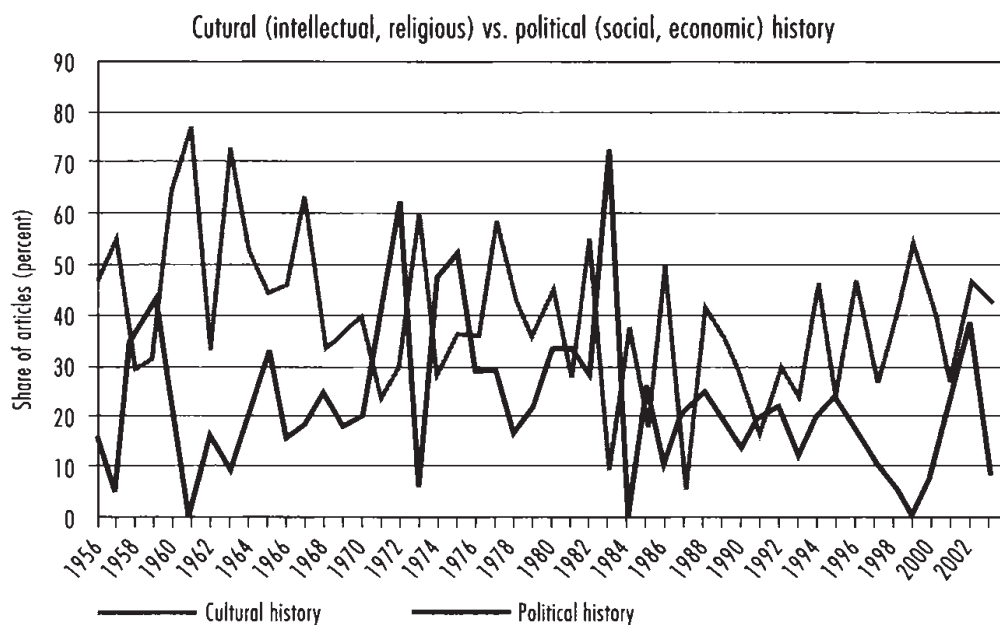
<sup>111</sup> Michael A. Meyer, "Becoming German, Remaining Jewish," in *idem* (ed.), *German-Jewish History in Modern Times*, vol. 2: *Emancipation and Acculturation 1780–1871*, New York 1997, pp. 199–250.

<sup>112</sup> See, for example, the large sections on the topic in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 29 (1984), pp. 3–227; vol. 32 (1987), pp. 157–383; vol. 34 (1989), pp. 187–355; vol. 36 (1991), pp. 243–411; vol. 37 (1992), pp. 327–479.

<sup>113</sup> See, for example, Jacob Toury, *Die politischen Orientierungen der Juden in Deutschland. Von Jena bis Weimar*, Tübingen 1966 (Schriftenreihe wissenschaftlicher Abhandlungen des Leo Baeck Instituts 15); Ernest Hamburger and Peter Pulzer, "Jews as Voters in the Weimar Republic," in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 30 (1985), pp. 3–66.

volume anthology of Jewish autobiographies compiled by Monika Richarz for the LBI were key contributions in the emergence of a new social typology of German Jewry,<sup>114</sup> now considered not as a monolithic entity but as composed of a range of professions and subgroups: shopkeepers, rabbis, teachers, Jews from both urban and rural environments, the interest now having turned to concrete behaviors and modes of thought within a specific historical context. Topics such as the socio-political situation of Eastern Jews in Germany, the history of the Yiddish language and Yiddish literature, that of Jewish emigration after 1933 and, especially, the nature of Jewish defense against antisemitism, were all accorded greater attention in this new phase. However, the concept of gender, which Marion Kaplan would introduce to German-Jewish studies in 1982, remained marginal to the *Year Book*.<sup>115</sup>

(4) As it opened itself to the wider academic world, the journal increasingly became a forum mirroring developments within German-Jewish studies. To what extent was the publication able to preserve its own identity? A comparison of the number of articles on religious, intellectual, literary and educational history to the number of articles on political, social and economic history points to the dominance of cultural topics in the early years, followed by the rise of political and social history in the 1970s and 1980s and a return to intellectual and cultural history in the 1990s.



<sup>114</sup> "Exploring a Typology of German Jewry," in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 29 (1974), pp. 3–137; Monika Richarz (ed.), *Jüdisches Leben in Deutschland. Selbstzeugnisse zur Sozialgeschichte*, 3 vols., Stuttgart 1976–1982.

<sup>115</sup> Marion Kaplan, "Tradition and Transition: The Acculturation, Assimilation and Integration of Jews in Imperial Germany. A Gender Analysis," in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 27 (1982), pp. 3–35.

However, what is most apparent is a zigzag pattern among topics and a yearly alternation of thematic focus. To the extent that such supply-driven patterns are subject to external influence, this may well have been a matter of deliberate editorial policy. In any case, it is clear that the *Year Book* made room for new research trends and methodological innovations, but did not allow itself to be ruled by them. In both themes and methodology, the journal continued to preserve its international, interdisciplinary and pluralistic character.

## VII

In 1992, Arnold Paucker retired as editor of the *Year Book*. It was by far the longest volume, with the most essays and most extensive bibliography that has appeared to date. The volume was also a personal tribute by the various contributors to the departing editor – and a sign of the continued expansion of German-Jewish history in the early 1990s. The collapse of communism had led to the opening of archives in both eastern Germany and Eastern Europe, and with the new sources came new ideas. The discipline of Jewish studies was in the process of becoming established at West German universities, and the *Wissenschaftliche Arbeitsgemeinschaft's* seminars promoted the work of graduate students and younger scholars in various ways.<sup>116</sup> Interest in the discipline had continued to increase in America, making its way into German departments and various academic frameworks for the study of what had come to be termed cultural history and cultural studies.

While such activity was of clear benefit to the LBI, it also meant that the *Year Book* no longer had German-Jewish history to itself. In Germany, three journals devoted to different aspects of the field appeared in the early 1990s, another prominent journal appeared in the U.S.,<sup>117</sup> with periodicals concerned with German language, history and literature also publishing numerous essays and devoting special issues to German-Jewish history and culture.<sup>118</sup> The increasing academic specialization this proliferation reflected, and the basic competition the other journals were offering, raised the question of whether the *Year Book* any longer had a unique role and identity.

<sup>116</sup> On the situation of Jewish Studies in contemporary Germany, see the contributions of Margarete Schlüter and Andreas Gotzmann in Michael Brenner and Stefan Rohrbacher (eds.), *Wissenschaft vom Judentum. Annäherungen nach dem Holocaust*, Göttingen 2000, pp. 85–110

<sup>117</sup> In Germany: *Menora. Jahrbuch für deutsch-jüdische Geschichte* (1990ff.); *Aschkenas. Zeitschrift für Geschichte und Kultur der Juden* (1991ff.); *Jahrbuch für Antisemitismusforschung* (1992ff.). In the U.S.: *Jewish Social Studies: History, Culture and Society* (1999ff.).

<sup>118</sup> Examples include the following academic periodicals: *Geschichte und Gesellschaft*; *Historische Zeitschrift*; *Zeitschrift für Religions- und Geistesgeschichte*; *German History*; *Central European History*; *New German Critique*; *German Studies Review*.

The sixty-four-year-old historian John Grenville was named Arnold Paucker's successor as editor in 1992. Grenville was a professor of international history at the University of Birmingham. He had escaped Nazi persecution as an eleven-year-old in 1939, arriving in England from Berlin on a *Kindertransport*. Despite immense obstacles including a lack of formal secondary school qualifications, Grenville eventually studied at Birkbeck College, University of London and the London School of Economics. His doctoral thesis on *Lord Salisbury and Foreign Policy: The Close of the Nineteenth Century*, which was published in 1964, established his reputation as a methodologically innovative political historian. After a brief period as reader at the University of Nottingham, he was appointed professor of international history in Leeds in 1966, then moving to chairmanship of Birmingham's history department three years later. When Grenville assumed the *Year Book* editorship, he was thus well known as a historian and author in the field of international relations, but had not yet written anything directly related to German Jewry. Grenville thought of his work at the LBI as a return "to a field which for decades I avoided and distanced myself from: German-Jewish history. It has been possible for me only after forty years to study this period with proper scholarly detachment."<sup>119</sup> His new research focused on the history of Jewish-Christian relations in Hamburg in the 1930s and 1940s; his *magnum opus* on the history of Hamburg's Jews was recently finished and will be published soon.

In his work as *Year Book* editor Grenville collaborated closely with other scholars. From 1993 to 2000, Julius Carlebach, who taught Jewish Studies and sociology at the University of Sussex, also serving as chancellor of Heidelberg's *Hochschule für jüdische Studien* from 1989 to 1997, was associate editor. In 2001, the newly appointed director of the London LBI, Raphael Gross, a thirty-five-year-old intellectual historian from Switzerland who had made reputation for himself on the basis of a controversial study of the antisemitism of the jurist Carl Schmitt, himself became the journal's associate editor; he would become co-editor in 2003.

Grenville's top priority as editor has been maintaining continuity of underlying focus while preserving the high scholarly standard of scholarship that had distinguished the *Year Book* over the years. Like Paucker, he believed the journal's key task was to see to it "that the *Year Book* remains at the forefront of research." He expanded the journal's traditional emphasis on the period extending from 1780 to the eve of the Second World War to include the "whole of German-speaking Jewry from medieval to contemporary times." At the same time, he laid considerable stress on the importance of comparative studies.<sup>120</sup> Grenville and Carlebach also worked to strengthen the *Year*

<sup>119</sup> See J. A. S. Grenville, "From Gardener to Professor," in Alter (ed.), *Out of the Third Reich*, pp. 57–72, here p. 69.

<sup>120</sup> John Grenville and Julius Carlebach, Preface to *LBI Year Book*, vol. 38 (1993), here p. ix.

*Book's* role as an aid to research, publishing historiographical debates,<sup>121</sup> offering suggestions for future research and providing reports on individual projects, sources, literature and archives.<sup>122</sup> This process has continued under Gross's co-editorship, with a new inclusion of dissertation abstracts (beginning in 2004) and the strengthening of the *Year Book's* important bibliography section under Annette Pringle and Barbara Suchy.

Over the past five volumes of the *Year Book* (2000–2004), nearly all of its authors have been from countries in which the LBI has had an active presence. Around a third of the authors are based in Germany (35.8 %), another third in the USA (32.3 %), one-fifth in Israel (19.9 %), and one-tenth in Great Britain (10.7 %). The relatively large number of German contributors reflects Germany's development into an academic center of German-Jewish studies over the past decade. Although it has decreased somewhat since the 1980s, the degree of professionalization among contributors remains high: nearly eighty-five percent of authors hold a doctorate, and nearly forty percent are professors at a university. The lower proportion of professors reflects two factors above all: first, in contrast with the 1980s, in German-Jewish history as elsewhere there is a great deal of publication by graduate students, even at master's level. In this respect it is worth noting that the average age of the *Year Book's* authors has continued to decline since the 1960s and 1980s, with the average being 49 for the past five years. And second, despite the field's expansion, academic positions in German-Jewish history have remained scarce – this a reflection of general developments in the academic job market, especially in Germany, offering a sharp contrast between the present situation and that prevailing in the 1970s and 1980s.

As the field of German-Jewish studies has become more specialized, the contributions in the *Year Book* between 1993 and 2004 have become more varied, to the extent that it has become increasingly difficult to distinguish clear trends in research. In accordance with the wishes of recent editors, the journal has shown more openness to publishing research on both pre-Enlightenment and postwar history.<sup>123</sup> With a few exceptions, however, the editors' wish to publish more comparative research, in other words, material considering German Jewry in relation to other Jewish communities, has been frustrated by the nature of the submissions.<sup>124</sup> The emphasis has con-

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<sup>121</sup> "German-Jewish History: A Debate," in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 41 (1996), pp. 207–229 and *ibid.*, vol. 43 (1998), pp. 315–336.

<sup>122</sup> "Sources on Jewish History," in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 38 (1993), pp. 343–423; Avraham Barkai, "The C.V. Archives in Moscow: A Reassessment," in *ibid.*, vol. 45 (2000), pp. 173–182.

<sup>123</sup> See the sections on "Continuity and New Beginnings in the Post-War Period," in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 42 (1997), pp. 273–324; "The Jewish *Alltag* in the Early Modern Period," in *ibid.*, vol. 47 (2002), pp. 41–113; "Remigration," in *ibid.*, vol. 48 (2004), pp. 107–224.

tinued to be, as David Sorkin has put it, “Germano-centric.”<sup>125</sup> There has been an increase of articles on Jewish religious history,<sup>126</sup> but in general the focus has remained on publishing important research on antisemitism and Nazi policies towards the German Jews, German-Jewish self-defense and resistance, German-Jewish emigration after 1933, and the history of German-Jewish organizations and Yiddish culture in Germany. Articles treating women’s history and historical questions related to gender do now form a solid presence in the journal, and this holds true for the history of daily life as well;<sup>127</sup> coverage of Jewish religious history has likewise expanded. In contrast, articles reflecting the recent emergence of postcolonial theory within the new cultural history as a powerful academic trend – expressed, in the German-Jewish historiographical context, as a questioning of the traditionally accepted boundaries between majority and minority cultures and a positing of German Jewry both as a model of “hybridised identity” and a guide “to a specifically modern diasporic existence” – do not use the *Year Book* as a regular forum.<sup>128</sup>

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<sup>124</sup> See, however, Hans Sode-Madsen, “The Perfect Deception: The Danish Jews and Theresienstadt 1940–1945,” in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 38 (1993), pp. 263–290; Gerd Kormann, “When Heredity met the Bacterium: Quarantines in New York and Danzig, 1898–1921,” in *ibid.*, vol. 46 (2001), pp. 243–276.

<sup>125</sup> See David Sorkin, “Beyond the *Émigré* Synthesis,” in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 45 (2000), pp. 209f., here p. 210. It should be noted that two major works devoted to comparative research have been published by the LBI recently: Michael Brenner, Rainer Liedtke and David Rechter (eds.), *Two Nations: British and German Jews in Comparative Perspective*, Tübingen 1999 (Schriftenreihe wissenschaftlicher Abhandlungen des Leo Baeck Instituts 60); Michael Brenner, Vicki Caron and Uri R. Kaufmann (eds.), *Jewish Emancipation Reconsidered: The French and German Models*, Tübingen 2003 (Schriftenreihe wissenschaftlicher Abhandlungen des Leo Baeck Instituts 66).

<sup>126</sup> “Intellectual History and Religious Thought,” in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 41 (1996), pp. 3–86; “Religion and Jewish Teaching,” in *ibid.*, vol. 43 (1998), pp. 3–126.; “Religious Renewal,” in *ibid.*, vol. 48 (2003), pp. 3–37; “Jewish Conversion From the Seventeenth to the Nineteenth Century,” in *ibid.*, vol. 40 (1995), pp. 65–129.

<sup>127</sup> See the sections “Gender and History,” in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 39 (1994), pp. 213–253; “Gender and Boundaries of the Jewish Community in 19<sup>th</sup> Century Germany,” in *ibid.*, vol. 46 (2001), pp. 95–172. See also “The Jewish *Alltag* in the Early Modern Period”; Marion Kaplan, “*Unter uns*: Jews Socialising with other Jews in Imperial Germany,” in *ibid.*, vol. 48 (2003), pp. 41–66. See too *idem* (ed.), *Geschichte des jüdischen Alltags in Deutschland. Vom 17. Jahrhundert bis 1945*, Munich 2003.

<sup>128</sup> Samuel Moyn, “German Jewry and the Question of Identity: Historiography and Theory,” in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 41 (1996), pp. 291–308, here p. 308. In addition to Moyn’s article, two further contributions that have incorporated insights and methodologies from the “new cultural history” in productive ways are Steven E. Aschheim, “German History and German Jewry: Boundaries, Junctions and Interdependence,” in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 43 (1998), pp. 315–322, and Till van Rahden, *Juden und andere Breslauer. Die Beziehungen zwischen Juden, Protestanten und Katholiken in einer deutschen Großstadt von 1860 bis 1925*, Göttingen 2000, pp. 13ff.



As this brief survey has suggested, in its most recent phase the *Year Book* has continued to emphasize thematic variety, a multiplicity of perspectives, interpretive pluralism, and academic and methodological rigor while retaining a position of reserve toward academic trends and fashions.

★ ★ ★

In the general academic world, recent years have witnessed an increasing movement towards the universalization of the German-Jewish experience and an expansion (and popularization) of the market for German-Jewish studies. In light of these tendencies, how does the *Year Book* remain distinctive and important? Three points are worth noting here:

– Although, as indicated, the *Year Book* no longer holds a monopoly on the publication of historical research on German Jewry, the journal does continue to serve as an intellectual and historiographical focal point for the discipline: the most important center for the integration and transmission of such research.

– The *Year Book* remains uniquely global and interdisciplinary in its basic approach. With its range of editors, authors and readers, the journal can call upon the expertise and methodological pluralism of a large international scholarly community. Research on German-Jewish history, whether conducted in Beersheva or Berkeley, Brighton or Bremen (not to mention Jerusalem, New York, London, Berlin), is not carried out in isolation. Rather, it now requires intense debate and intellectual exchange, often taking place instantaneously in electronic form – a process that owes a great deal to the work of both the LBI and its *Year Book*.

– Recent years have witnessed the proliferation of academic fashions and, with them, an instrumentalization of the German-Jewish past in order to fulfill the ephemeral needs of the present. In the face of such developments, one particular strength of the *Year Book* has been its unique locus within a *continuity* of German-Jewish history. Even more than other scholarly journals, the *Year Book* continues to embody, both in its staff and in its contents, a close connection with the lived experience and collective memory of the Jewish exiles from Germany. The preservation of that history remains the central reason for the institute and for the *Year Book's* existence.

A Master Narrative?  
The *Gesamtgeschichte* of German Jewry  
in Historical Context

Christian Wiese

In recent years, a number of German, Israeli and American authors have published surveys of the historical experience of German Jewry with a variety of interpretations and objectives. Amos Elon's *The Pity of It All: A Portrait of German Jews 1743–1933*, is a straightforward, encyclopedic account of prominent figures in the intellectual, political, cultural and economic life of German Jewry; it moves from Moses Mendelsohn's entry into Berlin's intellectual circles to Hannah Arendt's emigration from Germany. Although Elon did not intend to depict the destruction of German Jewry as the outcome of a history doomed from the start, his title implies what might be termed the "lachrymose conception" (Salo Baron) of German-Jewish historiography. Echoing arguments Gershom Scholem offered in the 1960s, Elon points to German Jewry's yearning for integration, its love of German culture, as an illusion, albeit a "highly creative one and with a grandeur of its own."<sup>1</sup> In contrast, in *Dann bin ich um den Schlaf gebracht. Ein Jahrtausend jüdisch-deutsche Kulturgeschichte*, Frank Stern questions the usefulness of a one-sided focus on "antisemitism, persecution, expulsion, deportation and destruction, on the social and cultural distance," arguing instead for an appreciation of "the commonalities, the reciprocity, the cultural rapprochement, and the creativity that flourished through social exchange."<sup>2</sup> German-Jewish history, which Stern describes on both social and cultural levels as a contradictory path to modernity, did not end "with the deportation trains to the death camps"; despite a radical rupture, Jewish life was rebuilt after 1945, a process that has intensified since the 1990s.<sup>3</sup> Another new account has been offered by Michael Toch, Friedrich Battenberg, Shulamit Volkov and Moshe Zimmermann in their individual volumes, treating different periods of German-Jewish history, of

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<sup>1</sup> Amos Elon, *The Pity of It All: A Portrait of German Jews 1743–1933*, New York 2002, p. 8.

<sup>2</sup> Frank Stern, *Dann bin ich um den Schlaf gebracht. Ein Jahrtausend jüdisch-deutsche Kulturgeschichte*, Berlin 2002, pp. 13–14.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p.12.

the multivolume *Enzyklopädie deutscher Geschichte*;<sup>4</sup> the volumes include surveys of sources and secondary literature, concise chronological overviews of the periods in question, and introductions, aimed at both a general and academic readership, to a range of issues and themes within recent scholarship on German Jewry. Volkov thus describes her essay as an effort “always to keep in mind the fate of the Jews, while at the same time avoiding a deterministic interpretation of Jewish history and an implication of constant persecution and inevitable catastrophe.”<sup>5</sup> And Zimmermann, in contrast to many present-day historians who show a certain reluctance to use a terminology pointing to successful integration, chooses to refer to “German Jews” rather than “Jews in Germany,” as the latter phrase would ultimately cede the power of interpretation to Nazism. Likewise, he rejects the “ghettoization of Jewish history” resulting from an exclusive focus on intra-Jewish history or its depiction as an exotic aspect of broader German history.<sup>6</sup> The above-mentioned volumes thus point to a number of central methodological questions posed in the most ambitious comprehensive history of German Jewry, the four-volume *German-Jewish History in Modern Times*, edited by Michael A. Meyer under the sponsorship of the Leo Baeck Institute.<sup>7</sup>

The publication of a *Gesamtgeschichte* was one of the earliest goals of the institute, dating back to its pre-war foundations. When the LBI was established in 1955, the writing of a comprehensive history – or “all-inclusive presentation” – of German Jewry was already a central part of its mission – its “final aim,” as Siegfried Moses put it in the first volume of the *Year Book*, published the following year.<sup>8</sup> All of the institute’s activities were meant to lay the groundwork for such a history. When the aim was achieved, forty years later, the history was rather different in form from what the LBI’s founders had envisioned. In the following pages, I wish to examine first the *Gesamtgeschichte*’s formative period – a period of discussions and negotiations

<sup>4</sup> Michael Toch, *Die Juden im mittelalterlichen Reich*, Munich 1998 (*Enzyklopädie deutscher Geschichte*, ed. by Lothar Gall, vol. 16); J. Friedrich Battenberg, *Die Juden in Deutschland vom 16. bis zum Ende des 18. Jahrhunderts*, Munich 2001 (vol. 60); Shulamit Volkov, *Die Juden in Deutschland 1780–1918*, Munich 1994 (vol. 16); Moshe Zimmermann, *Die deutschen Juden 1914–1945*, Munich 1997 (vol. 43).

<sup>5</sup> Volkov, *Die Juden in Deutschland 1780–1918*, p. 1.

<sup>6</sup> Zimmermann, *Die deutschen Juden 1914–1945*, pp. xi–xii.

<sup>7</sup> Michael A. Meyer (ed., with Michael Brenner, assistant ed.), *German-Jewish History in Modern Times*, 4 vols., New York 1996–1998: vol. 1: *Tradition and Enlightenment: 1600–1780* (1996); vol. 2: *Emancipation and Acculturation: 1780–1871* (1997); vol. 3: *Integration in Dispute: 1871–1918* (1997); vol. 4: *Renewal and Destruction: 1918–1945* (1998). All quotes are taken from this edition. The German edition *Deutsch-jüdische Geschichte in der Neuzeit* was published by C.H. Beck (Munich) in 1996 (vols. 1 and 2) and 1997 (vols. 3 and 4); so far, the first two volumes of the Hebrew edition *Toldot Yehude Germanyah ba-`et ha hadasha* have been published (Jerusalem 2000).

<sup>8</sup> Siegfried Moses, “Leo Baeck Institute of Jews from Germany,” in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 1 (1956), pp. xi–xviii, here p. xiii.

centered around significant questions of German-Jewish historiography. I will then consider the work's methodological tenets and conception of German-Jewish history. In conclusion, I will reflect upon the nature of the *Gesamtgeschichte*, originally intended as a definitive account of German Jewry. Historiographical developments that the LBI's founders could not have anticipated underscore the status of this synoptic history as an interim assessment – one that suggests directions for research and offers a basis for other historical narratives.

## I

The first ideas for a comprehensive history of German Jewry were already being considered during and immediately following World War II.<sup>9</sup> In fact, *Wissenschaft des Judentums* had started to lay the groundwork for such an historical survey at the start of the twentieth century. In 1903, the *Gesellschaft zur Förderung der Wissenschaft des Judentums* initiated the *Germania Judaica* project – the preparation of a historical gazetteer presenting material of all kinds from the earliest years to the present, and meant to form the basis for a comprehensive economic, social and intellectual history of German Jewry. The *Gesamtarchiv der deutschen Juden* was then founded in 1905. Its head, Eugen Täubler, insisted that Jewish historiography follow the standards of modern historical scholarship, German Jewry being considered in terms of both intra-Jewish religious, cultural and social developments and, crucially, the context of broader German history. When the *Akademie für die Wissenschaft des Judentums* was founded after the Great War, Täubler's insistence on scholarly rigor was the impetus for what seemed to represent a disciplinary revival<sup>10</sup> – one that nevertheless unfolded exclusively within Jewish studies. In this manner, the history of German Jewry remained exiled from both German historiography and – along with Jewish history in general – the

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<sup>9</sup> See Christhard Hoffmann, "Deutsch-jüdische Geschichtswissenschaft in der Emigration. Das Leo-Baeck-Institut," in Herbert A. Strauss, Klaus Fischer, Christhard Hoffmann and Alfons Söllner (eds.), *Die Emigration der Wissenschaften nach 1933. Disziplingeschichtliche Studien*, Munich, London, New York and Paris 1991, pp. 257–279; Ruth Nattermann, *Deutsch-jüdische Geschichtsschreibung nach der Shoah. Die Gründungs- und Frühgeschichte des Leo Baeck Institute*, Essen 2004; see also Christhard Hoffmann's contribution on the founding of the LBI in this volume.

<sup>10</sup> For Täubler, see Heike Scharbaum, *Zwischen zwei Welten. Wissenschaft und Lebenswelt am Beispiel des deutsch-jüdischen Historikers Eugen Täubler (1879–1953)*, Münster 2000; on the development of German-Jewish historiography during the Weimar Republic and the beginning of the Nazi-period, see Christhard Hoffmann, "Jüdische Geschichtswissenschaft in Deutschland 1918–1938," in Julius Carlebach (ed.), *Wissenschaft des Judentums. Anfänge der Judaistik in Europa*, Darmstadt 1992, pp. 132–152.

German universities, since it was not regarded as an integral part of German history.<sup>11</sup> The triumph of Nazism in Germany naturally marked an end to German *Wissenschaft des Judentums* along with German-Jewish history as a whole; instead, the movement's living members had to watch from exile as German historians and theologians appropriated Jewish history as a "scholarly" basis for virulent antisemitic propaganda in "historical" institutes and centers such as the *Institut zur Erforschung der Judenfrage* in Berlin (founded in 1934), the "Judenfrage" office of the *Reichsinstitut für Geschichte des neuen Deutschland* in Munich (1936), and the *Institut zur Erforschung der Judenfrage* in Frankfurt (1941).<sup>12</sup>

Both the destruction of German Jewry and the antisemitic distortion of German-Jewish history form a leitmotif in the reflections of émigrés on German-Jewish historiography during the Nazi era and after the Holocaust. Arnold Zweig, who fled to France and then to Palestine in 1933, observed at the end of his 1934 *Bilanz des deutschen Judentums* that following the destruction of German Jewry's emancipatory project, its only remaining task was to describe its development and achievements in a last historical chapter.<sup>13</sup> Zweig wished both to refute Nazism's mythological falsification of history and to document Jewish participation in what he termed "the civilization of the German nation and people." Only a fanatical antisemite, he indicated, would see this participation as akin to "domination by foreign influence" (*Überfremdung*) rather than as being "to the benefit, advantage, and greater glory of German culture."<sup>14</sup> The heart of Zweig's book is an impressive account of German Jewry's contribution to Germany's politics, economy and culture. He closed by lamenting the "physical and psychic torture" of the German Jews and contemplating what he viewed as their only remaining path: a reaffirmation of their Jewish heritage, emigration to Palestine and the participation in the creation of a society shaped by justice and democracy.<sup>15</sup>

Representatives of *Wissenschaft des Judentums* in exile first focused on a plan to transfer Jewish scholarly institutions to Palestine or England in the hope of later returning them to Germany.<sup>16</sup> After the war's outbreak, the emphasis shifted to writing counter-history to the pseudo-scholarly works

<sup>11</sup> See Arno Herzig, "Zur Problematik deutsch-jüdischer Geschichtsschreibung," in *Menora. Jahrbuch für deutsch-jüdische Geschichte*, vol. 1 (1990), pp. 209–234, especially pp. 218–219.

<sup>12</sup> See Werner Schochow, *Deutsch-Jüdische Geschichtswissenschaft. Eine Geschichte ihrer Organisationsformen unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Fachbibliographie*, Berlin 1969, pp. 131–195; Michael Brenner, "Jüdische Geschichte an deutschen Universitäten – Bilanz und Perspektiven," in *Historische Zeitschrift*, vol. 266 (1998), pp. 1–21.

<sup>13</sup> Arnold Zweig, *Bilanz der deutschen Judenheit. Ein Versuch* (1934), Leipzig 1990, p. 5.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 233 and 176.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 241 and 247ff.

<sup>16</sup> Christhard Hoffmann and Daniel Schwarz, "Early but Opposed – Supported

being issued by the Nazi “historical” institutes. Looking ahead in 1944, Eugen Täubler envisioned consolidating these institutes and their libraries into a Jewish institute for research and public education but, once the magnitude of the German crimes came to light, he abandoned the idea of reconstructing Jewish life in Germany,<sup>17</sup> suggesting instead that the *Hochschule für die Wissenschaft des Judentums* in Berlin be re-established as the “Leo Baeck Library” at Columbia University along with a “Research Institute of Jewish History.” The library and institute would then compile all aspects of *Wissenschaft des Judentums* into a three-volume synthesis serving as a living memorial to the intellectual traditions of European Jewry.<sup>18</sup>

In July 1949, Adolf Kober, head of the cultural committee of the American Federation of Jews from Central Europe, suggested preparation of a comprehensive work on the economics, culture and religion of German Jewry since emancipation – a work entitled “Jews and Judaism in Germany from the Beginning of Emancipation to Catastrophe.” In the proposals submitted by Kober and Max Wiener,<sup>19</sup> the two scholars emphasized that they did not intend to write an apologetic account; rather, they would adhere to a Rankean ideal, presenting things “the way they really were ... in a scholarly and impartial manner” (Kober). As a “testimony to loyalty,” Wiener wrote, this “truthful historical account” would be dedicated to the “memory of German Jewry.” Its preservation, Kober indicated – “the construction of a monument to the Jewish past in Germany and the victims of our age” – was “the hour’s imperative, for the sake of historical truth and Jewish honor.” The 400- to 450-page commemorative volume would honor the accomplishments of German Jewry by examining the development of Jewish culture and its contribution to German culture. A concluding summation of the “importance of German Jews and Jewry to world Jewry” would increase postwar Jewish respect for the history of German Jewry. In the afterword to his 1933 book *Jüdische Religion im Zeitalter der Emanzipation*, Wiener had stated that Jewish social integration had come to an end in Germany.<sup>20</sup> In his 1949 proposal he conceded that the question of whether Jewish contributions to German culture were indeed founded on an “inner connection between Jewish and German intellectual and spiritual life” required a “profound or even metaphysical confrontation.” Nonetheless, he emphasized, the

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but Late: Two Berlin Seminaries which Attempted to Move Abroad,” in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 36 (1991), pp. 267–304.

<sup>17</sup> Arguing that there was no future for Jewish life in Germany, Adolf Kober proposed an alternative plan to establish an “Institute for the History of the Jews in Europe” in the USA: see Nattermann, *Deutsch-jüdische Geschichtsschreibung*, pp. 40–49.

<sup>18</sup> For details of this plan, see *ibid.*, pp. 51–65.

<sup>19</sup> See Appendix 2 in Christhard Hoffmann’s contribution on the founding of the LBI in this volume.

<sup>20</sup> Max Wiener, *Jüdische Religion im Zeitalter der Emanzipation* (1933), ed. and epilogue by Daniel Weidner, Berlin 2002, p. 274.

rejection of this one-sided love did not detract from the basic dignity possessed by German Jewry and its cultural achievements.

In 1952, Nathan Stein issued an appeal echoing key themes from Kober and Wiener's proposal, including Kober's urgent question "how long ... will the bearers of the final generation of Jewish history in Germany be able to bear living witness to this history?" A written history of German Jewry, Stein argued, was necessary for the historical awareness of those who followed – to ensure that German Jewry would not "be dismissed by history as a *quantité négligeable*."<sup>21</sup> Eugen Täubler took up this appeal shortly before his death. In May 1953, he submitted a proposal for a "history of Jews in Germany on the basis of general historiography" – a project far broader in scope and with far more philosophical resonance than Stein's appeal. This work, Täubler suggested, should serve as "an intellectual reparation" under the September 1952 German-Israeli Reparations Agreement and be commissioned by West Germany's president, Theodor Heuss. The costs, however, would be covered by the Ford Foundation, for the sake of independence from the German authorities. As members of the advisory board, Täubler proposed Leo Baeck, Albert Einstein, Nathan Stein, and the German scholars Franz Böhm, Gerhard Ritter, Franz Schnabel and Alfred Weber. This was an ambitious project – "not a memorial (an air of the graveyard [*Friedhofsluft*]), not a well-documented textbook, but rather a historical *pronunciamento*" – that expanded on Täubler's earlier plans to write an account of the interaction between Jewish history and universal history. Interestingly, although offering only a brief sketch of its underlying principles, the proposal also emphasized the necessity of a "construction of meaning." According to Täubler, this meaning would lie in the interpretation of German-Jewish history as a paradigm for the history of European Jewry: a history that had ended factually, but not inevitably, in a destruction that itself inaugurated a new Jewish historical epoch outside the European Diaspora.<sup>22</sup>

A year after Täubler's death in Cincinnati in 1953, members of the American Federation committee presented one last draft for a *Gesamtgeschichte*. In light of the dwindling of the "German-Jewish hegemony of the last century," the draft stated, it was necessary to explore the historical significance of German Jewry and the "fate of its remnants" in the post-Holocaust world. This "Memorial for the Jews of Germany," meant to be published in at least four

<sup>21</sup> Nathan Stein, "Ein Ruf an unsere Generation," in *Ten Years American Federation of Jews from Central Europe, 1941–1951*, ed. by Kurt R. Grossmann, New York 1952, pp. 11–15, here p. 15. For the complete text of the unpublished version of the appeal, see Appendix 3 to Christhard Hoffmann's contribution on the founding of the LBI in this volume.

<sup>22</sup> Appendix to Eugen Täubler's letter to Nathan Stein, May 6, 1953, *LBI Archives New York*, Täubler Coll., AR 174. See Nattermann, *Deutsch-jüdische Geschichtsschreibung*, pp. 100f; Scharbaum, *Zwischen zwei Wélten*, pp. 109f.

volumes under the direction of Bernard D. Weinryb, Werner J. Cahnmann and Eva Reichmann, would depict the political, economic, social and cultural history of German Jewry and Austrian Jewry up until their destruction, paying special attention to the period after 1914. Unlike earlier and later proposals, this draft referred to the German-Jewish emigration to Israel, the USA, Great Britain and Latin America, pointing to the contribution of the German-Jewish émigrés to the Jewish community worldwide and emphasizing the continuing relevance of German-Jewish history and culture even after the Holocaust. The project included a two-volume collection of literary and personal sources, designed to provide the émigrés' descendants with knowledge about the experiences of the last generation of German Jews. The estimation was of a total cost of 115,000 dollars and three years completion time;<sup>23</sup> like other such proposals drafted before the LBI's founding, this one was abandoned due to lack of funding and general skepticism among the larger Jewish public with regard to the cultural endeavors of the surviving German Jews.

The generation that founded the LBI viewed the experience of modern German Jewry as paradigmatic of Judaism's double-edged encounter with modernity. As well as maintaining a deeply held ideal of pure scholarship, the émigrés hoped to instill that experience within postwar Jewry's collective memory – a task to which the idea of a *Gesamtgeschichte* was central, and one that had taken on significance in view of the pre-eminence now held in Jewish life by Israeli and American Jews. Early estimates for the time preparatory work on such a project would involve were quite optimistic, although Siegfried Moses's 1956 draft in the first *Year Book* contained a note of caution, speaking of four or five years of preparation, and raising the possibility that this “ambitious project will have to wait for a great historian who does not depend on a personal contact with the generation of Jews who emigrated from Germany.”<sup>24</sup>

In a *Festschrift* for Siegfried Moses edited by Hans Tramer and published in Tel Aviv in 1962, Max Kreuzberger reflected on the significance of German-Jewish historiography and the obstacles it faced. A “destructive maelstrom of upheaval and catastrophe” had swept away the German-speaking Jews of Central Europe, he indicated. In light of this upheaval, it was no longer possible to believe in the continuation of German-Jewish history. Indeed, was it even possible “to *write* this history?”<sup>25</sup> Before basic

<sup>23</sup> See the proposal “A Memorial for the Jews of Germany” (1954), Archives of the *Zentrum für Antisemitismusforschung* of the Technical University, Berlin (*ZfA Archives*), AmFed Coll., box 17, folder “Geschichte der deutschen Juden 1948–54.”

<sup>24</sup> Moses, “Leo Baeck Institute of Jews from Germany,” p. xiii.

<sup>25</sup> Max Kreuzberger, “Bedeutung und Aufgabe deutsch-jüdischer Geschichtsschreibung in unserer Zeit,” in Hans Tramer (ed.), *In Zwei Welten. Siegfried Moses zum Fünfundsiebzigsten Geburtstag*, Tel Aviv 1962, pp. 627–642, here pp. 630f. (my italics).



methodological issues could be addressed, it was therefore necessary to confront fundamental doubts about the project's purpose:

*Should it [the Gesamtgeschichte] be written in the first place? Many may consider this a peculiar question. However, amongst those who witnessed and survived this terrible catastrophe, it is raised rather frequently. More than half of German Jewry fell prey to this brutal annihilation. The remainder now live scattered across the globe. ... This was, for the most part, an expulsion under the most bitter and cruel conditions, under profoundly degrading circumstances. And it was inflicted on a group that believed itself profoundly at home in the German language and culture. ... The one who loves suffers more than the one who is indifferent and uncommitted, his reactions are more intense and less predictable, no longer bound by logic. A large number of émigrés were thus unable to separate the Nazi monstrosity from the greatness of German culture. For them, it was all a *single* past, which they put behind them and of which they no longer wish to be reminded.*<sup>26</sup>

Although Kreutzberger clearly sympathized with the reluctance of many émigrés to confront past experiences that were sometimes traumatic, he also felt that “the erasure of German Jewry from the history books” would place a final seal on the Nazi project<sup>27</sup> – and that maintenance of historical awareness would serve as a sign of the survivors’ dignity. In this respect, his understanding of the purpose of the *Gesamtgeschichte* emerged in a parallel he drew with the experience of Spanish Jewry after the disintegration and destruction of both their community and the Spanish-Jewish cultural symbiosis in 1492: Spanish Jews “carried the mark of their heritage with pride, nurtured memory in language and legend, preserved difference, and survived a five-hundred year period of expulsion with no longing for return.” Rather, they always saw their expulsion as a sign of the others’ disgrace.<sup>28</sup> Kreutzberger did have his doubts about the presence of sufficient interest to “maintain the memory of German Jewry from an historical standpoint” and, more concretely, whether suitable researchers who had witnessed the events could be recruited and enough money raised to see through a *Gesamtgeschichte*.<sup>29</sup> But he was encouraged by signs of an increase of interest in German-Jewish history among various crucial parties: the descendants of German émigrés, Jewish communities throughout the world and, not least of all, non-Jewish Germans who appreciated the “unique cultural symbiosis” of the pre-Nazi era.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 631f. See also Max Kreutzberger, “The Significance and Aims of German-Jewish Historiography,” in *Perspectives of German-Jewish History in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries*, ed. by the LBI, Jerusalem 1971, pp. 89–105.

<sup>27</sup> Kreutzberger, “Bedeutung und Aufgabe deutsch-jüdischer Geschichtsschreibung,” p. 632.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 641.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 636.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 641. It is worth noting here Adolf Leschnitzer’s contrasting hopes for an eventual revival of the “German-Jewish symbiosis,” as manifested in his two proposals,

## II

In the mid-1960s, the first generation of institute members was joined by a group of younger historians no longer concerned primarily with creating an historiographical monument to the destruction of German Jewry. Rather, their concerns were more practical and professional: intensifying and systematizing the institute's publication efforts, strengthening its international ties with both Jewish and non-Jewish historians, especially in Germany, and generally promoting improved scholarly standards in German-Jewish historiography. The concrete outcome of this shift in focus was, in fact, the *Gesamtgeschichte*, a first major effort in that direction being the 1965 publication in the *Schriftenreihe* of the collection of essays and documents entitled *Entscheidungsjahr 1932*, edited by Werner Mosse and Arnold Paucker in 1965. In his foreword, Mosse postulated the necessity of "applying strictly historiographic principles" while analyzing the history of German Jewry and the attitude of the non-Jewish majority. This work was an expression of the increasing historicization of a past that, despite the enduring shadow of the Holocaust, no longer had to be viewed from an "emotionally laden and distorted perspective," but nonetheless from a close enough angle for that past to be experienced as "a living one."<sup>31</sup> The collection included German contributors; with all its articles written in German, it was also aimed in part at a younger German readership – a strategy eliciting controversy within the LBI board of directors, with Siegfried Moses not believing it was the "task of the LBI to produce works mainly for the Germans," and Robert Weltsch arguing that German-speakers constituted the primary audience for any such research.<sup>32</sup>

Henceforth the London LBI would promote detailed research in German-Jewish history – a basis for the *Gesamtgeschichte*. Importantly, by drawing on German historians the London branch's efforts also influenced the course of West German historiography, which had begun to concern itself more with German Jewry in the context of debates on Nazism and the Holocaust.<sup>33</sup> With the Wilhelminian period, the Great War, and that war's aftermath, the prehistory of the Nazi era remained at the center of the

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namely for the publication of a "Handbook on the History of German Jewry" in cooperation with the Historical Commission of Berlin and for the founding of a German Leo Baeck Institute: see "Arbeitsplan für ein *Handbuch zur Geschichte der deutschen Juden*, 1965" and "Gründung eines deutschen Leo Baeck Instituts. Ein Studienprojekt des 'Aufbau,' 1968," in *LBI Archives New York*, Adolf Leschnitzer Coll.

<sup>31</sup> Werner E. Mosse, Foreword in *idem* and Arnold Paucker (eds.), *Entscheidungsjahr 1932. Zur Judenfrage in der Endphase der Weimarer Republik*, Tübingen 1966 (*Schriftenreihe wissenschaftlicher Abhandlungen des Leo Baeck Instituts* 13), pp. vii–xiv, here p. viii and p. xii.

<sup>32</sup> Minutes of the LBI international board, Jerusalem, October 21, 1963, *LBI New York*, LBI Office Records, II (Correspondence all LBI Institutes) 63/2, p. 8.

<sup>33</sup> See John A. S. Grenville, "Die Geschichtsschreibung der Bundesrepublik über

institute's focus,<sup>34</sup> while the 1977 collection *Das Judentum in der deutschen Umwelt 1800–1850* contained articles examining German-Jewish emancipation and acculturation since the Enlightenment.<sup>35</sup> The collections produced by the London institute, editors Arnold Paucker and Hans Liebeschütz emphasized, were not meant as a replacement for a “*Gesamtgeschichte* of German Jewry in the modern era” and did not claim to “record all aspects of the problem of German-Jewish coexistence.” Instead they aimed to reinterpret existing facts and sources and to offer new documentary material, in order to lay the groundwork for a “convincing interpretation of the fate of German Jewry.”<sup>36</sup>

Paucker and Liebeschütz were here anticipating Hans Tramer's criticism, delivered at a January 1978 meeting of the Jerusalem board, to the effect that all three branches of the institute had survived mainly on “random submissions of material.” The LBI, Tramer suggested, should finally start to cooperate on a *Gesamtgeschichte*. Although he praised the groundwork already done, he lamented the neglect that important periods had suffered – the eighteenth century, the years between 1850 and 1890, and the Weimar era. Intellectual historical material was absent and disparate topics had been passed over: the secularization of religious beliefs, the Jewish reaction to antisemitism, rural Jewry, the role of Jewish bankers in Germany and, last but not least, the Jewry in various localities throughout the Austro-Hungarian empire. “Because we do not have a magic word to conjure up a brilliant *Gesamthistoriker*,” Tramer indicated, such gaps would have to be filled through books and essays on clearly defined topics.<sup>37</sup>

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die deutschen Juden,” in *Studien zur jüdischen Geschichte und Soziologie*, ed. by the Hochschule für Jüdische Studien, Heidelberg 1990, pp. 195–205.

<sup>34</sup> See Werner E. Mosse and Arnold Paucker (eds.), *Deutsches Judentum in Krieg und Revolution 1916–1923*, Tübingen 1971 (Schriftenreihe wissenschaftlicher Abhandlungen des Leo Baeck Instituts 25); Werner E. Mosse and Arnold Paucker (eds.), *Judentum im Wilhelminischen Deutschland 1890–1914*, Tübingen 1976 (Schriftenreihe wissenschaftlicher Abhandlungen des Leo Baeck Instituts 33).

<sup>35</sup> Hans Liebeschütz, Conclusion, “Werten und Verstehen,” in *idem* and Arnold Paucker (eds.), *Das Judentum in der deutschen Umwelt 1800–1850. Studien zur Frühgeschichte der Emanzipation*, Tübingen 1977 (Schriftenreihe wissenschaftlicher Abhandlungen des Leo Baeck Instituts 35), pp. 377–389.

<sup>36</sup> Hans Liebeschütz and Arnold Paucker (eds.), *Das Judentum in der deutschen Umwelt*, p. viii.

<sup>37</sup> Hans Tramer, “Probleme der Abrundung des historischen Materials zur Geschichte des deutschen Judentums auf Grund der vier Sammelbände” (comments made during the LBI Jerusalem board meeting, January 26, 1978), *LBI Jerusalem*, file 1072. I am grateful to Guy Miron for bringing this document to my attention. The desideratum of a volume on the period after 1850 was soon to be fulfilled by a conference in Oxford (1979) that thoroughly explored the effects of the revolution of 1848 on the political, religious and cultural development of German Jewry: see Werner E. Mosse, Arnold Paucker and Reinhard Rürup (eds.), *Revolution and Evolution: 1848*

In November 1972, Jacob Toury – a specialist in the sociopolitical history of nineteenth-century German Jewry,<sup>38</sup> with a key role in the establishment, in 1971, of Tel Aviv University's Institute for German History – drafted an outline proposing collaboration between the universities of Tel Aviv, Bar Ilan and Haifa on a “*Gesamtgeschichte* of Jews in Germany.”<sup>39</sup> Toury underscored the urgency of the project, noting a growing historical distance from the German catastrophe; it was “all but imperative” that the “last of the scholars who grew up in pre-Hitler Germany undertake a *summary of the completed path* with the help of the young postwar generation.” Soon, he claimed, witnesses, the “living source of historical knowledge,” would no longer be available, a younger generation then approaching the topic “perforce as strangers” – a remark that echoes the German-Jewish émigrés’ conviction that the passing of their own generation threatened to extinguish an authentic memory of German Jewry.<sup>40</sup> Toury envisioned a nine-volume series containing new source-based research by around thirty specialists from various fields, this ambitious project involving collaboration with a range of German historians and support from a number of German research institutes. In contrast to the emphasis in earlier proposals, Toury wished to begin with three volumes focused on Germany’s Jewish communities before the early modern era. The remaining volumes would trace German Jewry’s political and cultural history from the Enlightenment through the emancipation process and beyond to Hitler.

The planning on Toury’s project managed to advance to the stage of allocating research topics. But the project ultimately evaporated, being too broadly conceived and too difficult to finance. It would be over a decade before the idea of a German-Jewish *Gesamtgeschichte* would be raised again in a meaningful manner, the stimulus this time being furnished by the historian and LBI board member Lucy Dawidowicz – the author of one of the most well-known studies of the Nazi German annihilation of European Jewry,<sup>41</sup> published in 1975. A decade later, Dawidowicz attended the LBI conference in Berlin on “Self-Assertion in a Time of Distress: Jews in National Socialist

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in *German-Jewish History*, Tübingen 1981 (Schriftenreihe wissenschaftlicher Abhandlungen des Leo Baeck Institute 39).

<sup>38</sup> See Jacob Toury, *Die politischen Orientierungen der Juden in Deutschland*, Tübingen 1966 (Schriftenreihe wissenschaftlicher Abhandlungen des Leo Baeck Instituts 15); *idem*, *Soziale und politische Geschichte der Juden in Deutschland (1847–1871)*, Düsseldorf 1977.

<sup>39</sup> The fact that Hebrew University was not included in the proposal reveals the underlying tensions between the universities in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem in this matter: see the contribution of Stephanie Schüler-Springorum to this volume.

<sup>40</sup> *Idem*, Outline proposal, “Projekt einer *Gesamtgeschichte* der Juden in Deutschland” (November 1972). I would like to thank Michael Meyer for providing me a copy of this document.

<sup>41</sup> Lucy Dawidowicz, *The War Against the Jews 1933–1945*, New York 1975.

Germany, 1933–1939”; she was one of a number of Jewish participants for whom the conference marked a first visit to Germany since fleeing for their lives. In an essay for *Commentary* written the following year, Dawidowicz indicated that,

By traveling to Berlin for its first public and collective appearance in Germany, the LBI hoped to tell the Germans how the Jewish community had responded to the persecution which the German dictatorship had unloosed against it. This return of the Jewish exiles, refugees, and survivors of National Socialist Germany to confront the Germans with that terrible past seemed to me a momentous occasion, a mini-drama of Jewish history.<sup>42</sup>

Herself of Polish-Jewish background, Dawidowicz here described her intense emotions upon returning to the source of Europe’s recent transformation into a “Jewish necropolis,” emotions that included rage against Germany, confusion at encountering a generation “too young to be charged with the burden of Germany’s terrible history” and amazement at the German desire for knowledge of Jews and Jewish culture: “It is as if, by acquiring rational knowledge and a firmer grasp on the historical reality of Jews and Judaism, they might thereby hope to exorcise the demonic image of the Jew which Nazi propaganda implanted in the German consciousness.”<sup>43</sup> Although “Nazi Germany,” Dawidowicz indicated, was “now a closed chapter in history” – something part of a “transient past” – this did not mean abandoning its victims, the extermination of European Jewry being part of “an enduring past.”<sup>44</sup> In light of the increasing acknowledgment of the event and its implications within German society since the 1980s, Dawidowicz believed a historical reassessment of German Jewry and German-Jewish culture before the Nazi era had become timely. At a board meeting of the New York LBI held in December 1985, she thus suggested that “after 30 years of work the LBI should now concentrate on sponsoring and finally publishing a comprehensive history of the Jews of Germany.” She envisioned a six-volume work that would be structured as follows: “1) From Antiquity to Reformation; 2) From the Reformation to the French Revolution; 3) From the End of the Eighteenth Century to 1866; 4) From 1866 to the End of World War I; 5) Weimar Republic; 6) The Nazi Era.”<sup>45</sup> We have no indications of Dawidowicz’s intended audience or methodological premises. Focusing on the years between 1866 and 1945, her outline simply reflects a sense, formed during her Berlin visit, that changes in Germany now allowed a new relationship between Jews

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<sup>42</sup> Lucy Dawidowicz, “In Berlin Again,” in *Commentary*, vol. 82, August 1986, pp. 32–41, here pp. 32f.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, here pp. 32, 33, 41.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 37f.

<sup>45</sup> Minutes of the LBI New York board meeting, December 12, 1985, *LBI New York*, Office Records.

and Germans, one offering a basis for a broad overview and analysis of German-Jewish history.

Even though Dawidowicz made no move to participate directly in the project and her proposal was quite vague, with retrospect her initiative can be viewed as a sort of milestone. It was welcomed by the director of the New York institute, Ismar Schorsch, who was obviously encouraged by the interest the conference had aroused in Germany. Schorsch commissioned Fred Grubel to get the project underway and develop strategies for its funding. In an account of the early administrative preparations, Grubel describes how Schorsch's sketch was transformed into plans for a multivolume work written by a team of eight to ten historians during a single year of sabbatical leave:

When everything had been thought through and calculated, I had a project on paper that would cost around two million deutschmarks. The most generous possible financial assistance was thus necessary. My experience had shown me that great things [*Großes*] could only be obtained from mighty men [*Großen*]. So I had the bold idea of submitting the project to the head [*Oberhaupt*] of the Deutsche Bank, Dr. Hermann Abs. ... He actually gave me an appointment for a conference in his Frankfurt office (on the basis of a transatlantic phone call!). I visited his suite on the top floor of the Deutsche Bank's skyscraper and asked him if he thought the time had come for our history project and if he thought it could be financed. His reply was an enthusiastic "Yes."<sup>46</sup>

Both a sense that it was important to take advantage of the *kairos* of broad public interest in the history of German Jewry and, rather more concretely, the Deutsche Bank's start-up funding of 100,000 marks, spurred the institute's deliberations on the theoretical underpinnings and practical organization of this massive historical project. Grubel's time frame would prove far too optimistic, another decade passing between the first planning sessions and the appearance of the first volumes of the German and English editions of the *Gesamtgeschichte*. Towards the start of 1986, the New York institute asked the distinguished historian Jacob Katz for an assessment of the timeliness of such a project, and whether it would be advisable for it to take in the Middle Ages, usually not part of the LBI's purview. Katz's memorandum of February 1986 shows how conceptually open and unclear the project was at this point.<sup>47</sup> Katz envisioned a series of synthetic accounts by individual authors covering various periods of German-Jewish history in all their relevant aspects – economic, social, cultural, religious. This, he indicated, would be difficult in the case of the medieval period: although research on intra-Jewish developments had progressed, that on the status of Jews in wider medieval

<sup>46</sup> This report, as is much of the material underlying the following passage on the planning and organization of the project, is to be found in Michael Meyer's private papers.

<sup>47</sup> Jacob Katz, Memorandum, Michael A. Meyer's private papers.

society was still at the same point as “before the Hitler era”; it would thus be best to omit the Middle Ages from the *Gesamtgeschichte*, perhaps reserving the period for a comprehensive work to begin when the *Germania Judaica* project had advanced further. The collection, Katz then suggested, might best begin with the seventeenth century and the Court Jews – perhaps preceded by an introductory chapter on the “The Legacy of the Middle Ages” describing German Jewry’s legal status and attitudes at the dawn of the modern era.

Strikingly, along with laying out his historiographical ideal, Katz acknowledged that it was unrealistic even with regard to modern times. Thanks to LBI-sponsored research, the time was indeed “sufficiently ripe for a synthetic account.” Nonetheless, that goal remained “unattainable” due to the lack of historians who would be sufficiently competent to assess both the position of the Jews in the non-Jewish world and the intra-Jewish dimension of German-Jewish history:

The demand that the account consider the inner cultural and religious dimensions would exclude non-Jewish historians who are often top-ranking experts in other fields such as emancipation, antisemitism, economics and the like. In reality, Jewish historians who are not specialists in Judaic Studies would also be excluded. What would remain would be a small number of scholars of Judaic Studies, who sometimes are not sufficiently well-versed in the other areas.

Like Dawidowicz, Katz argued that the only feasible form for a *Gesamtgeschichte* was the “Cambridge History” model in which specific topics like economic activity, legal status, culture and the religious identity of German Jews would be assigned to different historians. Personally, Katz was somewhat skeptical about the entire project, believing that “a good book either considering an aspect of the entire picture or the history of a single community or the life and work of a leading figure was more valuable and informative for the public than a *Gesamtdarstellung* that was not synthetic [*unsynthetisch*].” In any event, should the project receive final approval, he was willing to participate in the planning and execution.

In the autumn of 1986, Fred Grubel submitted an outline to the institute for “a history of Jews in the German-speaking sphere on the basis of the current state of scholarship in the field” from “the period of the Court Jews to the catastrophe of the National Socialist regime.” To meet the cost of approximately 2.5 million marks, which far exceeded the institute’s budget, it would be necessary to obtain outside funding. In many basic ways, Grubel anticipated later plans for the project. For example, he referred to a four-volume series in which individual topics – economics, society, culture, religion – would be discussed by specialists from Israel, England, Germany and the United States. The work was to be published in five to six years in German, English and Hebrew. Planning would be handled by Werner Angress, Jacob Katz, Michael Meyer, Werner Mosse and Ismar Schorsch.

Discussions with the German historians Reinhard Rürup and Monika Richarz were also envisioned, and an “eminent historian” was to be found to serve as the project editor.<sup>48</sup>

Michael Meyer, known since the late 1960s for a study of German Judaism and modernism in the nineteenth century, and in the process of completing another book on the Reform movement in Germany and the USA,<sup>49</sup> was quickly selected as that editor. In the years that followed, he would thus shape the project conceptually, editorially, and as the author of a number of chapters in the second volume devoted to the period between 1780 and 1871. At the first working conference for the project held in Jerusalem in July 1987, agreement was reached regarding the genre, discursive style and audience of the *Gesamtgeschichte*: the work would be a “synthetic, integrative history ... both narrative and analytic to appeal to both the general reader and the historian.”<sup>50</sup> The minutes of this meeting, and of the later working meetings in July 1989 in New York and August 1992 in Berlin, testify to an intense and occasionally contentious debate regarding both methodological guidelines and practical problems. Even discussion of the comprehensive history’s title raised important historical and terminological issues: the formulation “German-Jewish history” was to be avoided in light of ongoing controversy regarding the problem of identity raised by terms such as “German-Jewish,” “German Jews,” and “Jews in Germany”; “A History of the Jews in Germany” appeared too narrow because it did not encompass political and social aspects of other German-speaking regions, these also meant to be included in the project. After extensive deliberations, the (English-language) title, “The Jews of Germany: A History of the Jews of German-Speaking Central Europe since the Seventeenth Century” was chosen.<sup>51</sup> However, the C. H. Beck publishing house and Columbia University Press, which had agreed to publish the work, did not accept this choice of title and in 1994, despite all the previous controversy, agreement was reached on “German-Jewish History in Modern Times.” Some scholars, above all Mordechai Breuer, had serious misgivings about the title as the memory of the Holocaust’s victims precluded use of “hyphenated German-Jewish” formulations.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Fred Grubel, Memorandum, “Projekt einer Geschichte der Juden im deutschsprachigen Raum 1648–1945 – Entwurf,” in Meyer’s papers.

<sup>49</sup> Michael A. Meyer, *The Origins of the Modern Jew: Jewish Identity and European Culture in Germany, 1749–1824*, Detroit 1967; *idem*, *Response to Modernity: A History of the Reform Movement in Judaism*, New York and Oxford 1988.

<sup>50</sup> Minutes of the LBI historians’ working conference in Jerusalem, July 12–13, 1987, p. 1, Meyer’s papers.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 7ff.

<sup>52</sup> Mordechai Breuer to Michael A. Meyer, August 14, 1994, Meyer’s papers.



It was generally agreed upon that the *Gesamtgeschichte* would not be able to offer new research in all the fields it treated. In addition, authors were to avoid entering into specialized historiographical controversies as much as possible, with new source-based research being undertaken mainly in areas that had not yet been sufficiently explored. Otherwise, as Meyer indicated in the second working meeting in New York, the priority was the “creation of an integrated, coherent and persuasive narrative” which should be “a plausible synthesis of fresh interpretations.”<sup>53</sup> The greatest possible readability and clarity was to be achieved by eliminating lengthy footnotes and including a range of illustrations, newly designed maps, graphs and chronologies, and by closing each volume with a brief bibliographical essay.

Two criteria were arrived at for choosing authors: first, there was need for an overall balance between researchers from Israel, England and North America, as well as an adequate participation by German historians; second, there was need for an appropriate range of specialists on the religious, intellectual, political, cultural, social and economic history of the relevant eras. In addition to Michael Meyer (responsible for nineteenth-century religious and cultural history), the team of invited authors included Mordechai Breuer (early modern social and cultural history), Michael Graetz (eighteenth-century intellectual history), Stefi Jersch-Wenzel (nineteenth-century political, legal and economic history), Steven Lowenstein (eighteenth- to twentieth-century cultural and local history), Paul Mendes-Flohr (nineteenth- and twentieth-century intellectual history), Peter Pulzer (modern European political history and the history of antisemitism), Monika Richarz (nineteenth- and twentieth-century social history and the history of the family) and Avraham Barkai (political and economic history of the Weimar Republic and the Nazi era). Over the following years, this group of historians would meet frequently. The team then collaborated closely to discuss and coordinate early drafts and advanced versions of their manuscripts. In September 1992, Michael Brenner joined the group as an editorial assistant; he would later become one of the project’s authors. The project’s wider editorial team included a number of distinguished individuals with varying backgrounds and origins: Max Gruenewald, Jacob Katz, Jürgen Kocka, Werner Mosse, Jehuda Reinharz, Reinhard Rürup, Ismar Schorsch, Fritz Stern and Yosef Yerushalmi. In the spring of 1988, Michael Meyer sent an extensive proposal and individual chapter synopses by contributors to the Volkswagen Foundation, a grant being approved later that fall, although it fell somewhat short of the requested amount of nearly two million marks. In April 1990, the project funding was completed with a grant from the German Federal Ministry for Research and Technology. Notably, most of the manuscripts would be written in

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<sup>53</sup> Minutes of the working meeting for the project in New York, July 10–11, 1989, p. 1. Meyer’s papers.

German, to be translated later; a few chapters would be written in English and translated into German. After a period of intensive editorial collaboration by Meyer and Brenner on both the English and German material, the four volumes were published in German in 1996 and 1997 and in English between 1996 and 1998; two volumes of the Hebrew version have been published (in 2000) and the rest are in preparation.

### III

Before work on the *Gesamtgeschichte* could begin, a number of methodological decisions had to be made. The most important were decisions about periodization and geographical scope. Fixing an approximate date for the start of modernity has been a controversial issue in Jewish historiography since the nineteenth century, the date varying greatly according to the historian's ideological orientation, although increasingly the beginning of "modern" tendencies have been located in the seventeenth century.<sup>54</sup> After having decided to include an introductory chapter on the development of German Jewry during the Middle Ages, the *Gesamtgeschichte's* working committee considered both the signing of the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648 – to be sure, no factual or symbolic moment in Jewish history – and the settling of fifty Viennese Jewish families in Brandenburg in 1671 as a starting point before rejecting both as artificial. Eventually, the committee settled on the appropriately vague formulation "the middle of the seventeenth century." But after Mordechai Breuer pointed out that important aspects of the modernization of German Jewry, including demographic developments, the activities of the Court Jews, and the opening of Jewish learning to elements of secular education had emerged long before this period, the first volume's time-span was finally set at 1600–1780.<sup>55</sup> The periods set for the remaining volumes – 1780–1871, 1871–1918, 1918–1945 – were easier to arrive at. The situation of German Jews in the postwar period, it was agreed, would be discussed in an epilogue.

At the start, many committee members were skeptical about maintaining a broad definition of the subject along the lines of "German-speaking Jewry." Both Monika Richarz and Peter Pulzer pointed to the relatively poor state of research on Jews in the Habsburg Empire, where the local Jewish communities differed in their traditions and perspective from the Jews of what would

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<sup>54</sup> See Michael A. Meyer, "When does the Modern Period of Jewish History Begin?" in *idem, Judaism within Modernity: Essays on Jewish History and Religion*, Detroit 2001, pp. 21–31.

<sup>55</sup> Minutes of the working meeting in Berlin, August 3–5, 1992, Meyer's papers.

later become the *Kaiserreich*.<sup>56</sup> Nevertheless, it was also evident that drawing more limited boundaries would mean an inordinately limited focus, and a work without an important comparative dimension; there was, however, agreement to exclude any discussion of Galicia, Bukovina and Hungary and to focus mainly on the large communities of Vienna and Prague. In contrast, there was disagreement about whether the comparative discussion should be limited to cultural questions or include economic and social history – the view of Jacob Katz. Following Peter Pulzer's suggestion, the decision was made to consider the cultural, political and regional history of Jews in Austria and what eventually became Czechoslovakia, on the one hand, and Austrian antisemitism on the other hand, especially for the period before 1867–71.<sup>57</sup> The chapter that Steven Lowenstein would write for the *Gesamtgeschichte* comparing the conditions for Jewish cultural creativity offered in Prague – where Germans were a minority and much less antisemitic in inclination – to the vastly different conditions present in Berlin and Vienna, demonstrates the fruitfulness of this approach.<sup>58</sup>

Inspired by an evolution of German-Jewish historiography manifest in the 1980s, the authors involved in this project generally tried to move beyond a standard coupling of political and intellectual history in order to address heretofore neglected topics: demographical developments; the political and legal status and socio-economic structure of German-speaking Jewry; the relationship between the Jewish subculture and the non-Jewish environment; family and communal life; and religious and cultural developments in the framework of European philosophy and Christian theology. Social and intellectual history were either interwoven, as in Breuer's account of the early modern period, or incorporated into complementary chapters, as in Barkai's and Mendes-Flohr's analysis of the Weimar Republic. Since the historiography of rural Jewry had only emerged in recent years, the *Gesamtgeschichte* merely hinted at the possibility of balancing the history of urban communities and intellectual elites against the social, cultural and communal history of that Jewry, which had largely defined Jewish existence well into the nineteenth century, including its relationship to the non-Jewish environment.<sup>59</sup> There was nevertheless some acknowledgment of the newer research, with Michael Meyer, for example, referring to the "powerful milieu-sustained

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<sup>56</sup> Minutes of the LBI historians' working conference in Jerusalem, July 12–13, 1987, pp. 2f., Meyer's papers.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 7ff.

<sup>58</sup> Steven M. Lowenstein, "Jewish Participation in German Culture," in *German-Jewish History*, vol. 3, pp. 305–335, here p. 313

<sup>59</sup> See Monika Richarz, "Ländliches Judentum als Problem der Forschung," in Monika Richarz and Reinhard Rürup (eds.), *Jüdisches Leben auf dem Lande. Studien zur deutsch-jüdischen Geschichte*, Tübingen 1997 (Schriftenreihe wissenschaftlicher Abhandlungen des Leo Baeck Instituts 56), pp. 1–8.

piety” of traditional Jewry in small towns and villages, expressed in the persistence of traditional Halakah-based customs and educational structures in the face of progressive acculturation.<sup>60</sup> The *Gesamtgeschichte* only addressed topics related to women’s history in tentative form: Monika Richarz contributed an article on both the transformation of sexual roles during German Jewry’s embourgeoisement and the role of Jewish women in preserving the “Jewishness” of family life.<sup>61</sup>

Within the committee, a debate emerged on the relative importance to be granted to both “internal” (*innere*) and “external” (*äußere*) Jewish history (the Jewish participation in German society and German society’s attitudes toward the Jews), on the one hand, and larger German history, on the other hand. Reinhard Rürup argued that the *Gesamtgeschichte* should constitute a history of the relationship between Jews and non-Jews, especially in regards to the emancipatory period when the role played by broader German society became far more pronounced. For his part, Mordechai Breuer wished to stress intra-Jewish history;<sup>62</sup> and Michael Meyer’s proposal took account of both perspectives, emphasizing the inherent duality of German-Jewish history – a duality that needed to be historiographically recognized rather than disposed of in favor of one or another pole.<sup>63</sup>

The German historians involved with the project had themselves rather varied opinions regarding the proper balance. Jürgen Kocka, a member of the advisory committee whose work focused on bourgeois German society and culture, favored the sort of balance recommended by Meyer, which he saw as furnishing a previously neglected perspective. (On the nature of this neglect see below.)<sup>64</sup> In contrast, an anonymous advisor from the Volkswagen Foundation expressed reservations about the new focus on intra-Jewish questions, complaining about a “certain narrowness of vision” connected to it. Since, he indicated, German-Jewish history was about the “participation and settling of German Jews in German society and culture, and their shaping by it,” focusing on “Jewish history in the more narrow sense” was problematic – the problems exacerbated by the “numerically rather low participation of German historians on the advisory committee and on the project team.”<sup>65</sup> These remarks quite transparently reflected a historiographical tra-

<sup>60</sup> Michael A. Meyer, “Jewish Communities in Transition,” in *German-Jewish History*, vol. 2, pp. 90–127, here p. 93.

<sup>61</sup> Monika Richarz, “Jewish Women in the Family and Public Sphere,” in *German-Jewish History*, vol. 3, pp. 68–102; see Marion Kaplan, *The Making of the Jewish Middle Class: Women, Family, and Identity in Imperial Germany*, New York and Oxford 1991.

<sup>62</sup> Minutes of the working meeting for the project in New York, July 10–11, 1989, p. 4 and pp. 6f.

<sup>63</sup> Michael A. Meyer, project proposal, “Eine Geschichte der Juden im deutschsprachigen Mitteleuropa seit dem 17. Jahrhundert,” pp. 1f., Meyer’s papers.

<sup>64</sup> Jürgen Kocka to Michael Meyer, July 6, 1989, Meyer’s papers.

<sup>65</sup> Quoted from a letter from Axel Horstmann (a representative of the Volkswagen

dition that placed German-Jewish history firmly within the framework of research on Nazism and antisemitism, in a process of marginalization that was especially evident in Germany in the newer forms of social history, research on liberalism and on the bourgeoisie, and in the social history of religion.<sup>66</sup>

In this manner, over four decades after the end of the Second World War, a nation-centered German history still tended, despite some developments within social history in the contrary direction, to relegate Jewish history to the category of a “supposedly marginal minority history,” in the process eliding German Jewry’s independent achievements and development within German society.<sup>67</sup> The *Gesamtgeschichte*, in contrast, offers an account of religious, cultural and communal developments, and the “identity discourse” of the Jewish minority, in its natural framework of general German history. “German Jews as Jews and German Jews as Germans,” Michael Meyer claims, “may be the two sides of a coin, but obverse and reverse images must adhere to each other.”<sup>68</sup> The value of this approach is eloquently illustrated in the chapters by Barkai and Mendes-Flohr on Jewish existence under Nazism. The reader is here confronted with the desperate circumstances and growing despair resulting from “segregation ... in a ghetto without walls” along with social solidarity among the persecuted Jews and indeed a multifaceted “Jewish spiritual resistance to Nazism” – all factors that clearly would remain largely absent from a view directed mainly from without.<sup>69</sup>

At the start, it was unclear whether the project’s intra-Jewish dimension should center mainly on the Jewish community or rather on individual Jews who, even if they did not view themselves as Jews or had even converted to Christianity, had played an important role within German society. Hence Rürup wished to accord more attention to the history of “marginal Jews,” who took on an increasingly important role in German history beginning with the *Kaiserreich*. Breuer, on the other hand, argued that describing intra-

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Foundation) to Yosef H. Yerushalmi of March 10, 1989 informing him of the funding of the project, Meyer’s papers.

<sup>66</sup> See the critique in Till van Rahden, *Juden und andere Breslauer. Die Beziehungen zwischen Juden, Protestanten und Katholiken in einer deutschen Großstadt von 1860 bis 1925*, Göttingen 2000, pp. 24ff.

<sup>67</sup> Andreas Gotzmann, Rainer Liedtke and Till van Rahden (eds.), *Juden, Bürger, Deutsche. Zur Geschichte von Vielfalt und Differenz 1800–1933*, Tübingen 2001, p. 4

<sup>68</sup> Michael A. Meyer, “Jews as Jews versus Jews as Germans: Two Historical Perspectives,” in *idem*, *Judaism within Modernity*, pp. 76–86, here p. 78. For the relationship between intra-Jewish and general history in Jewish historiography, see Shulamit Volkov, “Zur Einführung,” in *idem* (ed.), *Deutsche Juden und die Moderne*, Munich 1994, pp. vi–xxiii; and Moshe Zimmermann, “Jewish History and Jewish Historiography: A Challenge to Contemporary German Historiography,” in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 35 (1990), pp. 36–52.

<sup>69</sup> Avraham Barkai, “Exclusion and Persecution: 1933–1938,” in *German-Jewish History*, vol. 4, pp. 197–230, here p. 230; Paul Mendes-Flohr, “Jewish Cultural Life Under the National Socialism,” in *ibid.*, pp. 283–312, here p. 303.

Jewish culture was more important than portraying famous figures such as Gerson Bleichröder and Walther Rathenau, “as the Jewish element in their lives was too small.”<sup>70</sup> Here again, the *Gesamtgeschichte* authors reached a compromise, in the form of a decision to direct attention towards the “nature of [the] ... Jewish identity” such figures revealed, and towards its presence as a “residue even among those who left Judaism but continued to be widely regarded as Jews.”<sup>71</sup> The compromise meant not focusing (with rare exceptions) on the careers and contributions of baptized Jews, despite their sometimes important historical role and in face of the sometimes difficult question of their enduring “Jewishness.”<sup>72</sup> On the other hand, the compromise did allow not only for devoting virtually an entire chapter to Heinrich Heine – “*der nicht abzuwaschende Jude*”<sup>73</sup> – but also for a consideration of relatively highly acculturated German Jews, in line with George L. Mosse’s now well-known argument that German-Jewish acculturation, as expressed in a commitment to liberal, Enlightenment-centered ideals, created a new form of Jewish identity occupying a space removed from the question of distance from or proximity to Jewish customs and religion.<sup>74</sup>

The *Gesamtgeschichte* was thus relatively conservative in its definitional framework for German Judaism and German-Jewish identity. The emphasis on the problem of what was specifically Jewish in the participation of Jewish intellectuals in German cultural life and on the “Jewish renaissance” is evident, for instance, in Lowenstein’s chapter on the *Kaiserreich* and Mendes-Flohr’s chapter on the Weimar era, both these contributions eliciting vigorous criticism from some historians. Steven Beller, in particular, argued that they revealed a “parochial approach to defining Jewish identity” that did not do justice to German Jewry’s “phenomenal participation in the modern culture of central Europe.” This, Beller suspected, was the result of “a certain discomfort with the whole question of the ‘Jewishness’ of ‘non-Jewish’ contributions by Jews and people of Jewish descent, a topic that fits neither with a confessionally defined Judaism nor with a Zionist-inspired ‘national’ conceptualization of ‘Jewishness.’”<sup>75</sup> For Beller, the project revealed a drastically

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<sup>70</sup> Minutes of the LBI historians’ working conference in Jerusalem, July 12–13, 1987, p. 5.

<sup>71</sup> Meyer, Preface to the Series, in *German-Jewish History*, vol. 1, pp. ix–xiii, here p. xi.

<sup>72</sup> On this issue see Meyer, “Jews as Jews versus Jews as Germans,” pp. 80ff.

<sup>73</sup> Meyer, “Becoming German, Remaining Jewish,” in *German-Jewish History*, vol. 2, pp. 199–250, the subchapter on Heine, “The Jew That Can Never Be Washed Off,” pp. 208–218.

<sup>74</sup> See George L. Mosse, *German Jews Beyond Judaism*, Bloomington and Cincinnati 1983; Meyer, “Jews as Jews versus Jews as Germans,” p. 81.

<sup>75</sup> Steven Beller, “Setting the Tone: A Review of German-Jewish History in

insufficient emphasis on the leading figures of “non-Jewish Jewry,” especially within early twentieth-century Viennese and Berlin culture – these figures offering a key to the understanding of German-Jewish modernization and secularization.

In his article, Lowenstein had in fact rejected what seems to have been one facet of Beller’s critique, arguing that a focus on the Jewish “contribution” to German history was unsatisfactory in that it rather simplistically implied “a collective enterprise of the Jewish community in giving a gift to the non-Jewish majority.” Rather, for Lowenstein the intensity of Jewish participation in German culture was best read as a sign for how “Germanized the German-speaking Jews had become.”<sup>76</sup> The historian’s task was to locate the origins of German Jewry’s extraordinary cultural creativity – its specific Jewish dimension not involving the presence of specifically Jewish themes or ideas but rather in a radical critique of tradition emerging from the Jewish experience of “exclusion from the inner circle of German traditional culture.” In this way Lowenstein’s own approach was in the end not so different from Beller’s.<sup>77</sup> Mendes-Flohr’s skepticism regarding Weimar Germany’s “Jewish culture” was more pronounced than Lowenstein’s: the Jewish participation in Germany’s avant-garde culture of the 1920s was in fact relatively small, he argued, its overstatement involving “an ironic correspondence to antisemitic opinion that pointed to the allegedly disproportionate number of Jews in the cultural life of the *Vaterland* and the danger it posed to the ‘German soul.’”<sup>78</sup> The dispute raised by Beller’s criticism was undoubtedly one of the most heated within the historiography of Weimar Republic German Jewry. The *Gesamtgeschichte* had tried for a balance of focus between radically secular Jewry and its more traditional religious and cultural counterpart, manifest, for instance, in the activities linked to *Wissenschaft des Judentums* and a revival of both Jewish education and national elements of Jewish identity.<sup>79</sup>

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One of the greatest conceptual challenges facing the authors of the *Gesamtgeschichte* was the potential overshadowing by the Holocaust of any discussion of the social, political and cultural history of German Jewry in the cen-

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Modern Times,” in *German Politics & Society*, vol. 19, no. 2 (2001), pp. 92–105, here pp. 95f.

<sup>76</sup> Lowenstein, “Jewish Participation in German Culture,” in *German-Jewish History*, vol. 3, p. 306.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 334.

<sup>78</sup> Mendes-Flohr, “Jews Within German Culture,” in *German-Jewish History*, vol. 4, pp. 170–194, here p. 173.

<sup>79</sup> *Idem*, in *ibid.*, pp. 283–312.

turies before it unfolded – an overshadowing manifest in a tendency, made popular by certain remarks of Gershom Scholem, to view German Jewry as a social grouping whose political naïvety and one-way love affair with German high culture would contribute to its own destruction.<sup>80</sup> At the same time, there was a need to avoid another historiographical temptation: to view German-Jewish history as a sort of a long and continuous “success story” suddenly terminated in 1933 – an approach still perhaps present in Peter Gay’s far more nuanced judgment that “the German record was one of a century-long, almost uninterrupted improvement of relations between its Jewish and gentile populations.”<sup>81</sup> In the introduction to the *Gesamtgeschichte*, Meyer thus makes note of the decision “not to minimize the role that antisemitism has played throughout the history of Jewish life in German lands. We had to recognize that a leitmotif of our narrative would be the trajectory from emancipation to exclusion and destruction.”<sup>82</sup>

The editors of the *Gesamtgeschichte* thus hoped to avoid, as much as possible, both historical determinism and a sense of history as pure hazard, in favor of an emphasis on historical ironies, shadings and contradictions, the closeness to one or another interpretive pole nevertheless depending on the weight of each reader’s own perspective. Jakob Hessing, for example, lays stress on the tragic ambiguity resulting from the thwarting of German Jewry’s efforts at social advancement and cultural integration – an ambiguity he nonetheless describes, within an essentially Zionist framework, as inherent in the *Gesamtgeschichte* as a “chronicle of a Diaspora destroyed.”<sup>83</sup> Although this and some other contributions do indeed reveal a certain “deterministic propensity,” Jay Harris has argued that one of the most important accomplishments of the *Gesamtgeschichte* is its taking seriously of German Jewry’s passionate desire for integration – with this understood as a path not preordained to failure, even though success was not more than “one, very precarious, possibility among many.”<sup>84</sup> Harris thus sees the *Gesamtgeschichte* as a tribute to the *legitimacy* of both the German-Jewish love of German culture and the project of Jewish modernization: a legitimacy that should not be

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<sup>80</sup> In this regard see Michael A. Meyer, “Juden – Deutsche – Juden. Wandlungen des deutschen Judentums in der Neuzeit, in *idem* and Michael Brenner, *Deutsch-jüdische Geschichte in der Neuzeit. Zwei Vorträge (LBI Information special issue)*, Frankfurt am Main 1998, pp. 5–16, here p. 5.

<sup>81</sup> Peter Gay, *My German Question: Growing Up in Nazi Berlin*, New Haven and London 1998, p. 112.

<sup>82</sup> Michael A. Meyer, *German-Jewish History*, vol. 1, p. x.

<sup>83</sup> Jakob Hessing, “Spielbälle im unnachgiebigen Netz der Bürokratie. Chronik einer untergegangenen Diaspora: Deutsche Juden in der Neuzeit,” in *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, February 12, 1997.

<sup>84</sup> Jay Harris, “In Defense of German Jews,” in *Commentary*, vol. 108, September 1999, pp. 44–48, here p. 45.



“obscured in retrospect by the overwhelmingly stunning and vicious events that followed.”<sup>85</sup>

But Harris’s is ultimately one possible reading among others. What is clear is that running through the entire historical narrative laid out in the *Gesamtgeschichte* is a sense of both existential ambivalence and the precarious nature of Jewish integration – albeit this sense may often be implicit, as Meyer indicates, rather than explicit. For Meyer, the path of German-Jewish history has traversed three stages, each marked by an occasional coexistence of contradictory tendencies:

In the first, Jews are defined only as Jews from the outside in and this is acknowledged by both sides; in the second stage, they define themselves as Germans and Jews, even though this is not always acknowledged by non-Jews; in the end, they are defined as “just” Jews exclusively from without. In the process, Jews regain a partial, but not completely revitalized sense of their own Jewishness.<sup>86</sup>

Corresponding to Meyer’s observation, in the *Gesamtgeschichte*’s depiction of the Middle Ages and early modern period, persecution, discrimination and ultimately expulsion coexisted both alongside important political, economic and religious transformations following the rise of absolute principalities, and alongside the spread of Ashkenazi erudition and culture within autonomous Jewish communities. Likewise, in the Enlightenment era, state modernization was accompanied on the one hand by a quick ascent of the Jewish population to the economic and professional bourgeoisie but, on the other hand, political emancipation unfolded in a long, protracted process denying Jews effective political participation and demanding as its price “the relinquishing of all Jewish characteristics that were viewed as national.”<sup>87</sup> The result was a complex process of cultural adaptation. Reflecting one strong tendency in recent German-Jewish historiography, the *Gesamtgeschichte* authors avoid use of the term “assimilation.” Instead, there is consistent use throughout the contributions of the term “acculturation,” in order to avoid implying “that Jews merged totally into German society” but rather to suggest an effort “to participate in both the Jewish and German spheres.”<sup>88</sup>

In his own contributions to the project, Meyer himself lays great stress on the dual nature of the modernization and cultural transformation of German Jewry sparked by the Haskalah, as well as of the emergence of *Wissenschaft des Judentums* and the development of the Reform movement and modern Orthodoxy. His heading “Becoming German, Remaining Jewish” captured the

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<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 48.

<sup>86</sup> Meyer, “Juden – Deutsche – Juden,” p. 6.

<sup>87</sup> Michael Brenner, Introduction to *German-Jewish History*, vol. 2, p. 2.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 2f. For a detailed discussion of the discourse on “assimilation,” see Till van Rahden’s contribution to this volume.

complexities of the process he is addressing.<sup>89</sup> Jewish intellectuals, Meyer observes, increasingly interpreted Judaism in a modern scientific and philosophical framework, desiring “to live fully within the German cultural milieu,” even though this milieu “continued to be imbued with Christian ideas and Christian symbols.”<sup>90</sup> This rendered all the more painful a recognition that even liberal and enlightened non-Jewish intellectuals believed Judaism was a doomed tradition, one that modern Jews would soon abandon. The fate of *Wissenschaft des Judentums*, seen by Meyer – in an implicit rebuttal of Scholem’s view of the movement as apologetic, assimilationist, and ultimately a failure<sup>91</sup> – as playing a key role in the emergence of a modern Jewish consciousness, despite never being accepted as an autonomous academic discipline within the German universities, underscores one of the main reasons for the ambivalence of Jewish integration: “In non-Jewish eyes integration of the Jews into German society did not imply integrating their cultural heritage, not even scholarly study done with the tools of German *Wissenschaft*.”<sup>92</sup> Meyer’s conclusions have been taken up in recent work focused on the resistance of Jewish scholars to the hegemony of a culture defining itself as both Prussian and Protestant.<sup>93</sup>

The picture emerging in the *Gesamtgeschichte* of the epoch extending from the formal completion of emancipation in 1871 to its repeal in 1933 is also stamped by a deep ambivalence. The “success of acculturation” accompanying German-Jewish embourgeoisement unfolded in the face of a persistent “social separation”;<sup>94</sup> the emergence of political and racially based antisemitism represents the “darker side” of a “general story of progress and betterment.”<sup>95</sup> On the one hand, the Jewish minority was threatened by demographic decline; on the other hand, as Monika Richarz observes, legal equality did provide protection from discrimination – although the Jewish middle class “differed from the German one and was never accepted as equal.”<sup>96</sup> Full integration without a loss of Jewish identity had thus “remained an unfulfilled hope.”<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> Michael A. Meyer, “Becoming German, Remaining Jewish,” in *German-Jewish History*, vol. 2, p. 199.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 185.

<sup>91</sup> Gershom Scholem, *Judaica*, vol. 6, *Die Wissenschaft vom Judentum*, Frankfurt am Main 1997.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 135.

<sup>93</sup> Susannah Heschel, *Abraham Geiger and the Jewish Jesus*, Chicago and London 1998; Christian Wiese, *Challenging Colonial Discourse: Jewish Studies and Protestant Theology in Wilhelmine Germany*, Leiden and Boston 2005.

<sup>94</sup> Meyer, Conclusion in *German-Jewish History*, vol. 2, p. 351.

<sup>95</sup> Peter Pulzer, Introduction to *German-Jewish History*, vol. 3, p. 4.

<sup>96</sup> Monika Richarz, “Jewish Women in the Family and Public Sphere,” in *German-Jewish History*, vol. 3, p. 69.

<sup>97</sup> *Idem*, Conclusion in *ibid.*, pp. 385–388, here p. 388.

As the *Gesamtgeschichte* informs us, the establishment of self-defense organizations during the *Kaiserreich* in reaction to antisemitism contributed to a revitalization of Jewish cultural and national values that must count as one of modern German Jewry's most outstanding achievements. At the same time, the ironies inherent in this achievement are not obscured by the project's authors. For example, attacks on Jewish religious texts and customs prompted secular Jews to their own form of defiance – defense of a tradition they had largely abandoned.<sup>98</sup> Lowenstein does not wish to view this as a “Jewish renaissance,” rather pointing to the “curious paradox, intensifying over the course of the Weimar Republic, ... [that] the same community that was expressing an unprecedented pride in its individuality was also a community more acculturated than ever before.”<sup>99</sup> In his account, Barkai focuses on Jewish demographic and economic decline during this period, along with the sense of crisis among German Jews after the First World War and the “lengthening shadow of antisemitism.”<sup>100</sup> Mendes-Flohr, on the other hand, describes both a remarkable regeneration of Jewish communal, religious and cultural life, and promising attempts at Jewish-Christian dialogue during the same period. But Mendes-Flohr refers as well to the “excruciating paradox of the Weimar experience for Jewry”: just as Jews had finally attained full participation in German cultural life, “their right to do so was questioned with ever greater intensity.”<sup>101</sup> In his version of the paradox, the challenges placed in the path of full civic participation intensified an awareness of the frailty of the longed-for social synthesis – of the enormous tensions inherent in it. This is evident, Mendes-Flohr suggests, in Franz Rosenzweig's metaphor of “the valley of two rivers,” the notion that “[the] German Jew lives at the confluence of two nurturing sources: German culture and the Jewish spiritual heritage.”<sup>102</sup> Mendes-Flohr uses the example of Rosenzweig to illustrate what he elsewhere identifies as the “bifurcated soul of the German Jew”:<sup>103</sup> marginalized within a nationalistic and antisemitic culture, German Jewry attempted to cling to Germany's humanistic literary and philosophical tradition while simultaneously seeking to integrate it into a balanced and autonomous Jewish identity. The tragedy of German Jewry, he suggests, was that “any hope, alas, that the Land between

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<sup>98</sup> Steven Lowenstein, “Ideology and Identity,” in *German-Jewish History*, vol. 3, pp. 281–304, here p. 286.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 304.

<sup>100</sup> Avraham Barkai, “Jewish Life in Its German Milieu,” in *German-Jewish History*, vol. 4, pp. 45–71, here p. 46.

<sup>101</sup> Paul Mendes-Flohr, “Jews Within German Culture,” in *German-Jewish History*, vol. 4, p. 171.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 162.

<sup>103</sup> Paul Mendes-Flohr, *German Jews: A Dual Identity*, New Haven and London 1999, p. 1–24.

the Rhine and the Danube would become a new Babylonia was cruelly dashed by the developments that brought the Republic to its demise.”<sup>104</sup>

In line with the stance taken by other *Gesamtgeschichte* authors, Mendes-Flohr expressly rejects as ahistorical the view “that German Jewry was benighted, beguiled by an imagined but nonexistent symbiosis between Judaism and German culture.”<sup>105</sup> But he also stresses that the notion of a German-Jewish symbiosis “is pre-eminently a post-Second World War construct largely propounded by non-Jews expressing an idealized image of a world brutally disrupted by Hitler.” Rosenzweig and Hermann Cohen, he insists, were not cultivating a myth of “German-Jewish dialogue” when they spoke of an affinity between *Deutschtum* and *Judentum*; rather, they were referring to a “dialogue within the soul of individual Jews as well as between themselves.” “They knew they had few non-Jewish partners in the dialogue,” Mendes-Flohr continues. “They saw the problem as how to preserve Jewish cultural memory and identity while passionately and creatively embracing another culture.”<sup>106</sup> A number of recent discussions have taken up the opposition of the *Gesamtgeschichte*’s authors to defining this effort at dialogue as illusory. Hence in his analysis of the cultural interaction between Jewish and non-Jewish intellectual discourse in Germany in the decades before Hitler, David Myers refers to a complex “process of borrowing, lending, and negotiation” on the Jewish side; rather than a complete absence of dialogue, there was a “level of communication between respectful dialogue and icy silence.”<sup>107</sup> Myers argues for a historiography allowing historians to escape “the long shadow of the Holocaust that often shrouds past interaction between Jews and non-Jews in Germany in darkness.”<sup>108</sup>

The effort at historical balance continues throughout the account of marginalization, persecution, forced labor, expulsion and annihilation occupying the final chapters. At the end of his description of the destruction of German Jewry, Avraham Barkai echoes one of the institute’s foundational principles: that a culturally dynamic community engaged in a centuries-long struggle for emancipation and integration now belonged to the past. “For some fifteen hundred years,” he indicates, “Jews and non-Jews lived together in German-speaking lands, most of that time in isolated, often threatened coexistence, but also and especially during the last century, participating in a stimulating, though never entirely calm, common life. A single decade of unleashed inhumanity brought this life together to its violent end.”<sup>109</sup> It

<sup>104</sup> *Idem*, Introduction to *German-Jewish History*, vol. 4, p.3.

<sup>105</sup> *Idem*, *German Jews*, p. 2.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 93.

<sup>107</sup> David N. Myers, *Resisting History: Historicism and its Discontents in German-Jewish Thought*, Princeton, NJ 2003, pp. 9f.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 169f.

<sup>109</sup> Avraham Barkai, Conclusion in *German-Jewish History*, vol. 4, p. 392.

seems that committee members did not raise the possibility of continuing the *Gesamtgeschichte* beyond this endpoint, other than in the form of a brief epilogue – a reflection of the radical caesura that the Holocaust signified for European Judaism.

The epilogue, written by Steven Lowenstein, focused on the approximately 350,000 German-Jewish refugees who found asylum in, mainly, the United States, England, Israel and Argentina. Despite their “remarkable attachment to German language and high culture,” Lowenstein observes, once the dimension of the Jewish catastrophe in Europe became known, most of the émigré Jews “rejected any conscious identification with the German people because of their traumatic experiences in the Nazi era.”<sup>110</sup> The *Gesamtgeschichte* offers only a brief outline of the émigrés’ adaptation to their new surroundings, the social and religious identity that emerged there and the tensions present in their relationship to American and Israeli Jews of Eastern European background; likewise, little is said regarding the lives of the refugees’ children in the host countries. Lowenstein’s epilogue ends with an indication of the German-Jewish cultural inheritance’s impending decline: an acknowledgment of one of the *Gesamtgeschichte*’s original – although no longer primary – objectives, to serve as a memorial to German Jewry. In Lowenstein’s words, “The culture of German-speaking Jewry was being transformed from a personal into a historical memory.”<sup>111</sup>

At the same time, the epilogue suggests directions for future research. Despite some preliminary efforts, one gap in research is a detailed, long-term historical and sociological analysis of the emigration of Jews to other countries.<sup>112</sup> Another gap is a full-length history of the Jewish community in postwar Austria and both East Germany and West Germany. As several critics have noted, the epilogue merely refers briefly to a radical disjuncture in the relationship to German-Jewish tradition of East European survivors living in Germany. Lowenstein stresses the alienation and insecurity of those Jews who stayed in postwar Germany, feelings that were intensified by a widespread attitude that “Jews should not reside in a land soaked with Jewish blood.”<sup>113</sup>

The epilogue does acknowledge, without exploring, the start of a “new German-Jewish culture” emerging from Russian Jewish immigration to Germany in the 1990s.<sup>114</sup> In this regard, Michael Brenner – himself having addressed the complexities of Jewish life in postwar Germany – has

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<sup>110</sup> Steven M. Lowenstein, Epilogue, “The German-Jewish Diaspora,” in *German-Jewish History*, vol. 4, pp. 393–402, here pp. 396f.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 402.

<sup>112</sup> See, for example, Werner E. Mosse and Julius Carlebach (eds.), *Second Chance: Two Centuries of German-speaking Jews in the United Kingdom*, Tübingen 1991 (Schriftenreihe wissenschaftlicher Abhandlungen des Leo Baeck Instituts 48).

<sup>113</sup> Lowenstein, Epilogue in *German-Jewish History*, vol. 4, p. 395.

suggested that had the *Gesamtgeschichte* been written several years later, more attention would have been devoted to this topic.<sup>115</sup> In order to justify scholarly interest in the post-1945 era, it is in fact no longer necessary to either construct continuity between pre-Holocaust German-Jewish history and Jewish life in a democratic, Europe-oriented Germany or to interpret that life as the “renaissance” of a past age. Recent work on Jewish life in contemporary Germany done in the field of history and literature reveals a diversity of perspectives,<sup>116</sup> with the LBI also planning a project on the topic in coming years.<sup>117</sup>

#### IV

As might be expected for a work of this sort, the *Gesamtgeschichte*, a synthetic account written by a range of authors with diverse specialties and perspectives, has elicited both fulsome praise and fundamental criticism from various sources. Keith Pickus has observed ironically that the work’s intended harmonious depiction is at times “closer to Arnold Schoenberg’s twelve-tone system than the lush melodies of Felix Mendelssohn.”<sup>118</sup> And David Sorkin has suggested that the *Gesamtgeschichte*, despite its introductory and summary passages in the project’s individual volumes, fails to “create a unified vision of German-Jewish history”;<sup>119</sup> the relative attention various approaches receive – social, institutional and intellectual history, gender history, the history of everyday life and rural life – varies according to personal focus and preference. Anticipating such criticism in his introduction, Michael Meyer defines the absence of a monolithic perspective as one of the work’s strengths,<sup>120</sup> a point he has reformulated elsewhere as follows: “The readers ‘hear’ diverse voices that may harmonize with one another or not, but which do not in any case sing in any uniform, simple way.”<sup>121</sup> This multivocal quality can be un-

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 396.

<sup>115</sup> See, for example, Michael Brenner, “The Transformation of the German-Jewish Community,” in Leslie Morris and Jack Zipes (eds.), *Unlikely History: The Changing German-Jewish Symbiosis 1945–2000*, New York 2002, pp. 49–61; and *idem*, “Deutsch-jüdische Geschichte nach 1945 – nur ein Epilog?” in Meyer and *idem*, *Deutsch-jüdische Geschichte in der Neuzeit. Zwei Vorträge*, pp. 17–23.

<sup>116</sup> See the extensive bibliography in Morris and Zipes (eds.), *Unlikely History*, pp. 307–325.

<sup>117</sup> Michael A. Meyer, interview with the author, by phone, December 12, 2004.

<sup>118</sup> Keith H. Pickus, in *German Studies Review*, vol. 3, no. 1 (2000), p. 115.

<sup>119</sup> David Sorkin, “The Émigré Synthesis: German-Jewish History in Modern Times,” in *Central European History*, vol. 34, no. 4 (2001), pp. 531–559, here p. 534.

<sup>120</sup> Michael A. Meyer, Preface to the Series, in *German-Jewish History*, vol. 1, p. xii.

<sup>121</sup> *Idem*, “Streitfragen in der zeitgenössischen jüdischen Historiographie,” in Michael Brenner and David N. Myers (eds.), *Jüdische Geschichtsschreibung heute. Themen, Positionen, Kontroversen*, Munich 2002, pp. 36–43, here pp. 38f.

derstood as the reflection of a fluid, expansive field of research – one that undercuts rigid and arbitrary historiographic conformity. It hardly seems possible, Jacob Katz observed in his above-mentioned memorandum, to interpret an object as complex as German-Jewish history as a unified whole.

Sorkin does acknowledge the status of the *Gesamtgeschichte* as a “meticulously researched and impeccably edited” survey. His most provocative criticism is that as a “successful culmination” of four decades of research, it is an expression of “critical scholarship of an identifiable sort,” closely linked to the scholarly program of the institute’s founders.<sup>122</sup> He describes the work as, in the final analysis, a work of “émigré synthesis” founded on the experiences and memories of a specific generation – one bound to an older ideological discourse centered around liberalism and Zionism, Germanness and Jewishness, and the existence of “German-Jewish dialogue.” For Sorkin, then, the result of this ambitious project has been a series of outmoded interpretations stamped by intellectual and institutional history, depictions of representative figures, and an apologetic focus on the cultural accomplishments of German Jews – all approaches he views as overtaken by newer methodologies and historical questions. Elements of social history, he indicates, are at best marginal to the narrative, traditional concepts such as “assimilation” and “[socio-cultural] contribution” occasionally being replaced by concepts such as “acculturation” and “participation” in a superficial and random manner.<sup>123</sup> In his detailed critique of the individual volumes, Sorkin notes the absence of a detailed analysis of the acculturation process, especially for a “mass of German Jewry” that appears a faceless “phantom” in comparison to the intellectual elite.<sup>124</sup>

Sorkin’s critique reflects his own definition of German-Jewish social integration and modernization as expressions of the creative production of a “German-Jewish subculture.”<sup>125</sup> It also reflects his wish to consider afresh an “assimilation problem” all too bound up in a Holocaust framework.<sup>126</sup> It is ironic that such an intention corresponds, apparently, with the above-mentioned editorial rejection of any use of the term “assimilation.” Likewise one of the basic intents of the *Gesamtgeschichte*, a nuanced consideration of German Jewry’s preservation of “Jewishness” in the course of secularization and its identification with the liberal German culture of *Bildung*, would itself seem aligned with Sorkin’s own orientation. In their stress on recent

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<sup>122</sup> Sorkin, “The Émigré Synthesis,” p. 532.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 545.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 545, 553.

<sup>125</sup> *Idem*, *The Transformation of German Jewry, 1780–1840: Studies in Jewish History*, New York and Oxford 1987, pp. 113ff.

<sup>126</sup> *Idem*, “Emancipation and Assimilation: Two Concepts and their Application to German-Jewish History,” in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 35 (1990), pp. 17–33.

methodological debates and the need to pursue more fully topics touched upon only cursorily, his remarks do, however, carry some weight.

The polemical character of his critique emerges in the label “émigré synthesis,” with its suggestion of an outdated account – one, as Sorkin indicates, that fails to convey a sense of living history – directed at a dwindling generation, its descendants, and a few specialists. For Sorkin, then, the *Gesamtgeschichte* remains wedded to the perspective at work in the first plans for a comprehensive history: a perspective containing strong elements of monumentalization, revealing an overriding focus on German Jewry’s cultural contribution to German society and a profound awareness of German-Jewish history as something that had come to an end. Reflecting stark reality, this last element has indeed remained with the *Gesamtgeschichte*, but other aspects are in fact anything but foregrounded – something hardly surprising in view of the changes at the LBI that began in the 1970s; as described elsewhere in this volume, with the new, professionalized use of approaches taken from fields such as women’s history, comparative history, and the history of everyday life, came an inevitable re-evaluation of the founders’ basic assumptions. In this context, it is important to stress that despite Sorkin’s suggestions to the contrary, the project’s contributors never intended it to comprise a “final narrative” of that completed history – Meyer in fact at one point directly emphasizes that the “volumes make no claim to finality.”<sup>127</sup>

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Since publication of the *Gesamtgeschichte*’s last (English-language) volume in 1998, a number of specialized studies have appeared extending the research it summarizes. Two volumes of the LBI *Schriftenreihe*, for instance, have offered comparisons between German Jewry and other European Jewish communities.<sup>128</sup> Other research, sometimes focused on the Haskalah, has helped illuminate the origins of German-Jewish modernization; it has done so in a manner lending support to Sorkin’s sense of a discrepancy between Mordechai Breuer’s description of a complex transformation of Jewish tradition beginning before the Enlightenment, and Michael Graetz’s “conventional interpretation of the Haskalah,” an interpretation revolving around Mendelssohn and his circle.<sup>129</sup> In the 1990s, scholars had in fact begun to counter

<sup>127</sup> Meyer, Preface to the Series, in *German-Jewish History*, vol. 1, p. ix.

<sup>128</sup> Michael Brenner, Rainer Liedke and David Rechter (eds.), *Two Nations: British and German Jews in Comparative Perspective*, Tübingen 1999 (Schriftenreihe wissenschaftlicher Abhandlungen des Leo Baeck Instituts 60); Michael Brenner, Vicky Caron and Uri R. Kaufmann (eds.), *Jewish Emancipation Reconsidered: The French and German Models*, Tübingen 2003 (Schriftenreihe wissenschaftlicher Abhandlungen des Leo Baeck Instituts 66).

<sup>129</sup> Sorkin, “The Émigré Synthesis,” p. 537.



the focus on the Berlin Haskalah of the 1770s and 1780s with research on the “early Haskalah” that emerged at the start of the eighteenth century, placing this development in the context of parallel phenomena in the Protestant and Catholic milieux.<sup>130</sup>

Another area of research that has supplemented certain elements of the *Gesamtgeschichte* involves the history of German Jewry’s daily life. The *Alltagsgeschichte*, already planned in the mid-1990s but first published – under the LBI’s aegis – in German in 2003, merits mention here: *Jewish Daily Life in Germany, 1618–1945*, edited by Marion Kaplan with contributions by Robert Liberles, Steven Lowenstein and Trude Maurer. As the title makes clear, the volume is devoted to the social history of “ordinary” German Jews – their “personal, often concealed reactions” to the challenges of the era,<sup>131</sup> as revealed in memoirs, diaries and letters as well as Jewish periodicals. Women’s history receives far more attention in this volume than in the *Gesamtgeschichte*. Although the contributions have received pointed criticism for using irrelevant or unrepresentative sources,<sup>132</sup> it nevertheless seems to this author that the volume succeeds in suggesting new paths for understanding the “ambiguities of acculturation.”<sup>133</sup> This is particularly the case with Trude Maurer’s depiction of everyday German-Jewish life in the Nazi period; this discussion in fact opens new perspectives on the period, lending a human face to both those who would eventually be murdered and those who would survive.

In the mid-1990s, the *LBI Year Book* offered a forum for debates on new theoretical approaches in German-Jewish history. In this context, Shulamit Volkov wrote on the need to overcome ideological dichotomies such as that – so omnipresent between different branches of the LBI – between liberalism and Zionism, a “radical new beginning” here being called for in order to escape what had become a historiographical cul-de-sac.<sup>134</sup> In general, the *Year Book* debates revolved around the same issues that the *Gesamtgeschichte* authors were also confronting around the same time: the need to move beyond a delegitimization of the entire story because of its closing narrative of catastrophe; a devaluation of empirical history into “wistfully nostalgic

<sup>130</sup> See *idem*, *The Berlin Haskalah and German Religious Thought: Orphans of Knowledge*, London and Portland; *idem*, “The Early Haskalah,” in Shmuel Feiner and *idem* (eds.), *New Perspectives on the Haskalah*, London and Portland, 2001, pp. 9–26.

<sup>131</sup> Marion Kaplan (ed.), *Jewish Daily Life in Germany, 1618–1945*, New York 2005, p. 4. The German edition *Geschichte des jüdischen Alltags in Deutschland. Vom 17. Jahrhundert bis 1945* was published by C.H. Beck (Munich 2003).

<sup>132</sup> For an example of this criticism, see Stefanie Schüler-Springorum, “Tun und Treiben der kleinen Leute,” in *Frankfurter Rundschau*, July 5, 2003, p. 12; see also Kaplan (ed.), *Jewish Daily Life*, p. 8.

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6.

<sup>134</sup> Shulamit Volkov, “Reflections on German-Jewish Historiography: A Dead End or a New Beginning?” in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 41 (1996), pp. 309–320, here p. 309.

evocations of alleged symbiosis"; and the integration of German-Jewish history into both overall Jewish history and the general history of Germany.<sup>135</sup> As things now stand, a fundamentally new approach rendering the guiding principles of the *Gesamtgeschichte* obsolete is not in sight. This certainly does not mean that what the project offered was some sort of conclusive historical account or "master narrative," – the sort of grand national histories, epitomized for instance by Jules Michelet and now essentially obsolete as a genre, that offer a reading of the past broadly unchallenged in the field of public discourse.<sup>136</sup> Writing at a time of intense historical debate, the *Gesamtgeschichte*'s authors, as we have seen, broadly rejected approaches, frequently affiliated with the *Sonderweg* thesis, that define German-Jewish history as inevitably headed towards catastrophe. In its broader implications, the project thus runs counter, as suggested, to both Gershom Scholem's thesis of a "completely false start in the history of modern relations between Jews and Germans"<sup>137</sup> and to a Zionist vision, criticized by Harris, in which Jewish assimilatory efforts "tragically ... set themselves on a trajectory that led inevitably to *Kristallnacht* and beyond."<sup>138</sup> In this respect, Michael Meyer has pointed out the dominance, especially in the United States, of precisely such a vision, with an image of German Jewry coming to serve as a reminder of the hazards facing Jewish identity in the Diaspora. For Meyer, German-Jewish history thus sometimes serves as something like a "ghost from the past, a historical phantom that will frighten contemporaries sufficiently to drive them from its own unfortunate path."<sup>139</sup> As we have seen, the authors of the *Gesamtgeschichte* wished to present another historical image, far more positive but itself not without shadows. At the same time, they were aiming their narratives in a rather different direction – towards German readers, in the hope for "an honest confrontation" on their part with their own history: "a history imbued with things German-Jewish, in order to help construct a genuine and accurate historical consciousness."<sup>140</sup>

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<sup>135</sup> Samuel Moyn, "German Jewry and the Question of Identity: Historiography and Theory," in *ibid.*, pp. 291–307, here pp. 293f; see also Evjatar Friesel, "The German-Jewish Encounter as a Historical Problem: A Reconsideration," in *ibid.*, pp. 263–275; Volkov, "Reflections," p. 320.

<sup>136</sup> See the critical analysis of the term by Konrad H. Jarausch and Martin Sabrow, "'Meistererzählung' – Zur Karriere eines Begriffes," in *idem* (eds.), *Die historische Meistererzählung. Deutungslinien der deutschen Nationalgeschichte nach 1945*, Göttingen 2002, pp. 9–32.

<sup>137</sup> Gershom Scholem, "Jews and Germans," in *Commentary*, vol. 42, November 1966, pp. 31–38, here p. 33.

<sup>138</sup> Harris, "In Defense of German Jews," p. 44.

<sup>139</sup> Michael A. Meyer, "The German Jews: Some Perspectives on Their History," p. 99, in *idem*, *Judaism within Modernity*, pp. 99–110, here p. 99.

<sup>140</sup> Meyer, "Jenseits und diesseits des Abgrunds," p. 11.

As is well known, German reunification reawakened the debates and controversies originally emerging in the course of the *Historikerstreit*. In this regard, it is worth noting that Meyer has observed that the LBI's extended narrative account of German Jewry's struggle for integration into a pluralistic German culture – a struggle ending in an “abyss of annihilation” – might serve as an historical paradigm for contemporary German political and cultural debates. For Meyer, the *Gesamtgeschichte* has thus provided politically relevant guidelines for a confrontation with national narratives that – in the context of intense debates on the concept of a *Leitkultur*, a “dominant [Christian] culture” as opposed to multiculturalism or the independence of minority cultures within German society – still appear to play an important role in German consciousness. In Meyer's words:

It seems to me ... that German-Jewish history from Moses Mendelssohn to the Nazi dictatorship has become more rather than less important in the past forty years. ... To the extent that a reunited Germany continues to question the continuity of its own history, to the extent that it must increasingly grapple with the issue of an immigrant minority's German identity, and to the extent that it has failed to develop a solidly pluralistic concept of nation, German-Jewish history can continue to serve as a paradigm. The history of the former Jewish minority can provide important lessons, not only about the past, but also about the possibility for a new future, to a Germany that is now politically united but in many respects also newly divided. The Leo Baeck Institute's responsibilities toward Germany are thus not limited to history as memorial or memory. As the institute builds upon and continues its work, it is my hope that a better understanding of the experiences of a fragment of the People of Israel in Germany and their important role in the emergence of modern German culture will make a significant and beneficial contribution to the development of a new consciousness among the German people on this side of the historical abyss.<sup>141</sup>

Treason, Fate, or Blessing:  
Narratives of Assimilation in the Historiography  
of German-Speaking Jewry since the 1950s

Till van Rahden

The Jewish tribes [*Stämme*] are distinguished ... not through one being more Jewish, the other less so, or as it is often arrogantly put, one being composed of better Jews, the other of worse ones. In their Judaism they are equal. However, they are distinguished through their forms of assimilation. Russian Judaism is more Russian and German Judaism more German; none is more Jewish, and none can any longer be *only* Jewish.<sup>1</sup>

*Georg Landauer*

“Rumors of my death have been greatly exaggerated.” Mark Twain’s aphorism certainly appears to hold true for the concept of assimilation. Even though leading experts on the historiography of German Jewry have repeatedly asserted that the concept has little to offer by way of new approaches or perspectives in German-Jewish history, it has proven surprisingly enduring. In November 1987, at one of the last large conferences on the “results, criticisms, and goals” of research on German Jewry, David Sorkin noted a “palpable and growing dissatisfaction with the concept.” Attempts to redefine and thereby rehabilitate it as a category of scholarly analysis were ill-conceived, Sorkin insisted. Instead, he argued for recourse to concepts like integration, acculturation, embourgeoisement, and subculture, which were “at once less fraught and more precise.” This shift would provide new perspectives on an historical relationship defined as assimilation by an older

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<sup>1</sup> Georg Landauer, (1895–1954), “Über das Erbe des deutschen Judentums,” in *Mitteilungsblatt. Wochenzeitung des Irgun Olej Merkaz Europa*, vol. 21, no. 13/14 (30 March 1953), pp. 1–2, here p. 1f.

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generation of historians.<sup>2</sup> Christhard Hoffmann made a similar argument in one of the first histories of the Leo Baeck Institute. In that essay, he described the “controversial debate on the problem of assimilation” during the first fifteen years of the institute’s existence as an expression of the “dominance of a moralistic approach to history” in decline since the early 1970s.<sup>3</sup> Neither the growing influence of social history nor the ascendancy of women’s history and gender history has affected the concept’s negative and occasionally pejorative connotation. Even Marion Kaplan’s path-breaking work long remained wedded to a negative conception of assimilation in its argument that women were better able to resist its lure than their husbands and thus better positioned to preserve Jewish tradition.<sup>4</sup>

The belief that the concept of assimilation must be approached with caution has become axiomatic within recent German-Jewish historiography. Indeed, the concept often appears a call to battle rather than a category of analysis. This polemical quality dates back to the earliest political debates in the emancipation era on whether and to what extent German Jews should relinquish their right to difference in return for civic equality. Preserved within the concept are traces of the struggle between the Zionists and anti-Zionists and the struggle between religious Reformers and Orthodoxy over the future form of a modern and sustainable Jewish consciousness.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>2</sup> David Sorkin, “Emancipation and Assimilation: Two Concepts and their Applications on German-Jewish History,” in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 35 (1990), pp. 17–33, here p. 27 and p. 33. In 1966, Jacob Toury emphasized that he deliberately chose to avoid “terms that could be interpreted as value judgments such as ‘assimilation,’ ‘symbiosis,’ etc.” Instead, he employed the “more objective term ‘amalgamation’” in order to describe the “connection between two groups.” Another advantage of this term is that it frequently appears in nineteenth-century sources; see, for example, *idem*, *Die politischen Orientierungen der Juden in Deutschland. Von Jena bis Weimar*, Tübingen 1966 (Schriftenreihe wissenschaftlicher Abhandlungen des Leo Baeck Instituts 15), p. vi.

<sup>3</sup> Christhard Hoffmann, “Deutsch-jüdische Geschichtswissenschaft in der Emigration. Das Leo-Baeck-Institut,” in Herbert A. Strauss, Klaus Fischer, Christhard Hoffmann and Alfons Söllner (eds.), *Die Emigration der Wissenschaften nach 1933. Disziplingeschichtliche Studien*, Munich, London, New York and Paris 1991, pp. 257–279, here p. 272.

<sup>4</sup> Marion A. Kaplan, “Tradition and Transition: The Acculturation and Assimilation of Jews in Imperial Germany. A Gender Analysis,” in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 27 (1982), pp. 3–35.

<sup>5</sup> David Sorkin, “Emancipation and Assimilation”; Jacob Toury, “Emanzipation und Assimilation. Konzepte und Bedingungen,” in *Yalkut Moreshet*, vol. 2, no. 2 (1964), pp. 167–182 (in Hebrew); Arno Herzig, “Das Assimilationsproblem aus jüdischer Sicht (1780–1880),” in Hans Otto Horch and Horst Denkler (eds.), *Conditio Judaica*, vol. 1: *Judentum, Antisemitismus und deutschsprachige Literatur vom 18. Jahrhundert bis zum ersten Weltkrieg*, Tübingen 1988, pp. 10–28; Scott Spector, *Prague Territories: National Conflict and Cultural Innovation in Kafka’s Fin De Siecle* (Weimar Then and Now, vol. 21), Berkeley, CA 2000, pp. 163–164, 192–193; David A. Brenner, *Marketing Identities: The Invention of Jewish Ethnicity in Ost und West*, Detroit, MI 1998, pp. 30, 70–71, 75, 81, 89–90.

A reassessment of the concept should not aim at a definition that is analytically precise and free of historical and ideological ballast. Instead, the priority should be to analyze the concept's historicity and explore the self-consciousness and hopes for the future contained within its various definitions and deployments. This reassessment has precedents in older debates. In 1931, Selma Stern noted that the concept incorporated a variety of attitudes towards "Volk and nation, the spirit and the world, religion and God." For this reason, it could only be "examined and assessed from a subjective point of view."<sup>6</sup> In the first part of this essay, I will reconstruct several early-twentieth-century debates on assimilation that remain of interest. Next I will consider the role played by the concept in the two decades after the founding of the Leo Baeck Institute. Here I distinguish between three interpretations in which assimilation is conceived as, respectively, treason, fate, and blessing. The third section considers the elusive quest for analytical rigor in debates on the relation between the concepts of acculturation and assimilation since approximately 1980. The focus of the final section is the remarkable renaissance of the concept of assimilation since the mid-1990s.

### I. Buried Traditions:

#### The Debate on the Concept of Assimilation before 1933

In late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century debates within Jewish circles, the concept of assimilation was highly polemicized. Nevertheless many contemporary authors such as Selma Stern reflected in a nuanced manner upon the term's complexity. Alongside the ideologically laden critique of "assimilationism," as well as the equally ideological response to the critique, it is possible to detect more thoughtful voices suggesting an increasingly subtle and productive approach. Even though polemical stridency and thoughtful reflection often existed side by side, traces were also present of a conceptual history not subsumed to the schematic confrontation between Zionists and anti-Zionists or Reformers and the Orthodox.

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<sup>6</sup> Selma Stern, "Probleme der Emanzipation und der Assimilation," in *Der Morgen*, vol. 7, no. 5 (1931), pp. 423–439, here p. 438; see also Michael A. Meyer, "German Jewry's Path to Normality and Assimilation: Complexities, Ironies, Paradoxes," in Rainer Liedtke and David Rechter (eds.), *Towards Normality? Acculturation and Modern German Jewry*, Tübingen 2003 (Schriftenreihe wissenschaftlicher Abhandlungen des Leo Baeck Instituts 68), pp. 13–26, esp. p. 15, and David Sorkin, "Emancipation and Assimilation," esp. pp. 22–23. On Selma Stern, see Marina Sassenberg, *Das Eigene in der Geschichte. Selbstentwürfe und Geschichtsentwürfe der deutsch-jüdischen Historikerin Selma Stern 1890–1981*, Tübingen 2004 (Schriftenreihe wissenschaftlicher Abhandlungen des Leo Baeck Instituts 69).

One example of this would be the writings of the historian and classical philologist Eugen Täubler, who embarked on an analysis of the structural principles behind the history of the Jewish Diaspora after being named head of the newly founded General Archive of the German Jews in 1906.<sup>7</sup> Täubler, who was born in Lissa in Posen, had sympathized with Zionism since his youth. However, in a programmatic essay of 1911, he rejected the idea that the history of the Diaspora Jews could be structured within the foundational categories of state and *Volk* that had grown to dominate European national historiographies since the nineteenth century.<sup>8</sup> Rather than reverting to a limited idea of the history of the Jewish Diaspora as a combination of religious history and intellectual history or as “the sum of community histories,” Täubler made a case for applying guiding notions of “settlement,” “assimilation,” and “particularity.”<sup>9</sup> He defined assimilation as “all of the phenomena . . . that the process of fusion of the Jewish *Volk* element with the body of the German *Volk* caused to appear among both the Jewish and the larger German faction.” Täubler distinguished between two dimensions of this “fusion process”: first, the political, legal, and social relationship of Jews to their environment, an issue that today is typically articulated as a question of emancipation and integration; and second, the change in Jewish self-consciousness.<sup>10</sup> Ultimately, however, Täubler believed that the concept of assimilation was opposed to the concept of Jewish identity. “The concept of particularity complements the concept of assimilation,” he argued. “The one begins where the other ends. With respect only to its social aspects, it is limited to the history of religion and of religious life, the history of individual branches of scholarship in whole or in part, the history of Jewish political and social ideas and movements and the history of Jewish organizations.”<sup>11</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Eugen Täubler, 1879–1953. For biographical details, see Selma Stern-Täubler, Introduction, “Eugen Täubler und die Wissenschaft des Judentum,” in Eugen Täubler, *Aufsätze zur Problematik jüdischer Geschichtsschreibung 1908–1950*, Tübingen 1977 (Schriftenreihe wissenschaftlicher Abhandlungen des Leo Baeck Instituts 36), pp. vii–xxiv; David N. Myers, “Eugen Täubler. The Personification of ‘Judaism as Tragic Existence,’” in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 39 (1994), pp. 131–150.

<sup>8</sup> Eugen Täubler, “Die Entwicklung der Arbeit des ‘Gesamtarchivs’ und der Versuch einer methodologischen Gliederung und Systematisierung der jüdischen Geschichtsforschung (1911),” in Täubler, *Aufsätze zur Problematik jüdischer Geschichtsschreibung 1908–1950*, pp. 9–20, esp. p. 16. On Täubler’s essay see Sorkin, “Emancipation and Assimilation,” pp. 23–24.

<sup>9</sup> Täubler, “Die Entwicklung der Arbeit des ‘Gesamtarchivs,’” p. 17.

<sup>10</sup> This is in line with Sorkin’s distinction in “Emancipation and Assimilation,” p. 27: “Recent historiography has effectively divided the concept of assimilation into two component processes: assimilation by the Jews – the extent to which they attempted to conform to their environment – and assimilation of the Jews – the extent to which Germans accepted them.”

<sup>11</sup> Täubler, “Die Entwicklung der Arbeit des ‘Gesamtarchivs,’” p. 19.

Remarkably, an October 1904 keynote essay in the cultural Zionist monthly *Ost und West* challenged this dualistic opposition of assimilation and particularity. The anonymous essay, "Assimilation," was most likely authored by the monthly's editor, Leo Winz. It opened with a criticism of the demand that Jews assimilate to their environment. This demand, properly understood, should be directed not towards Jews but towards the environment. In German-speaking central Europe, only the "bourgeois elite" could assume this task. But as a result of antisemitism and political powerlessness, even in Germany the bourgeois elite was unwilling and unable to "assimilate the Jews ... without a trace." "In its deliberate and uncompromising form, its character as a kind of social program," Winz concluded, "assimilation ... remains an empty echo."<sup>12</sup>

Winz argued instead that assimilation should be a Jewish goal and a source of Jewish vitality. The older interpretation of assimilation needed to be abandoned as utopian daydream, at least within German-speaking central Europe. By contrast, an interpretation more in tune with the times was "one of the most important tasks of Jewry, a task that must continue to be fulfilled, and a task in whose fulfillment may be found the most forceful expression of Jewish vitality." Rather than a withdrawal into seclusion or unconditional integration and submission to the environment, it was necessary to "distinguish among the ideas and ways of life developed elsewhere, and adopt only those which are the most suitable and beneficial to one's own organic development, to incorporate them in accordance with one's own tradition and within the spirit of one's own doctrines, to reshape it, to reconfigure it to an element of the self: to assimilate it into oneself." A "healthy, viable, and vital" Judaism would "not work towards the destruction and ruin of its own individuality but nurture it with the best intellectual content of the age." "The world's progress" was not a process in which "all civilized peoples and tribes blindly emulate one another in order to become more alike, so that all individuality amongst peoples ultimately dissolves into a dreary, uniform, undifferentiated mush." Instead Winz defined progress as "the participation of all peoples in the expansion of the great, momentous ideas, each in their own fashion, while still preserving their unique character, and so adding a new nuance to the world-view, a new note to the choir of peoples." Rather than pitting the idea of Zionism and assimilation against one another, he argued that the "desire for national independence, for a secure homeland on native soil, the land that animates the souls of millions of our people," was the best late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century example of a creative Jewish

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<sup>12</sup> Anonymous [probably Leo Winz], "Assimilation," in *Ost und West*, vol. 4, no. 10 (1904), pp. 641–654, here pp. 652–653.



appropriation of “a modern idea, an idea mastered by nearly all contemporary civilized peoples.”<sup>13</sup>

## II. Plurality in Silent Dissent: The Multifaceted Use of the Concept of Assimilation from 1956 to 1980

In the essays published by the *Year Book* and the *Bulletin* of the Leo Baeck Institute, the concept of assimilation was at once omnipresent and marginal. The concept arose in nearly every volume; some of the annual *Year Book* indexes contained more than thirty occurrences of the term. Even so, the institute's publications during its first two decades did not engage in a rigorous confrontation with the concept, its place within the history of ideas, and its benefits and limitations. David Sorkin was the first author to address these issues systematically, in an essay only published in 1990, the thirty-fifth issue of the *Year Book*.<sup>14</sup> In contrast to the self-reflexive debates of the pre-1933 period, analyzing the understanding of assimilation at work in the institute on the basis of its programmatic texts is impossible. Instead, considering the concept as it was discussed or referred to in the *Year Book*'s regular essays appears more productive. Indeed, such an apparent limitation may well contain an opportunity. Programmatic demands and historiographic practice often diverge significantly, a fact that historians often choose to ignore.

However, we should not assume that the absence of programmatic reflection implies that the founding generation of the Leo Baeck Institute hoped to ignore or suppress the concept's theoretical and politico-historical content. The German-Jewish émigrés who made up the institute's founding generation had participated in the polemical debates of the first three decades of the twentieth century. This was presumably why they feared that a heated debate on the historical significance of assimilation might threaten

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<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> Sorkin, “Emancipation and Assimilation.” In 1969, Robert A. Kann published the first *Year Book* essay to employ the term “assimilation” in the title (“Assimilation and Antisemitism in the German-French Orbit in the Nineteenth and the Early Twentieth Century,” in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 14 (1969), pp. 92–115). However, Kann does not explain or define the term in his text, which can thus only be inferred indirectly. This is all the more remarkable in light of the fact that he spends several pages defining terms such as “Jews” and “antisemitism.” Writing as a specialist on the Habsburg Empire, Kann implicitly defined the term as an increasing accommodation of the occupational structure of Jews and non-Jews; he is thus mainly concerned with the economic aspects of assimilation. His analysis remains within the framework of quantitative social history, which was a leading approach in the United States at the time.

their hard-won consensus. Some scholars did express mild dissent. Hans Tramer, for example, believed that the institute's "historical task" was to reassess the "philosophy of history of the age of emancipation" in order to arrive at new cultural, social, and theoretical approaches and perspectives on the "process of fusion" of European and Jewish culture.<sup>15</sup> Kurt Blumenfeld, by contrast, even failed to win over the remaining Israeli members of the advisory board to his May 1955 suggestion that the institute's programmatic research should focus on the extent and the dangers of assimilation.<sup>16</sup>

A tactful reticence regarding assimilation made it possible for these German-Jewish émigrés to join forces despite their divergent religious and political orientation, the variety of their experiences in their countries of origin, and the diversity of their academic background. Notwithstanding these differences, all members of the founding generation believed in the unique importance of the history of German Jewry. Tramer, for example, proclaimed Germany the "birthplace of modern Jewry." Blumenfeld, in turn, argued that the "Zionist attempt" to "overcome assimilation by means of insight into the Jewish question" had been attempted "only in Germany."<sup>17</sup> For this founding generation, the common goal of establishing and affirming German-Jewish history as a legitimate field of research took precedence over a heated and potentially conflictual debate on the concept of assimilation. They agreed with Max Kreuzberger's later statement that the "process of emancipation and assimilation of German Jews" was not a "mistake from the start ... whose only end was catastrophe and destruction."<sup>18</sup>

Even though arguments occasionally flared up, the founding generation agreed to settle their conflicts in private. The publication of Kurt Blumenfeld's 1962 autobiography *Erlebte Judenfrage*, which purported to dissect the "essence of the characterless assimilant," elicited a great deal of discomfort among the institute's members, especially in New York. This resulted in a highly critical and polemical exchange of letters. After the controversy subsided, the question of whether the correspondence should be published was raised. All of the founding members agreed with Siegfried Moses's later comment that publication would have undermined a "tacit agreement" to refrain from "unleashing ideological opposition."<sup>19</sup> The long-time president

<sup>15</sup> Hans Tramer, "Die geschichtliche Aufgabe," in *Bulletin für die Mitglieder der Freunde des Leo Baeck Institut*, 1, no. 1 (1957), pp. 1–6, here p. 3.

<sup>16</sup> See Guy Miron, "From Memorial Community to Research Center: The Leo Baeck Institute in Jerusalem," in this volume.

<sup>17</sup> Hans Tramer, "Die geschichtliche Aufgabe," pp. 1–6, here p. 1; Kurt Blumenfeld, "Ursprünge und Art einer zionistischen Bewegung," in *Bulletin für die Mitglieder der Freunde des Leo Baeck Institut*, 1, no. 4 (1958), pp. 129–140, here p. 140.

<sup>18</sup> Max Kreuzberger, Introduction in *idem* (with Irmgard Foerg) (eds.), *Leo Baeck Institute New York, Bibliothek und Archiv. Katalog*, vol. 1, Tübingen 1970 (Schriftenreihe wissenschaftlicher Abhandlungen des Leo Baeck Instituts 22), pp. xv–xli, here p. xix.

<sup>19</sup> Kurt Blumenfeld, *Erlebte Judenfrage. Ein Vierteljahrhundert deutscher Zionismus*,

of the New York Leo Baeck Institute, Max Gruenewald, also recalled the silent consensus that the parallel debate on the existence of a German-Jewish symbiosis should be conducted in private.<sup>20</sup> The journals' readers, it must be said, did not always agree with the LBI leadership's tactful reticence regarding the great controversies of the pre-1933 era. In 1959, one reader wrote to complain about the absence of reflection upon "German-Jewish 'incompatibility'" and called for "a few frank words on the ephemeral character of much of the Jewish contribution to German life." He went on to say that the *Year Book* authors downplayed the "differences of opinion which existed formerly among Jews in Germany," and that "for the sake of truth as well as a lesson for posterity the antagonistic attitudes of orthodox and liberal Jews, of Zionists and their opponents should be clearly delineated."<sup>21</sup>

In light of these vocal complaints and the potential for conflict inherent in the concept of assimilation, the liberal stance of the *Year Book* publishers is both notable and admirable. The imperative of neutrality that Robert Weltsch had issued on matters of religious dispute appears to have also applied to topics of political controversy. As an historical research institute, the LBI did not take a stand on the "religious controversies which stirred German Jewry ... in the nineteenth and early twentieth century." Although the institute permitted contributors to express their own "views and scale of values," it believed that controversies should be analyzed and framed as artifacts of German-Jewish history.<sup>22</sup> As long as contributors did not make explicit their theoretical and politico-historical assumptions with respect to assimilation, Weltsch did not consider refusing publication of their work or defusing it editorially. The tacit agreement to disagree made it possible for the institute to provide a forum for a variety of approaches and perspectives, with this liberalism extending to other topics as well. From its inception, the

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Stuttgart 1962, here p. 100; Siegfried Moses, "Weltanschauliche Unterschiede im deutschen Judentum," in *Bulletin des Leo Baeck Instituts*, 8, no. 32 (1965), pp. 346–351, esp. pp. 349–351, here p. 351. See also Miron, "From Memorial Community to Research Center."

<sup>20</sup> Max Gruenewald, "The Leo Baeck Institute" (n.d.), *LBI Archives New York*, Gruenewald Collection. I wish to thank Ruth Nattermann (Rome) for the reference. On the topic of the early years of the Institute, see *idem*, *Deutsch-jüdische Geschichtsschreibung nach der Shoah. Die Gründung und Frühgeschichte des Leo Baeck Instituts*, Essen 2004.

<sup>21</sup> Michael Heymann, "Correspondence," in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 4 (1959), pp. 355–356.

<sup>22</sup> Robert Weltsch, Introduction in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 12 (1967), pp. ix–xxvi, here p. x; Hans Liebeschütz, "Past, Present and Future of German-Jewish Historiography," in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 23 (1978), pp. 3–21, esp. 4–5; Siegfried Moses, "Weltanschauliche Unterschiede," pp. 346–351, esp. 346–347. According to Moses, a "silent agreement" was reached "according to which all of the earlier schools of thought within Judaism would respect the other branches and refrain from claiming that their own beliefs had proven to be 'the correct ones'" (*ibid.*, p. 347).

*Year Book* published essays on controversial issues, including contributions on sensitive topics such as conversion and biographical sketches on prominent apostates such as Friedrich Julius Stahl and Fritz Haber.<sup>23</sup>

Contributors to the *Year Book* demonstrated three different approaches towards the topic of assimilation. The first was a radical Zionist interpretation in which assimilation appeared as a form of treason. This betrayal of Jewry was the result of a misunderstanding of the historical essence of the Jewish Diaspora in German-speaking central Europe. Anyone who had rejected Zionism was termed an “assimilationist,” in other words a victim of false and deluded consciousness. As David Myers notes, assimilation was regarded as a “quick route to self-negation.”<sup>24</sup> Those writing in this radical Zionist vein – and they mostly taught at the Hebrew University – agreed with the basic assumptions of the Jerusalem School. They interpreted the age of emancipation as a “crisis of national creativity” (Raphael Mahler) and the result of a “decomposition process” (Yitzhak Fritz Baer). The experience of the Holocaust, according to Mahler, had made it clear that the project of assimilation was “nothing short of an absolute illusion.” The only “feasible course” for modern Jewish existence was the “renewal of an all-embracing national culture ... within a sovereign state.”<sup>25</sup>

The explicit advocacy of a deliberate historical attempt to legitimize the Zionist nation-state was unusual among the contributors and members of the Leo Baeck Institute. The advocates of this radical Zionist position cultivated a Manichaean world-view that sharply distinguished between Zionists and their opponents. They were also characterized by their use of the contemporary polemical concept of the “assimilationist.” In a 1959 essay on the Zionist student movement, for example, Walter Gross argued that the members of both the emancipatory Free Association of Scholars and the League of Student Fraternities (*Kartell-Konvent*) were typical representatives of an “assimilationist tendency.” Their members remained convinced that “fundamentally there was no ubiquitous ‘Jewish Question’ that might call for some

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<sup>23</sup> Carl Cohen, “The Road to Conversion,” in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 6 (1961), pp. 259–279; Robert A. Kann, “Friedrich Julius Stahl: A Re-Examination of His Conservatism,” in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 12 (1967), pp. 55–74; Rudolf A. Stern, “Fritz Haber: Personal Recollection,” in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 8 (1963), pp. 71–102.

<sup>24</sup> David N. Myers, *Resisting History: Historicism and Its Discontents in German-Jewish Thought*, Princeton, NJ 2003, p. 165.

<sup>25</sup> Raphael Mahler, “Geschichte Israels in der neuesten Zeit (1961),” in Michael Brenner, Anthony Kauders, Gideon Reuveni and Nils Römer (eds.), *Jüdische Geschichte lesen. Texte der jüdischen Geschichtsschreibung im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert*, Munich 2003, pp. 80–90, here p. 85; Jizchak Fritz Baer, “Galut (1936),” in *ibid.*, pp. 178–188, here p. 184. On Baer’s “search for an idyllic Judaism,” see Israel Jacob Yuval, “Yitzhak Baer and the Search for Authentic Judaism,” in David N. Myers and David B. Ruderman (eds.), *The Jewish Past Revisited: Reflections on Modern Jewish Historians*, New Haven, CT 1998, pp. 77–87, here p. 81.

remedy beyond the frontiers of Germany.”<sup>26</sup> In a series of essays written for the *Year Book*, Zosa Szajkowski was especially forceful in his use of the assimilation concept. Szajkowski, a historian born in Zarobi, Poland, was affiliated with the *YIVO* Institute in New York. In the mid-1970s, he wrote a history of Eastern European Jews under German occupation during the First World War. He interpreted many internal Jewish debates on the future of Eastern European Jewry within the framework of a conflict between the “partisans of assimilation” and the advocates of a “nationalist point of view,” or the Zionists.<sup>27</sup> Szajkowski even called Orthodox rabbis such as Joseph Carlebach and Leopold Rosenak “assimilationists” because they had kept aloof from Zionism.<sup>28</sup> He repeatedly emphasized the opposition between the “assimilationist” German-Jewish Aid Organization and the “Jewish nationalist” Committee on the East.<sup>29</sup> In footnotes that sometimes span half a page, he quoted extensively from “assimilationist” critics such as Leon Chasanowitsch, the head of *Poale Zion*. In December 1916, Chasanowitsch complained about the influence of “assimilationist cliques” to Max Bodenheimer: “The assimilationists of all nations are related by marriage, and not just politically, and they work hand in hand. It’s impossible to neutralize someone like [Jacob] Schiff without being accused of undermining the prestige of P[aul] Nathan.”<sup>30</sup>

Szajkowski may have realized how closely his conceptualization remained rooted in contemporary controversies. It is also possible that his editor, Robert Weltsch, directed his attention to the problem. In any case, in a parenthetical aside Szajkowski anticipated his critics by admitting that he had undertaken a vast expansion of the concept: “The term *assimilation* is used here as it was used by East European Jews, namely as a movement to replace the Jewish language, culture, tradition, etc., by the language, culture and tradition of the non-Jewish environment; with the intention that this should ultimately lead to the extinction of the Jews as a separate ethnic identity.”<sup>31</sup> Szajkowski’s definition, with its prognosis of the extinction of Jewish particularity, was unusual even in the Eastern European context. For the *Year Book* editors, however, the salient point was that he based his argument upon East

<sup>26</sup> Walter Gross, “The Zionist Student Movement,” in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 4 (1959), pp. 143–164; here p. 144.

<sup>27</sup> Zosa Szajkowski, “The Struggle for Yiddish during World War I: The Attitude of German Jewry,” in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 9 (1964), pp. 131–158, here p. 145.

<sup>28</sup> Szajkowski, “Struggle for Yiddish,” p. 150.

<sup>29</sup> Zosa Szajkowski, “Jewish Relief in Eastern Europe 1914–1917,” in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 10 (1965), pp. 24–56, here p. 35.

<sup>30</sup> Szajkowski, “Jewish Relief in Eastern Europe,” p. 41, n. 78. For a similar indictment of Paul Nathan as an “assimilationist” see Robert S. Wistrich, “German Social Democracy and the Problem of Jewish Nationalism 1897–1917,” in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 21 (1976), pp. 109–142, here p. 116.

<sup>31</sup> Szajkowski, “Jewish Relief in Eastern Europe,” p. 35.

European rather than German Jewry; East European identity politics were manifestly less central to the institute's founding generation.

The second approach was the moderate Zionist position that defined assimilation as fate. According to this interpretation, assimilation was an inevitable but also potentially treacherous development in the history of modern Jewry. Its advocates attempted to historicize rather than to participate in the polemical debates of the pre-1933 period. Assimilation is described as a narrative of loss. This process, Weltsch insisted in 1957, contributed to the "rapid decline of Jewish knowledge ... when the wealth of newly acquired *Bildung* deprived Jewish individuals of any interest in Judaism."<sup>32</sup> Weltsch nonetheless argued that it was out of touch with reality to believe that emancipation and assimilation, or Jewish "entry into the modern world," was an unmitigated "disaster." "It would be quixotic to try to arrest the march of time or shut the door to the modern world. Most Jews of our age are convinced that they have been immeasurably enriched by modern culture and would not want to miss it."<sup>33</sup>

In an essay first published in the *Bulletin's* inaugural issue, Sigmar Ginsburg, a member of the Jerusalem branch's advisory board, described this "process of assimilation" as an "*intra-Jewish* process of *liberation* from the mental, spiritual and emotional shackles of a medieval way of life." Even though the development "brought to light the unsightly, the unbalanced, and the absurd" it was "necessary for the liberation of the Jewish world, for making further development possible."<sup>34</sup> A 1964 essay by Georg Herlitz, the retired founding director of the Central Zionist Archives, also incorporated this narrative of

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<sup>32</sup> Robert Weltsch, Introduction in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 2 (1957), pp. ix–xxvii, here p. xxvi.

<sup>33</sup> Robert Weltsch, Introduction in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 6 (1961), pp. ix–xxv, here p. xv. To my knowledge, Weltsch did not systematically develop his own position, at least in his introductions for the *Year Book*. Possibly he revealed many of his own opinions in his concise characterization of Leo Baeck's beliefs; see Robert Weltsch, "Ten Years after the Death of Leo Baeck: Introduction to Year Book XI," in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 11 (1966), pp. vii–xxii, esp. pp. x–xii.

<sup>34</sup> Sigmar Ginsburg, "Die zweite Generation der Juden nach Moses Mendelssohn (1786–1815). Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Assimilation der Juden in Deutschland," in *Bulletin für die Mitglieder der Gesellschaft der Freunde des Leo Baeck Institut*, 1, no. 2/3 (1958), pp. 62–72, here p. 63. Many other authors agreed with Weltsch and Ginsburg's interpretation of assimilation as an unavoidable fate. In a 1966 analysis of early Prussian assimilation policies, for example, the historian Herbert A. Strauss, who was then teaching in New York, emphasized that Jews had little choice with respect to the "basic process, if not the formal structures of acculturation." "This acculturation was part of a universal process through which groups like the Jewish community, but by no means the Jews alone, were leaving the traditions of a religion-centered world and entered the secular, industrial, commercial, science-oriented rationalistic world of the 19<sup>th</sup> century." Herbert A. Strauss, "Pre-Emancipation Prussian Politics towards the Jews 1815–1847," in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 11 (1966), pp. 107–136, here p. 135.

assimilation as fate. In his reminiscences on the “Jewish historians” Isaak Markus Jost, Heinrich Graetz and Eugen Täubler, Herlitz cited Täubler’s thesis that “the formative elements in Jewish history were decisively affected by non-Jewish factors.” He agreed with Täubler that the concept of assimilation should be one of three key concepts in the writing of Jewish history. In another quote from Täubler, Herlitz concluded that assimilation was the result of an “inevitable and irresistible process ... of the association of the Jews with Gentiles in the economic and other fields,” rather than a deliberate or ideological Jewish strategy.<sup>35</sup>

Over the years, Robert Weltsch himself appears to have gradually developed an increasing appreciation for marginal forms of Jewish identity. In an early 1961 analysis, he distinguished between two completely contradictory responses to the challenge of emancipation: “On the one hand, those who turned their back on Jewish affairs and tried to mingle completely with the surrounding world, and on the other, those who were anxious to retain and even to revive Judaism as a powerful element in actual life.”<sup>36</sup> Less than a decade later, however, Weltsch agreed that the *Year Book* should also provide a forum for Jews who had, without disowning or denying their Jewish origins, conceived of themselves as “nothing but Germans.” Rather than deriding their efforts, the history of this faction should be understood as a “heart-breaking psychological tragedy.” “Enamoured with German culture and with the fatherland, to which they felt unlimited loyalty ... they were now rejected and insulted.”<sup>37</sup> According to Weltsch’s hypothesis, the history of the weaker modes of German-Jewish identity during the heyday of assimilation was particularly suited to the need of Western Diaspora Jews for guidance in the second half of the twentieth century. “From the perplexity of the alienated but still emotionally affected Jew,” Weltsch continued, “stems the characteristic quest for ‘Jewish identity,’ frequently voiced in our days.” Rather than portraying the history of German Jewry as a unique warning of the dangers of blind assimilation, their experience should be understood as one of the “most striking phenomena” of nineteenth- and twentieth-century history: “the emergence of the Europeanized Jew, assimilated in a larger or smaller degree, regarded as a Jew by the outside world and often – more or less – aware of his Jewish origin and destiny in his own life and thought.” The same questions that had worried generations of German Jews were “now often

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<sup>35</sup> Georg Herlitz, “Three Jewish Historians: Isaak Markus Jost – Heinrich Graetz – Eugen Täubler,” in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 9 (1964), pp. 69–90, here pp. 86 and 89.

<sup>36</sup> Robert Weltsch, Introduction in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 6 (1961), pp. ix–xxv, here p. xii.

<sup>37</sup> Robert Weltsch, Introduction in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 15 (1970), pp. vii–xviii, here pp. ix and x.

asked in assimilated Western circles which desire a continuation of some sort of loyalty to Judaism.”<sup>38</sup>

In contrast to the radical Zionist rhetoric of assimilationism, the more moderate view defined assimilation as inevitable fate. The question was not whether, but how and to what extent Jews should assimilate. However, the boundary between necessary and excessive assimilation remained a vexed question. The most open and frank discussions were contained in unpublished texts, again following the unwritten rule for a tactful reticence on matters of controversy. In a November 1961 letter to Hans Liebeschütz, Max Kreutzberger wrote that anyone who approved of the legal emancipation of the Jews must regard assimilation as an “objectively necessary process.” Nonetheless care had to be taken not to “exceed the boundaries in an improper or undignified fashion.” This happened, for example, when German Jewry began to “dictate to the Germans how they should conduct their national politics,” and to “disguise itself and forget its ‘Jewishness’ [*Jude-sein*].”<sup>39</sup> Despite their many differences, the first two narratives of assimilation conceived of the process as a “one-way street,” a unilinear process of cultural adaptation.<sup>40</sup> Both interpretations were grounded in a dualistic framework of opposition between the general and the specific, the majority and the minority, German and Jewish culture, or – in the words of Täubler and Weltsch – “assimilation” and “particularity,” “*Bildung*” and “Jewish knowledge.”

The third approach defining assimilation as a blessing and as a form of creative agency was less common. This narrative portrayed assimilation as a source of renewed vitality that enabled the continued existence of a Jewish identity and way of life. The 1966 essay by Gerson Cohen, chancellor of the Jewish Theological Seminary, is the most provocative example of this conception. Rather than escaping into “withdrawal and fossilization,” Jews should “take advantage of an alternative approach that sought to transform the inevitable inroads of assimilation into new sources of vitality. . . . All the great changes and developments that characterize modern Jewish history and that have made the lives of countless Jews infinitely richer and more pleasant than they had ever been previously are the effects of assimilation.”<sup>41</sup> Al-

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<sup>38</sup> Robert Weltsch, Introduction in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 12 (1967), pp. ix–xxvi, here p. xiv. See also Ernst J. Cohn, “Three Jewish Lawyers of Germany,” in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 17 (1972), pp. 155–178, esp. pp. 177–178.

<sup>39</sup> Max Kreutzberger to Hans Liebeschütz, November 2, 1961, *LBI Archives New York*, Liebeschütz’s papers.

<sup>40</sup> The formulation “one-way street” can be found in Strauss, “Pre-Emancipation Prussian Politics,” here p. 135.

<sup>41</sup> Gerson Cohen, “The Blessing of Assimilation in Jewish History,” Commencement Address, Hebrew Teachers College, Brookline, Mass., June 1966, reprinted in *idem, Jewish History and Jewish Destiny* (The Moreshet Series, vol. 15), New York 1997, pp. 145–156, here pp. 154, 155. Cohen’s argument can be found in the most unlikely



though the *Year Book* never published an equivalently radical formulation, many essays address elements of Cohen's thesis. Georg Landauer, a member of the socialist wing of German Zionism in the Weimar Republic who played an important role in the period leading up to the founding of the LBI, warned against popular and cheap ridicule of the "spirit of German Jewry." As Landauer noted in 1953, some chose to misrepresent the "productive synthesis of Jewry and world culture" as "mere 'assimilation.'" This misrepresentation, however, failed to acknowledge that "German Jewry ... had greedily swallowed" universal values in order to reproduce them "in creative form. ... These key elements of the Jewish inheritance and the newly acquired culture ... in turn, generated values that provided both the Jewish and other peoples with new, more profound and more varied impulses."<sup>42</sup> Remarkably, in an introduction to the *Year Book* written in 1960, Weltsch himself moved towards an interpretation of assimilation as a blessing and as a source of Jewish vitality. He did so in an extensive comment on a "remarkable and instructive article" by Steven Schwarzschild, citing it as evidence for his own hypothesis of a "productive combination of German and Jewish culture in German Orthodoxy." Schwarzschild, he indicated, was correct in noting that Samson Raphael Hirsch, an Orthodox rabbi, had been a "convinced and active member of the group of liberal, democratic nineteenth-century middle-class Germans." Rather than conceptualizing assimilation and Orthodoxy as contradictory, Hirsch had argued that the "modern, emancipated Jew had simultaneously to acquire all the best values and weapons of secular culture, for only with them could he defend and foster the Torah properly in the new environment in which he now lived."<sup>43</sup>

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quarters. Although Gershom Scholem rarely missed an opportunity to expose what he viewed as the "indignities, illusions, and contortions" of German-Jewish assimilation, he confessed to Theodor W. Adorno in June 1939 that "the strangest and most alluring thing is the fact that the most original products of Jewish thinking are, as it were, products of assimilation" (quoted in Steven E. Aschheim, "The Metaphysical Psychologist: On the Life and Letters of Gershom Scholem," in *Journal of Modern History*, vol. 76 (2004), pp. 903-933, here p. 915 and pp. 928-929).

<sup>42</sup> Landauer, "Über das Erbe des deutschen Judentums," pp. 1-2, here p. 2. The brief text was reprinted as the final essay in the first *Bulletin: ibid.*, 1, no. 1 (1957), pp. 47-48. Directly after the founding of the Leo Baeck Institute, Hans Tramer emphasized that Landauer's analysis "essentially" constituted "the program of the new institute": *idem*, "Die Erhaltung unseres Erbes," in *MB*, vol. 23, no. 23 (10 June 1955), p. 1. On Landauer, whom Leo Baeck and Siegfried Moses had designated to play a key role in the institute, see Christhard Hoffmann, "The Founding of the Leo Baeck Institute," and Ruth Nattermann, "Diversity within Unity: The LBI's 'Community of Founders,'" in this volume.

<sup>43</sup> Robert Weltsch, Introduction in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 5 (1960), pp. ix-xx, here p. xi. Weltsch draws upon Steven S. Schwarzschild, "Samson Raphael Hirsch - The Man and His Thought," in *Conservative Judaism*, vol. 13, no. 2 (1959), here p. 27.

Several years later, the historian and journalist Wera Lewin, who was born in Berlin in 1910, also emphasized the creative potential of assimilation. In an essay on the importance of the Stefan George circle to German-Jewish history, Lewin, by then the assistant literary editor of *Haaretz*, criticized the “Jewish nationalist” interpretation of assimilation as a betrayal of Jewry. She argued that this interpretation had failed to recognize the importance of assimilation for the “whole of Jewish history ... for the ideological foundation of Zionism and the spiritual recording of the unique life of the *Galuth* [exile], for Jewish historical research and for the tracing of irrational currents within Judaism.”<sup>44</sup> In the 1971 *Year Book*, the Israeli philosopher Mosche Schwarz contributed a reinterpretation of the importance of Reform Judaism, a current of thought that many Jewish nationalist thinkers reviled as an extreme form of assimilationism. Citing the Liberal rabbis Abraham Geiger, Salomon Formstecher and Ludwig Steinheim, Schwarz argued that it was “precisely liberal theology (the central theme of which is commonly regarded as being the integration of Judaism into general culture) that confronted general culture, not by self-effacement but by a critical examination of the nature of general culture and of its – from the Jewish point of view – problematic composition.” Even in the heyday of assimilation, Reform Jews had not renounced their religious traditions or imitated the dominant religion of Christianity. Instead, he argued that the Reform rabbis opposed the universalizing claims of Christianity: “Nothing as strong as the criticism that was heard in liberal theology against Christianity was to be found in the neo-Orthodoxy of S.R. Hirsch or, for altogether different reasons, among thinkers of religio-national sensibility, like Franz Rosenzweig or Martin Buber.”<sup>45</sup> Schwarz’s analysis contains fascinating parallels to Susannah Heschel’s study of Abraham Geiger. Even Weltsch made related arguments about the history of Zionism. In the 1974 obituary on Siegfried Moses, Weltsch emphasized that “intelligent Zionists and the main Zionist thinkers (Germany included)” had long realized that “assimilation was an unavoidable and even desirable reaction on the part of minorities living in a society in whose life and culture they were participating.” German Zionism, as well as Western European Zionism generally, were “post-assimilatory” rather than anti-assimilatory movements. Like Kurt Blumenfeld, Weltsch was convinced of the “high value of the ‘post-assimilation Zionist’ ... a man whose mind had been moulded by European (non-Jewish) influences was more likely to understand – and join – modern Zionism than someone who had never

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<sup>44</sup> Wera Lewin, “Die Bedeutung des Stefan George-Kreises für die deutsch-jüdische Geistesgeschichte,” in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 8 (1963), pp. 184–213, here p. 185.

<sup>45</sup> Moshe Schwarz, “Religious Currents and General Culture,” in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 16 (1971), p. 3–17, here p. 9; Susannah Heschel, *Abraham Geiger and the Jewish Jesus*, Chicago 1998.

moved out of the closed society into which Jews had been confined during their ghetto existence.”<sup>46</sup>

### III. The Elusive Quest for Analytic Rigor

The pluralistic coexistence of the three narratives of assimilation as treason, fate, and blessing came to an end around 1980. Many young historians affiliated with the Leo Baeck Institute rejected the concept of assimilation as analytically imprecise and historically and ideologically tainted. They proposed the alternative concept of acculturation, a notion that had gained currency in social science research on migration and ethnicity since the 1960s. This shift in perspective was closely linked to the passing of the generation of contemporary witnesses. (Robert Weltsch, who died in 1982, was the last surviving member of the founding generation who had directly participated in the Jewish debates of the interwar period.) Another factor was the increasing professionalization of the institute’s journal contributors.<sup>47</sup> The successor generation no longer felt it necessary to adhere to the tacit agreement of silent tolerance for differences of interpretation. As a result, it felt called upon to openly address the problematic character of assimilation and to historicize the debate. The new receptiveness of the historical profession and of the humanities to social scientific theories and approaches also began to influence the historiography of German Jewry. In accordance with the spirit of the social sciences, historians were permitted only to employ concepts and categories deemed free from ideological taint – categories that seemed to be analytically precise and compatible with the postulate of objectivity.

A number of these new concepts and categories were derived from the work of the American sociologist Milton M. Gordon. In *Assimilation in American Life*, Gordon argued in 1964 that it was necessary to distinguish between different dimensions within the process of assimilation. He defined cultural and habitual forms of assimilation leading to a partial adoption of the majority culture as acculturation. Institutionalized forms of interaction between the majority and the minority in clubs and societies, in friendly contact, and especially in mixed marriages were particularly important phenomena within this process of “structural assimilation.” Whereas acculturation was associated with the preservation of ethnic and religious particularity, structural

<sup>46</sup> Robert Weltsch, “Siegfried Moses: End of an Epoch,” in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 19 (1974), pp. vii–xi, here p. viii. “That Zionism,” Weltsch continued, “is ‘a gift from Europe to the Jews’, was an epigram coined by Moses Calvary, a forward-looking thinker of the same Zionist generation.”

<sup>47</sup> Data on professionalization can be found in Ismar Schorsch, “The Leo Baeck Institute: Continuity Amid Desolation,” in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 25 (1980), pp. ix–xii, esp. ix.

assimilation led to an “amalgamation” and dissolution of the minority culture into the majority. “Cultural assimilation, or acculturation, of the minority group may take place even when none of the other types of assimilation occur simultaneously or later, and this condition of ‘acculturation only’ may continue indefinitely.”<sup>48</sup>

Herbert A. Strauss, who was the founding director of the Berlin Center for Research on Antisemitism, was another key proponent of this social scientific methodology. Strauss defined “acculturation” as an “encounter of distinct cultural elements and their synthesis into a new entity within an unstable equilibrium of varying duration.” This new definition, he believed, made no value judgments regarding the relative advantages and disadvantages of the many and varied forms of cultural contact and culture transfer. Moreover, it was devoid of any suggestion of hierarchy among cultures and was free from biological analogies.<sup>49</sup> In contrast to Strauss, Shulamit Volkov believed that it was unnecessary and perhaps impossible to abandon completely the concept of assimilation. Still, Volkov was also convinced that Jewish historiography had proven the concept normatively tainted, historically confusing, and analytically dubious. The concept, she emphasized in 1983, elided the difference between “social, cultural and mental processes,” disguised “the interplay inherent in these processes,” and confused the process with its result.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Milton M. Gordon, *Assimilation in American Life: The Role of Race, Religion, and National Origins*, New York 1964, esp. pp. 71 and 76–77, here p. 77. On the reception of Gordon within Jewish historiography, see Jonathan Frankel, “Assimilation and the Jews in Nineteenth-Century Europe: Towards a New Historiography?” in Jonathan Frankel and Steven J. Zipperstein (eds.), *Assimilation and Community: The Jews in Nineteenth-Century Europe*, Cambridge 1992, pp. 1–37, esp. pp. 21–23; Marion A. Kaplan, “Tradition and Transition,” pp. 4–5; Marsha L. Rozenblit, *The Jews of Vienna: Assimilation and Identity, 1867–1914*, Albany, NY 1984, pp. 3–4; and, more generally, Russell A. Kazal, “Revisiting Assimilation: The Rise, Fall, and Reappraisal of a Concept in American Ethnic History,” in *American Historical Review*, vol. 100 (1995), pp. 437–471, esp. pp. 450–451.

<sup>49</sup> Herbert A. Strauss, “Akkulturation als Schicksal. Einleitende Bemerkungen zum Verhältnis von Juden und Umwelt,” in *idem* and Christhard Hoffmann (eds.), *Juden und Judentum in der Literatur*, Munich 1985, pp. 9–26, here p. 9. Strauss began to grapple with the concept of acculturation in the mid-1960s. See Herbert A. Strauss (ed.), *Conference on Acculturation*, New York 1965 as well as *idem*, “Changing Images of the Immigrant in the United States,” in *Amerikastudien*, vol. 21, no. 1 (1976), pp. 119–137, esp. pp. 127–130. See also Yehiel Iksar, “Zum Problem der Symbiose. Prolegomena zur deutsch-jüdischen Symbiose,” in *Bulletin des Leo Baeck Instituts*, 14, no. 51 (1975), pp. 122–165.

<sup>50</sup> Shulamit Volkov, “Jüdische Assimilation und Eigenart im Kaiserreich,” in *idem*, *Jüdisches Leben und Antisemitismus im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert*, Munich 1990, pp. 131–145, pp. 221–225, here pp. 132–133 (first published in *Geschichte und Gesellschaft*, vol. 9 (1983), pp. 331–348). In another essay, Volkov proposed understanding the relationship between assimilation and dissimilation as a dialectic, in order to explain “a

The renewed interest in social scientific approaches proved especially stimulating and productive for both women's history and gender history. Feminist historians such as Marion Kaplan rejected the concept of assimilation as excessively vague and a mask for "important emotional and behavioral factors." Kaplan was especially concerned with refuting the accusation that had been directed against Jewish women since the late nineteenth century – that they had promoted the "assimilationism" of the Jewish middle class. Employing the framework and tools of acculturation theory, she argued instead that women were "guardians of tradition." In contrast to their husbands, they had "profound ties to their ethnic and religious identity." Her path-breaking analysis of Jewish daily and family life under the Kaiserreich thus contained an unusually pointed distinction between assimilation and acculturation. Acculturation was defined as "the acceptance of many of the customs and cultural patterns of the majority of society and the simultaneous commitment ... to the preservation of ethnic and/or religious distinctiveness." Explicitly referring to the ideological debates of the late Kaiserreich, Kaplan described "the loss of a Jewish ethnic and religious identity" as a characteristic of assimilation.<sup>51</sup>

In retrospect it is clear that the debate on the conceptual utility of assimilation and acculturation after the late 1970s contributed to the development of a more nuanced and reflective use of the categories within German-Jewish historiography. Although it was not apparent to contemporary participants, we can now see that the newer and presumably more analytically precise conception of assimilation, in fact, remained indebted to an older understanding of assimilation as treason. The concept of acculturation, in turn, descended from the configuration of assimilation as blessing and as a form of creative agency. This loss of historiographical memory is indeed regrettable. Nonetheless, the importation of social scientific approaches and categories, with the tendency to systematic typology, made it possible to dis-

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major characteristic of German-Jewish social, cultural, and intellectual history: the insistence upon integration *and* identity, *Verschmelzung* and *Eigenart*." Shulamit Volkov, "The Dynamics of Dissimilation: *Ostjuden* and German Jews," in Jehuda Reinharz and Walter Schatzberg (eds.), *The Jewish Response to German Culture: From the Enlightenment to the Second World War*, Hanover, NH 1985, pp. 195–211, here p. 196. See also Sorkin, "Emancipation and Assimilation," esp. pp. 27–29.

<sup>51</sup> Kaplan, "Tradition and Transition," pp. 4–5. In light of this definition, Kaplan believed that "assimilation" was an "appropriate description for a small group of consciously and totally 'Germanized' Jews (many of whom were baptized or had intermarried) who lived in total estrangement from anything Jewish and who sought relationship only with Christians or rather Jews like themselves" (*ibid.*, p. 4). For a similar argument, see Paula Hyman, *Gender and Assimilation: Roles and Representations of Women in Modern Jewish History*, Seattle, WA 1995, as well as *idem*, "Gender and the Shaping of Modern Jewish Identities," in *Jewish Social Studies*, vol. 8 (2002), no. 2–3, pp. 153–161.

tinguish between different dimensions of assimilation and acculturation and to investigate their potentially contradictory relationship. As more dimensions of this process came to light, German-Jewish historiography discovered new topics of investigation. These included, for example, forms of Jewish sociability and Jewish daily life as a whole – a development reflected in the forthcoming *Jewish Daily Life in Germany, 1618–1945*.<sup>52</sup>

However, there was a price to be paid for this heuristic advance. By the early 1990s, the argument that acculturation was conceptually superior to assimilation threatened to solidify into a new orthodoxy. The initially productive debates of the late 1970s and of the 1980s had now ossified into the tidy formula that acculturation preserved Jewish identity whereas assimilation led to its abandonment and destruction. At the close of a nearly 200-page historiographical survey, for example, Trude Maurer concluded that the concept of assimilation was “unsuitable,” denoting a “one-sided and one-dimensional development” that did not allow for the “transformation of the traditional and the emergence of the new.” The concept of acculturation was more useful because it made apparent that German Jews were “an acculturated but not an assimilated group.”<sup>53</sup> Around the same time the five-volume anthology, *The Jewish People in America*, appeared; its editor, Henry L. Feingold, declared the “persistent tension between assimilation and group survival” to be the leitmotif of this work’s historical narrative.<sup>54</sup> In contrast, the four-volume *Modern German-Jewish History* followed Maurer’s lead. “In focusing on the redefinition of Judaism rather than its abandonment,” Michael Brenner emphasized in his introduction to the second volume of this monumental work, “the term *acculturation*, which has a less ideological connotation, seems more appropriate with respect to a majority of German Jewry.” Michael A. Meyer, the general editor, later admitted that the concept of

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<sup>52</sup> Marion A. Kaplan (ed.), *Geschichte des jüdischen Alltags in Deutschland. Vom 17. Jahrhundert bis 1945*, Munich 2003; forthcoming with OUP as *Jewish Daily Life in Germany, 1618–1945*, New York 2005.

<sup>53</sup> Trude Maurer, *Die Entwicklung der jüdischen Minderheit 1780–1933. Neuere Forschungen und offene Fragen* (Internationales Archiv für die Sozialgeschichte der Literatur, special issue no. 4), Tübingen 1992, pp. 171–173, here p. 172.

<sup>54</sup> Henry L. Feingold, Series Editor’s Foreword, in Eli Faber, *A Time for Planting: The First Migration, 1654–1820* (The Jewish People in America, vol. 1), Baltimore, MD 1992, pp. xi–xii, here p. xii; Jonathan Sarna, in contrast, recently urged scholars of American-Jewish history to refer to Americanization instead of assimilation. He argues that “‘assimilation’ has become so freighted with different meanings, modifiers, and cultural associations that for analytical purposes it has become virtually meaningless” – a surprising argument considering how ideologically charged the concept of Americanization itself has been; compare Sarna, *American Judaism: A History*, New Haven 2004, p. xix, with John Higham, “Crusade for Americanization,” in *idem*, *Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism 1860–1925* (Corrected with a new Preface), New York 1963, pp. 234–263.

acculturation was somewhat unwieldy in German. Nonetheless, he argued, it was superior to the concept of assimilation, which “described the yearning of a minority ... to be completely absorbed by the majority.”<sup>55</sup> Initially, the suggestion of referring to acculturation instead of assimilation stood at the center of an intense debate; now the suggestion had quite literally become a textbook fact.<sup>56</sup>

At first, the paradigm shift involved in the cultural studies approach that has dominated much academic historical discourse since the early 1990s had little effect on these debates. For Elisabeth Bronfen and Benjamin Marius, for example, assimilation remained a kind of *bête noire* that implied an “asymmetric relationship between clearly defined entities.” Assimilation as a concept tended to “overlook the complex process of interaction and reciprocity within cultural evolution, reducing it to an asymmetric, teleological process between two ahistorical entities.”<sup>57</sup> Zygmunt Bauman has achieved particu-

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<sup>55</sup> Michael Brenner, Introduction to Michael A. Meyer (ed.), *German-Jewish History in Modern Times*, vol. 2: *Emancipation and Acculturation 1780–1871*, New York 1997, pp. 1–3, here pp. 2f. See also Marion A. Kaplan, Introduction in *idem* (ed.), *Geschichte des jüdischen Alltags in Deutschland*, pp. 9–17, esp. p. 13. Michael A. Meyer, “Juden – Deutsche – Juden. Wandlungen des deutschen Judentums in der Neuzeit,” in Michael A. Meyer and Michael Brenner, *Deutsch-jüdische Geschichte der Neuzeit. Zwei Vorträge (LBI Information, special issue)*, Frankfurt am Main 1998, pp. 4–16, here p. 10; this may be compared to *idem*, “German Jewry’s Path to Normality and Assimilation,” in which Meyer argues that the concept of assimilation is of greater analytical value than acculturation.

<sup>56</sup> Elke-Vera Kotowski, “Wege der Akkulturation,” in Elke-Vera Kotowski, Julius H. Schoeps and Hiltrud Wallenborn (eds.), *Handbuch zur Geschichte der Juden in Europa*, vol. 2: *Religion, Alltag, Kultur*, Darmstadt 2001, pp. 353–363, pp. 354–355.

<sup>57</sup> Elisabeth Bronfen and Benjamin Marius, “Hybride Kulturen. Einleitung zur anglo-amerikanischen Multikulturalismusdebatte,” in Elisabeth Bronfen, Benjamin Marius and Therese Steffen (eds.), *Hybride Kulturen. Beiträge zur anglo-amerikanischen Multikulturalismusdebatte*, Tübingen 1997, pp. 1–29, here p. 19. As Marshall Sahlins has shown, it is now considered to be a matter of good form among anthropologists to condemn “the culture concept” as an operation of “hegemonic distinctions” because it is an “ideological trope of colonialism,” viz. an intellectual mode of control that has the effect of ‘incarcerating’ hinterland peoples in their spaces of subjection, permanently separating them from the progressive Western tradition.” In contrast, Sahlins, along with Terence Turner, has stressed the existence of good evidence for the “historical agency of indigenous people in the face of the capitalist world system – as opposed, that is, to the outlook that dehumanizes the peoples and ignores their struggles by conceiving them only as patients and objects of Western domination. One of the ironies of fashionable discourses of otherness, Turner remarks, ‘is that it tends to exaggerate the potency of Western representations to impose themselves upon the ‘others,’ dissolving their subjectivities and objectifying them as so many projections of the desiring gaze of the dominant West.’” Marshall Sahlins, “‘Sentimental Pessimism’ and Ethnographic Experience: Or, Why Culture Is Not a Disappearing ‘Object,’” in Lorraine Daston (ed.), *Biographies of Scientific Objects*, Chicago 2000, pp. 158–202, here pp. 160 and 193.

lar prominence among scholars receptive to the New Cultural History. The “policy of assimilation” reinforced a “social configuration” that was like a “trap from which there were few, if any, exits,” the sociologist has argued. “Gradually the drama of assimilation turned into a grotesque before it ended in tragedy.” For Bauman, then, the concept of assimilation was nothing but “a declaration of war on semantic ambiguity.”<sup>58</sup> And Christina von Braun has recently argued that the concept of assimilation emerging within political discourse of the early emancipatory period anticipated “many implications ... that would be important to antisemitic racist discourse after the middle of the nineteenth century.” Anyone who continues to advocate the use of assimilation as a category, it appears, runs the risk of exposing himself or herself to accusations of being in thrall to the spirit of racial antisemitism.<sup>59</sup>

#### IV. The Renaissance of “Assimilation”: Towards a Universalist-Particularist Rapprochement

The concept of assimilation continues to be subject to vocal critique and to demands that it be replaced by the concept of acculturation. Nonetheless, the concept has undergone a kind of renaissance in recent years. In particular American sociologists and political scientists have argued that it is indispensable. Provided that scholars continue to renounce the dubious cultural premises of a teleological understanding of assimilation, the concept might even pave the way for new approaches and perspectives.<sup>60</sup> For example, Ri-

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<sup>58</sup> Zygmunt Bauman, *Modernity and Ambivalence*, Cambridge 1991, esp. pp. 141–154, here p. 143 and p. 105.

<sup>59</sup> Christina von Braun, *Versuch über den Schwindel. Religion, Schrift, Bild, Geschlecht*, Zürich 2001, p. 439. Whether Braun’s argument is convincing remains to be seen. However, given that she substantiates the denotations and connotations of the concept of assimilation in the early nineteenth century with a quote from the first volume of the 1966 “Brockhaus [Encyclopedia] in 20 volumes,” this must be regarded as doubtful. (*ibid.*, p. 623, n. 12). This should not be taken to mean that the concept of assimilation did not exist in racial discourse; on the appropriation and reinterpretation of the concept in population policy and demographic research, see Alexander Pinwinkler, “‘Grenze’ als soziales Konzept: Assimilation und Dissimilation in der ‘Bevölkerungsgeschichte’ (ca. 1918–1960),” paper presented to the German Studies Association, Washington, DC, October 2004. Until the end of the nineteenth century, however, a cultural conception of the term predominated; this can be seen especially in the hermeneutic tradition of philosophy after the late eighteenth century; see Axel Horstmann, “Das Eigene und das Fremde. ‘Assimilation’ als hermeneutischer Begriff,” in Alois Wierlacher (ed.), *Kulturthema Fremdheit. Leitbegriffe und Problemfelder kulturwissenschaftlicher Fremdhheitsforschung*, Munich 1993, pp. 371–409.

<sup>60</sup> Kazal, “Revisiting Assimilation: The Rise, Fall, and Reappraisal of a Concept in American Ethnic History,” Ewa Morawska, “In Defense of the Assimilation Model,” in *Journal of American Ethnic History*, vol. 13 (1994), pp. 76–87; Marcelo Suarez-



chard Alba and Victor Nee argue for a return to the conception of assimilation advocated by the early Chicago School. Robert Park and Ernest Burgess were two Chicago School theorists who analyzed the early-twentieth-century ideology of Americanization. In 1924, they defined assimilation as a “process of interpenetration and fusion in which persons and groups acquire the memories, sentiments, and attitudes of other persons and groups and, by sharing their experience and history, are incorporated with them in a common cultural life.” Although we may well consider a “hidden teleology” to be at work in the concept, it is nevertheless striking that Park and Burgess presumed neither an asymmetrical and hierarchical relationship among individual groups, nor the existence of a majority culture or mainstream.<sup>61</sup> David N. Myers, Dipesh Chakrabarty, Michael André Bernstein and Steven E. Aschheim have all recently argued that assimilation should be understood as a mode of creative agency. Instead of a passive adoption of stable and closed cultural systems, assimilation appears as a moment of active appropriation, negotiation and translation.<sup>62</sup>

According to Myers and Bernstein, assimilation is neither a meta-concept for the writing of German-Jewish history nor a clearly defined analytical category. The genealogy of the concept should not be written as a narrative of historiographical, possibly even teleological progress from a simple and unreflective understanding to one that is complex and reflective. Thus the argument may also appear questionable that acculturation’s promise of analytical rigor allows one to evade the imprecision and ideological ballast of “assimilation” – implying thereby a comprehensive process leading to the complete erosion of Jewish identity. As Amos Funkenstein has shown, this notion mirrors the widespread tendency within Jewish historiography to acknowledge

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Orozco, “Everything You Ever Wanted to Know About Assimilation but Were Afraid to Ask,” in *Daedalus*, vol. 129, no. 4 (2000), pp. 1–30; Rogers Brubaker, “The Return of Assimilation? Changing Perspectives on Immigration and Its Sequel in France, Germany, and the United States,” in *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, vol. 24 (2001), pp. 531–548.

<sup>61</sup> Robert Ezra Park and Ernest W. Burgess, *Introduction to the Science of Sociology*, Chicago 1921, p. 735; see also Richard D. Alba and Victor Nee, *Remaking the American Mainstream: Assimilation and Contemporary Immigration*, Cambridge, MA 2003, pp. 19–20, as well as Rubén G. Rumbaut, “Assimilation of Immigrants,” in *International Encyclopedia of the Social and Behavioral Sciences*, New York 2001, pp. 845–849, esp. 845–846.

<sup>62</sup> David N. Myers, “‘The Blessings of Assimilation’ Reconsidered: An Inquiry into Jewish Cultural Studies,” in David N. Myers and William V. Rowe (eds.), *From Ghetto to Emancipation: Historical and Contemporary Reconsiderations of the Jewish Community*, Scranton, PA 1997, pp. 17–35; Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Post-colonial Thought and Historical Difference*, Princeton 2000; Steven E. Aschheim, “German History and German Jewry: Boundaries, Junctions, and Interdependence,” in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 43 (1998), pp. 315–322; Michael André Bernstein, *Foregone Conclusion: Against Apocalyptic History*, Berkeley, CA 1994.

that “Jewish culture exhibited always and everywhere formidable mimetic forces,” while continuing to differentiate between categories that he argues are actually “indistinguishable” – “essential ‘assimilation’ and accidental ‘adjustment’, the one bad and evitable, the other good and inevitable.”<sup>63</sup>

What first appears as analytic differentiation is thus ultimately grounded in an understandable wish to distinguish between desirable and undesirable variants of assimilation. A dualistic opposition between Jewish and Christian traditions, the familiar and the foreign, the particular and the universal, is questionable, especially since these dichotomies presuppose an equally holistic understanding of culture and a similarly essentialist conception of particularity and universality.<sup>64</sup> Theories that postulate the existence of transtemporal “essential elements” of the “people of Israel” [*Volkes Israel*] (Benzion Dinur) or the existence of an “inner substance” of Judaism (Hans Kohn) that could provide the historian with a standard or criteria to measure the extent of Jewish assimilation to a “foreign” culture or tradition have largely been abandoned.<sup>65</sup> The metaphor of a mainstream or a “main current” within national culture has also become increasingly fragile, as Lionel Trilling already noted in 1940. The “culture of a nation is not truly figured in the image of the current,” the Jewish American literary theorist emphasized. “A culture is not a flow, nor even a confluence; the form of its existence is struggle, or at least debate – it is nothing if not dialectical.”<sup>66</sup>

Both the debate on the difference between assimilation and acculturation and the debate on the boundary between appropriate and inappropriate forms of assimilation underscore the challenge involved in justifying and maintaining a sustainable mode of Jewish Diaspora existence in the age of the nation-state. Both debates pose the dilemma of how to articulate a speci-

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<sup>63</sup> Amos Funkenstein, “The Dialectics of Assimilation,” in *Jewish Social Studies*, vol. 1, no. 2 (1995), pp. 1–14, here p. 6.

<sup>64</sup> David Biale, Preface, “Toward a Cultural History of the Jews,” in *idem* (ed.), *Cultures of the Jews: A New History*, New York 2002, pp. xvii–xxxiii, esp. p. xix and p. xxvii; see also Sander L. Gilman, “The Frontier as a Model for Jewish History,” in Sander L. Gilman and Milton Shain (eds.), *Jewries at the Frontier: Accommodation, Identity, Conflict*, Urbana, IL 1999, pp. 1–25, esp. 5–6.

<sup>65</sup> Ben-Zion Dinur, “Die Einzigartigkeit der jüdischen Geschichte (1968),” in Brenner *et al.* (eds.), *Jüdische Geschichte lesen*, pp. 127–131; Hans Kohn, “Assimilation,” in *Jüdisches Lexikon*, vol. 1 (1927), pp. 517–523, here p. 518. In contrast, Amos Funkenstein has argued that the question of “what is original and therefore autochthonous in Jewish culture, as against what is borrowed, assimilated and therefore of alien provenance – that question is more often than not wrong and ahistorical. We rather ought to look for originality in the end product, not in the origins of its ingredients.” *Idem*, “Dialectics of Assimilation,” p. 10.

<sup>66</sup> Lionel Trilling, “Reality in America (1940)” [Review of Vernon Louis Parrington, *Main Currents in American Thought, 1923–1930*; first published in *Partisan Review*, 1940], in *idem*, *The Liberal Imagination. Essays on Literature and Society*, New York 1950, pp. 3–21, here p. 9.

ficity and legitimacy of Jewish identity that is founded on universal concepts without losing sight of the tendency of universalizing rhetoric to revert to imaginary notions of national, ethnic and religious purity.<sup>67</sup> The debate on the concepts of assimilation and acculturation that has engaged the historiography of German Jewry from its inception is now focused on the manner in which German-speaking Jewry grappled with and shaped the concepts, cultures and institutions of universalism.<sup>68</sup> Here I would argue that historians need to forgo a desire to delineate an essential core of the universal and the particular. Rather than defining generality and specificity as opposites, it would be more productive to consider their rapprochement and interdependence. Both the traces of the particular within a universalist discourse and those of the universal within a particularist discourse should be approached historically. In this way the concept of assimilation reveals the subjective features at work in the tension between the general and the specific. The three narratives of assimilation – assimilation as treason, fate, or blessing – constitute three different ways of articulating the reciprocal relationship between the universal and the particular. The historian's task is to understand the "complexities, ironies, [and] paradoxes" of this relationship rather than to cast retrospective judgment on which narrative is the most productive, plausible, and sustainable.<sup>69</sup>

In any case, it is clear that in the context of its renaissance, assimilation is no longer regarded as an analytically precise category and effective diagnostic tool. Instead, the concept and its semantic surroundings have themselves become the object of historical reflection.<sup>70</sup> This may remind us of Nietzsche's claim that "all concepts that attempt to capture the entirety of a process ... will ultimately elude definition." As Nietzsche concluded, the only thing that

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<sup>67</sup> Probably the most influential critique of modernity's propensity for homogeneity is Bauman, *Modernity and Ambivalence*; for another stimulating interpretation, see David Feldman, "Was Modernity Good for the Jews?" in Bryan Cheyette and Laura Marcus (eds.), *Modernity, Culture, and 'the Jew'*, Cambridge 1998, pp. 171–187.

<sup>68</sup> For a more detailed discussion, see Till van Rahden, "Juden und die Ambivalenzen der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft in Deutschland von 1800 bis 1933," in *Transversal. Zeitschrift des Centrums für jüdische Studien*, vol. 5, no. 1 (2004), pp. 33–61.

<sup>69</sup> Meyer, "German Jewry's Path to Normality and Assimilation."

<sup>70</sup> For a stimulating example, see Guy Miron, "Emancipation and Assimilation in the German-Jewish Discourse of the 1930s," in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 48 (2003), pp. 165–189, as well as Mitchell B. Hart, "Towards Abnormality: Assimilation and Degeneration in German-Jewish Social Thought," in Rainer Liedtke and David Rechter (eds.), *Towards Normality? Acculturation and Modern German Jewry*, Tübingen 2003 (Schriftenreihe wissenschaftlicher Abhandlungen des Leo Baeck Instituts 68), pp. 329–346; Ritchie Robertson, "Die Erneuerung des Judentums aus dem Geist der Assimilation 1900–1922," in Wolfgang Braungart, Gotthard Fuchs and Manfred Koch (eds.), *Ästhetische und religiöse Erfahrungen der Jahrhundertwenden*, vol. 2: *Um 1900*, Paderborn 1998, pp. 171–193.

can be defined is “that ... which has no history.”<sup>71</sup> The parallels to the concept of secularization, which has also fallen into disrepute in the past thirty years, are both interesting and illuminating. In 1994, the American sociologist of religion José Casanova was among the first to urge the retention of this concept – because, and not in spite of, the fact that it is “so multidimensional, so ironically reversible in its contradictory connotations, and so loaded with the wide range of meanings it has accumulated through history.” Renouncing secularization, to quote Casanova, “would lead to even greater conceptual impoverishment, for in such a case one would also lose the memory of a complex history accumulated within the concept.”<sup>72</sup> The same holds true for the concept of assimilation. Turning away from an ideal of analytical precision, reorientating our sensibilities towards a history of concepts, should indeed prove productive and rewarding. The continuing revision of “assimilation” within the historiography of the nineteenth and twentieth century is a precondition of its success. The history of the concept itself is a history of successful assimilation to changing historiographical contexts and epistemological interests.

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<sup>71</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, “Zur Genealogie der Moral,” in *idem, Kritische Studienausgabe*, ed. by Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari, vol. 5, Munich 1988, p. 317.

<sup>72</sup> José Casanova, *Public Religions in the Modern World*, Chicago 1994, p. 12. Casanova candidly admits, however, that the “concept’s very range of meanings and contradictions makes it practically non-operational for the dominant modes of empirical scientific analysis.” (*ibid.*)



## Between Fragmented Memory and “Real History” –

### The LBI’s Perception of Jewish Self-Defense against Nazi Antisemitism, 1955–1970

Jürgen Matthäus

The LBI’s contribution – through its publications, conferences and scholarly network – to the current research on Jewish self-defense against German antisemitism is as undisputed as it is visible.<sup>1</sup> Since the early 1980s, almost every issue of the institute’s yearbook has carried articles on such self-defense, particularly as part of the activities initiated by the *CV* after its 1893 founding: the “defensive struggle” – *Abwehrkampf* as referred to by the *CV*<sup>2</sup> – along with what various historians have referred to as “self-assertion” – *Selbstbehauptung*<sup>3</sup> – namely the German-Jewish fight for survival after 1933. As the long-time editor of the yearbook, Arnold Paucker served as the initiator and doyen of an entire subfield of research into resistance activities against Nazi antisemitism, in this way helping to dispel the persistent myth of a largely passive German Jewry.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> For their constructive criticism of the ideas explored in this article I thank the participants in the Tutzing LBI workshop, especially Reinhard Rürup, Arnold Paucker, Guy Miron, Christhard Hoffmann and Frank Mecklenburg. The opinions presented in this article are those of the author and do not represent the opinion of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum.

<sup>2</sup> Avraham Barkai, “*Wehr Dich!*” *Der Centralverein deutscher Staatsbürger jüdischen Glaubens (C.V.) 1893–1938*, Munich 2002, pp. 20–29.

<sup>3</sup> See, for example, Falk Pingel, *Häftlinge unter SS-Herrschaft. Widerstand, Selbstbehauptung und Vernichtung in Konzentrationslagern*, Hamburg 1978; Herbert Rosenkranz, *Verfolgung und Selbstbehauptung. Die Juden in Österreich*, Vienna 1978; Konrad Kwiet and Helmut Eschwege, *Selbstbehauptung und Widerstand. Deutsche Juden im Kampf um Existenz und Menschenwürde, 1933–1945*, Hamburg 1984.

<sup>4</sup> Arnold Paucker, *Der jüdische Abwehrkampf gegen Antisemitismus und Nationalsozialismus in den letzten Jahren der Weimarer Republik*, Hamburger Beiträge zur Zeitgeschichte, vol. 4, Hamburg 1968; *idem et al.* (eds.), *Die Juden im Nationalsozialistischen Deutschland / The Jews in Nazi Germany, 1933–1943*, Tübingen 1986 (Schriftenreihe wissenschaftlicher Abhandlungen des Leo Baeck Instituts 45); *idem*, *Deutsche Juden im Kampf um Recht und Freiheit. Studien zu Abwehr, Selbstbehauptung und Widerstand der deutschen Juden seit dem Ende des 19. Jahrhunderts*, Berlin 2003. For coverage of the subject in the *LBI Year Book*, see also the contribution by Christhard Hoffmann in this volume.

This achievement stands in marked contrast to the LBI's first years. At that time, the institute paid relatively little attention to either the struggle against German antisemitism before 1933 or the Jewish reaction to Nazi persecution.<sup>5</sup> The neglect can be explained to some degree by the rapid transformation that took place from the Weimar Republic, by way of the Nuremberg laws, to Auschwitz with its catastrophic effects on German Jews as well as Jewry as a whole. In addition, the LBI's founding generation had the tendency to perceive this era through the lens of what was regarded as objective history, that is to say with strong emphasis on records that seemed hardly available as far as German Jewry's reaction to the events after 1933 was concerned. When Leo Baeck met with Robert Weltsch and others in London on August 6, 1955, to discuss the agenda of the new institute founded in his name, he outlined his understanding of the guiding principles behind the LBI's approach towards the last phase of German-Jewish history before the Holocaust. "I understand research into the most recent past," Baeck said, "as collecting documents"; he himself might be able to contribute by, for instance, recording his involvement with German resistance circles.<sup>6</sup>

Other early pronouncements by the institute indicate a similar awareness of the complexity, or rather unwieldiness, involved in the historiographical representation of this era: under the heading "The Catastrophe," the first research program of the LBI listed work on antisemitism before 1914 and from 1918 to 1933, on the Nazi state, Jewish life in the Third Reich until 1939, and emigration.<sup>7</sup> In contrast to the approach taken later by many historians, this program did not regard Hitler's "seizure of power" as the most crucial caesura in twentieth-century German-Jewish history; instead, it attests to a broader

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<sup>5</sup> From its first issue in 1957 until 1969 (last issue in the "old series"), the *Bulletin des Leo Baeck Instituts* carried contributions on the *Kulturbund* (nos. 1 and 5), schools and doctors in the Nazi era (nos. 2/3 and 24), Jews in Upper Silesia and Danzig after 1933 (nos. 22, 30, and 34), emigration (no. 39), and Jews involved in organised relief and resistance efforts after 1933 (nos. 3, 23, and 45). For coverage of the Nazi era in the first five yearbooks, see memo by S. Adler-Rudel, March 10, 1961, *LBI Archives New York at the Jewish Museum Berlin (LBIJMB)*, MF 491, reel 26, folder 8/2.

<sup>6</sup> "Unter der Erforschung der jüngsten Vergangenheit ... verstehe ich das Sammeln von Dokumenten. Ich selbst werde vielleicht auch etwas beitragen können. Man sollte auch die Aufrufe der Reichsvertretung, die wir erlassen haben, etwa meinen Aufruf zu Rosch ha Schonoh 1936 sammeln. Ich werde vielleicht auch meine Teilnahme an der deutschen Widerstandsbewegung einmal aufzeichnen"; quoted from a note by Hans Reichmann (undated) on the August 6, 1955, meeting with Leo Baeck, in Eva G. Reichmann (ed.), *Worte des Gedenkens für Leo Baeck* (commissioned by the Council of Jews from Germany (the Council)), Heidelberg 1959, pp. 237–241, here p. 238; also in *LBI Archives New York*, AR 7161, box 1, folder 6.

<sup>7</sup> *LBI Year Book*, vol. 1 (1956), pp. xiv–xvi (Siegfried Moses). Compare an earlier undated version of the LBI's research program in the files of the American Federation of Jews from Central Europe, archive of the Zentrum für Antisemitismusforschung (*ZfA Archive*) of the Technical University, Berlin, *ZfA Archive*, AmFed Coll. 14/16.

biographical as well as generational experience of massive disruption and dramatic loss that synthesizes pre-1933 self-defense measures with Jewish efforts at self-assertion under the Nazis.<sup>8</sup> The LBI not only found it difficult to reconcile scholarship with memory, but also wavered in its assessment of the feasibility of researching Jewish self-defense. It was due to a combination of external factors and internal changes, the latter culminating in the shift of editorship of the yearbook from Robert Weltsch to Arnold Paucker in 1970, that the issue became more prominent. To understand why the Nazi period ranked low on the LBI’s historical agenda, we have to look beyond the institute’s publication output to the broader context of its emergence and early activities.

### Founding Assumptions

As outlined by Robert Weltsch, the founders of the Leo Baeck Institute understood its primary aim to be scholarly research as the basis for a “monumental history of German Jewry.”<sup>9</sup> When it came to the recent past, the building blocks as well as the architects seemed right at hand. Hans Reichmann, vice president of the Council of Jews from Germany – the organization that founded the LBI – and an official in a number of other postwar Jewish organizations, played an important role in the early activities of the institute. In the 1920s and early 1930s, Reichmann had been one of the key figures in the fight against Nazi antisemitism – part of a group of young, activist *CV* leaders – before fleeing Germany after his release from the Sachsenhausen concentration camp in the wake of “*Kristallnacht*.”<sup>10</sup> Despite resistance from *CV* traditionalists who favored educating the general public and high-level initiatives vis-à-vis the German state while dissociating themselves from the Zionist cause and the German Left, this group was pushing in

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<sup>8</sup> The differing concepts of caesura versus continuity held among German Jews during the Nazi era and after 1945 have not been thoroughly researched. Due to its focus on a “history of perception” rather than a “history of events,” this article uses the term “Jewish self-defense” to reflect the perception held by the LBI founders of a coherent era spanning several decades, as opposed to that of a difference between pre-1933 “defensive action” and subsequent “self assertion” or “resistance.” As will be shown, this perception did not prevent differences of opinion regarding the assessment of actions taken by German-Jewish factions prior to and after 1933.

<sup>9</sup> Robert Weltsch during LBI board meeting, December 1, 1955, *LBIJMB*, MF 491, reel 5, folder 2/12.

<sup>10</sup> For biographical sketches of Reichmann see Council of Jews from Germany (eds.), *Zum Gedenken an Hans Reichmann. 9. März 1900 – 24. Mai 1964*, London 1964, and the Introduction by Michael Wildt to Hans Reichmann, *Deutscher Bürger und verfolgter Jude. Novemberpogrom und KZ Sachsenhausen 1937 bis 1939*, Munich 1998, pp. 1–37.



the last Weimar years for direct action against the rising Nazi tide, in the form of counterpropaganda with mass appeal. In the fall of 1929, their efforts led to the creation of the “*Büro Wilhelmstrasse*,” a small center organized by the *CV* to systematically collect material on Hitler’s party for use against those who had created it. In the course of their work, Reichmann and his colleagues gathered more and deeper insight into the Nazi movement, its strategy and adherents than any other group in the late Weimar era.<sup>11</sup>

The failure of German elites to defend democracy and its values shattered the hopes of the Jewish activists and their supporters; in retrospect, even in its most radical form the *CV*’s struggle against German antisemitism in the immediate run-up to Hitler’s accession to power appears utterly inefficient and futile – as Caesar Aronsfeld put it, a “pill against earthquakes.”<sup>12</sup> Within the ranks of the LBI’s founding generation, Reichmann’s later activities on behalf of the remnants of German Jewry in exile guaranteed him a secure yet marginal position, but a different group identity and biographical orientation shaped the LBI’s perception of this era. Many of the LBI’s founders had a Zionist background with a more or less pronounced bias against the “assimilationist” majority represented by the *CV*; they had held prominent positions in German-Jewish organizational life, most notably in the *Zionistische Vereinigung für Deutschland (ZVfD)*, before taking on a leading role in the postwar framework of councils and associations from which the LBI emerged.<sup>13</sup>

In view of the forced severing of German Jewry’s ties to *Deutschtum*, ties representing one of the key concepts in the *CV*’s ideology, it is not surprising that Zionist interpretations generally dominated post-1933 intra-Jewish discourse. A feeling of vindication accompanying the immediate Zionist response to the Nazi takeover was most eloquently articulated in Robert Weltsch’s influential article “*Tragt ihn mit Stolz, den gelben Fleck*” (“Wear it with Pride, the Jewish Patch”).<sup>14</sup> Nevertheless, as the Nazi anti-Jewish measures unfolded, the early Zionist preference for “preaching heroism”<sup>15</sup> (Weltsch’s

<sup>11</sup> See Avraham Barkai, “*Wehr Dich!*” for material on the *CV*’s “defensive action” before 1933; see also Walter Gyßling, *Mein Leben in Deutschland vor und nach 1933 und Der Anti-Nazi. Handbuch im Kampf gegen die NSDAP*, ed. and intr. by Leonidas E. Hill, Bremen 2003.

<sup>12</sup> Caesar C. Aronsfeld, “Rufer in der Wüste,” in *Zum Gedenken an Hans Reichmann*, p. 47. Aronsfeld was the editor of the *Wiener Library Bulletin* between 1947 and 1966: see Ben Barkow, *Alfred Wiener and the Making of the Holocaust Library*, London and Portland, OR 1997, pp. 113–115.

<sup>13</sup> In 1966, Robert Weltsch noted that the LBI had been dominated by a small Zionist circle (Moses, Tramer, Adler-Rudel, Kreutzberger, Gruenewald, Weltsch) and had failed to make the circle more representative: Weltsch to Adler-Rudel, April 6, 1966; *idem* to Kreutzberger, April 7, 1966, *LBIJMB*, MF 491, reel 5, folder 2/13.

<sup>14</sup> Robert Weltsch, “*Tragt ihn mit Stolz, den gelben Fleck*,” in *Jüdische Rundschau*, April 4, 1933.

<sup>15</sup> Robert Weltsch in *Mitteilungsblatt. Wochenzeitung des Irgun Olej Merkaz Europa*, April 5, 1963.

self-critical term thirty years later) became as outdated as the world-view of the *CV*: while that organization had to confront the necessity of organizing emigration, the Zionists had to assist those Jews who for whatever reason would not or could not leave the Reich. Hence under Nazi persecution, rivalries between the main German-Jewish factions gradually lost their meaning. In September 1933 the leading organizations joined ranks to form the *Reichsvertretung der deutschen Juden*; in the wake of the November 1938 pogroms, all Jewish organizations were disbanded and forced into the *Reichsvereinigung der Juden in Deutschland*, set up by Heydrich's security police to help administer what turned out to be the liquidation of German Jewry.

Leo Baeck's position as unrivalled head of both the *Reichsvertretung* and *Reichsvereinigung* and his international status after the war contributed greatly towards reconciling the formerly rival camps, yet it could not prevent established prejudices from re-emerging. After 1945, the attitudes displayed by adherents of the *CV* and its ideology remained defensive; not only the rationale behind their activities, but their entire approach towards Jewish life in Germany, seemed disqualified, fostering a tendency to close ranks vis-à-vis other Jewish groups and to criticize Zionists (if only internally) for being over-nationalistic.<sup>16</sup> In the minds of their opponents, “assimilationism” had lost little of its negative connotations. Even in the early 1960s, at a time when the LBI was reconsidering its research agenda, judgments about the inherent futility of the *CV*'s efforts at Jewish self-defense – efforts that, as Siegfried Moses stated in his obituary for Hans Reichmann, “given the state of things could not meet with success” – were mainly based on preconceived notions, not on a thorough evaluation of the historical evidence.<sup>17</sup>

Ten years after the end of the war, this evidence was anything but transparent. Compared to the massive Nazi documentation that could be unearthed by the Allies, sources of German-Jewish provenance were almost absent. The *CV* archives, confiscated by Himmler's SS and policemen in late 1938, were believed to have perished (they would in fact resurface in a Moscow archive in the early 1990s);<sup>18</sup> the records of the “*Büro Wilhelmstrasse*” had

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<sup>16</sup> After the war, many former *CV* officials and like-minded German Jews found support and opportunities for reminiscing inside German-Jewish student fraternities in exile, e.g. the American Jewish KC (Kartell-Convent der Verbindungen deutscher Studenten jüdischen Glaubens) fraternity: for the largely uncritical reflections on the pre-1933 orientation of these fraternities, see, for example, Hermann L. Berlak, “Hatten wir Unrecht?” *American Jewish KC Fraternity*, October 23, 1946, pp. 32f., and Eva G. Reichmann, “Nochmals: ‘Hatten wir Unrecht,’” *ibid.*, October 23, 1956, pp. 25f., *LBIJMB*, AR 7108. See also Barkai, “*Wehr Dich!*” pp. 373–374; Adolph Asch, *Geschichte des K.C. im Lichte der deutschen kulturellen und politischen Entwicklung*, London 1964.

<sup>17</sup> Siegfried Moses, “Gesinnung,” in *Zum Gedenken an Hans Reichmann*, p. 14.

<sup>18</sup> See Avraham Barkai, “Der *CV* im Jahre 1933. Neu aufgefundene Dokumente im Moskauer ‘Sonderarchiv,’” in *Tel Aviver Jahrbuch für deutsche Geschichte*, vol. 23

been destroyed to prevent their falling into the hands of the Nazi authorities. Surviving Nazi era documents generated by German-Jewish organizations conveyed little concerning the aims, hopes, and frustrations of their authors. Friedrich Brodnitz, a former *CV* official who wrote an early description of the *Reichsvertretung*, still claimed in 1985 that if one wished to discover the general mood of the time, this could not be found in documents but only in the recollections of those who had lived through it.<sup>19</sup> Some prominent representatives of the “assimilationist” camp such as Ernst Herzfeld – the last head of the *CV*, already responsible at the end of the war for a rich account of the 1933–1938 period – offered oral or written reminiscences partly compensating for the absent organizational sources.<sup>20</sup> Still, in comparison to the results of collecting efforts made by East European Holocaust survivor associations after 1945, in the mid-1950s testimony by German Jews on Jewish self-defense and the Nazi era was sparse and fragmentary.<sup>21</sup>

Among written testimonies by former *CV* officials, Hans Reichmann’s recollections are outstanding. After his release from Sachsenhausen in early 1939, Reichmann and his wife Eva, another prominent official in the organization, emigrated to Britain where he recorded his experiences in Sachsenhausen in a 340-page manuscript “in complete truth as a kind of life confession for myself.”<sup>22</sup> In 1939–40, he contributed a 136-page account to an essay contest sponsored by Harvard University; this account focused less on his Sachsenhausen ordeal than on his work for the *CV* until his arrest in November 1938.<sup>23</sup> He indicated that he had considered publishing his earlier manuscript but soon changed his mind, continuing to decline sharing his “life con-

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(1994), pp. 233–246; *idem*, “The *CV* Archives in Moscow: A Reassessment” in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 45 (2000), pp. 163–172.

<sup>19</sup> Barkai, “*Wehr Dich!*” pp. 316–317. See also Friedrich S. Brodnitz, *Die Reichsvertretung der deutschen Juden*, in Hans Tramer (ed.), *In zwei Welten. Siegfried Moses zum 75. Geburtstag*, Tel Aviv 1962, pp. 106–113.

<sup>20</sup> Ernst Herzfeld, “Meine letzten Jahre in Deutschland 1933–1938,” written in Israel c. 1944–45, *Yad Vashem Archives (YVA)*, 01/8; also in Memoir Collection, reel 33, *LBI Archives New York* and *LBIJMB*. Extracts published in K.J. Ball-Kaduri, *Das Leben der Juden in Deutschland 1933*, Frankfurt 1963, pp. 41–42, 137–146, and Monika Richarz (ed.), *Jüdisches Leben in Deutschland. Selbstzeugnisse zur Sozialgeschichte 1918–1945*, Stuttgart 1982, pp. 301–311. See also the contributions in the journal *American Jewish KC Fraternity*, for example, F. Goldschmidt, “Erinnerungen an die Arbeit der Reichsvertretung,” October 23, 1956, pp. 19f., *LBIJMB*, AR 7108.

<sup>21</sup> Reporting on the work of the Central Historical Commission under the Central Committee of Liberated Jews in the U.S. Zone in 1949, the *Wiener Library Bulletin (WLB)*, vol. 3, no. 2 (March 1949), p. 15 noted that its fifty local branches had collected more than 2,500 testimonies.

<sup>22</sup> Published in Reichmann, *Deutscher Bürger*, quote p. 45.

<sup>23</sup> Hans Sachs [Hans Reichmann], “Mein Leben in Deutschland vor und nach dem 30. Januar 1933,” *LBIJMB*, MMII, reel 42 (ME 1230).

fession” with anyone until his death in 1964.<sup>24</sup> It took a long time until Reichmann’s manuscripts became fully available to a wider audience – a phenomenon that also applies to other former participants in the CV’s “defensive struggle.”<sup>25</sup>

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Holocaust testimony, Lawrence Langer has stressed, is not equal to a series of links in a coherent chain, but rather to “a cycle of sparks erupting unpredictably from a darkened landscape.”<sup>26</sup> Conveying a deep sense of loss, disorientation, and despair that could not be mitigated by any later events, Reichmann’s account remains anecdotal in the truest sense of the word: an isolated story about typical though not necessarily verifiable aspects of the past. Despite differences in outlook, the same anecdotal approach towards the Nazi era can be found in the postwar statements by other German-Jewish officials, Leo Baeck being the most prominent.<sup>27</sup> Their own disparate, contradictory, and incoherent recollections seemed to fit neither into the overall process of German-Jewish history nor into that of Jewish history in its broader sweep. At the same time, they saw themselves confronted with the expectation of both fellow-survivors, as conveyed by various Jewish groups, and the general public that they make sense of it all, or – to use a phrase Saul Friedländer has taken over from Eric Hobsbawm – that they illuminate the “twilight zone between history and memory.”<sup>28</sup> Within this “twilight zone” there was room for speculation and myth making, most notably regarding cooperation between German-Jewish officials and the Nazi authorities. Hence while Baeck himself did not submit his recollections on the Nazi era to paper, others did so, often with little historiographical care.<sup>29</sup> H.G. Adler recalls postwar “legends” surrounding Baeck’s time in Theresienstadt that Baeck, instead of confronting, responded to by indicating that no one would properly understand whatever he said in any case.<sup>30</sup> As can be seen from the

<sup>24</sup> See Robert Weltsch, “Bewährung in seelischer Not” in *Zum Gedenken an Hans Reichmann*, pp. 22–26, here p. 23.

<sup>25</sup> Like Reichmann, Walter Gyßling contributed to the Harvard essay contest (Gyßling, *Mein Leben*, p. 42); both accounts remained unpublished until recently.

<sup>26</sup> Lawrence Langer, *Preempting the Holocaust*, New Haven and London 1998, pp. 43–58, here p. 54.

<sup>27</sup> See Barkai, “*Wehr Dich!*” p. 317.

<sup>28</sup> Saul Friedländer, *Memory, History, and the Extermination of the Jews of Europe*, Bloomington, IN 1993, p. vii.

<sup>29</sup> See for example Baeck’s “account” drawn from “a series of interviews” and presented in direct speech by Eric H. Boehm, *We Survived: 14 Histories of the Hidden and Hunted of Nazi Germany*, Santa Barbara 1985 (1949), pp. 284–298.

<sup>30</sup> H.G. Adler, “Leo Baeck in Theresienstadt,” in Eva G. Reichmann (ed.), *Worte des Gedenkens*, pp. 61–62.

debates regarding Baeck's contacts with German resistance circles and, especially, the origins of his manuscript on *Die Rechtsstellung der Juden in Europa*, Baeck would be proved correct in this regard, even in those cases where he provided testimonial documentation.<sup>31</sup>

Elements of anecdotal memory form the building blocks of a narrative aptly summarized by the title of Ernst Simon's book *Aufbau im Untergang* ("construction in decline"), published in 1959 under the aegis of the LBI: the account of the organized efforts to protect and preserve German-Jewish life in the face of Nazi persecution.<sup>32</sup> The early identification of the *Reichsvertretung* as a focus for LBI activities can be seen as evidence of the strength of such a perception of the organization's role; Max Kreuzberger, director of the New York LBI and himself involved in the work of the *Reichsvertretung* until his emigration in 1935, took the initiative in stressing the need to record the achievements of this first German-Jewish umbrella organization.<sup>33</sup> There can be no doubt that the concept of "construction in decline" contains important elements of historical truth, especially in its perception of a gradual, unforeseeable and unsystematic pattern of persecution. As far as the situation within Germany's Jewish community in this period is concerned, however, the concept tends towards the simplistic in its glossing over of disagreements, rivalries and disparate experiences behind a shared fate; likewise, it is inadequate in respect of actual events and their social dimensions, particularly in the case of "ordinary" German Jews. The similarities in accounts provided by Zionists and "assimilationists" are not surprising given the fact that weaving fragmented memory into a coherent narrative – one centered on coordinated responses to the Nazi threat – provided an opening to the lowest common denominator shared by different ideological orientations, hence to integrating at least parts of their experience into a shared memorial landscape.

### Institutional Assets

At the time of the LBI's founding, public perception of the history of the Nazi era had already been shaped, less so by scholarship than by postwar events and institutional activities. Among the oldest and most active institutions to exert such an influence was the Wiener Library, led until 1963 by

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<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 238–240; see Fritz Backhaus and Martin Liepach, "Leo Baecks Manuskript über die 'Rechtsstellung der Juden in Europa,'" in *Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft*, vol. 50, no. 1 (2002), pp. 55–71.

<sup>32</sup> Ernst Simon, *Aufbau im Untergang. Jüdische Erwachsenenbildung im nationalsozialistischen Deutschland als geistiger Widerstand*, Tübingen 1959 (Schriftenreihe wissenschaftlicher Abhandlungen des Leo Baeck Institutes 2).

<sup>33</sup> See Kreuzberger to Weltsch, July 12 and July 26, 1955, *LBIJMB*, MF 491, folder 2/12.

former *CV* official Alfred Wiener, a sharp critic of Zionism and lifelong friend of Hans Reichmann, with whom he had organized the "*Büro Wilhelmstrasse*" before he left Germany in 1933.<sup>34</sup> In exile (first in Holland and in Britain since 1939) Wiener continued to collect material documenting Nazi anti-Jewish actions; this was used in legal proceedings after the war, at the same time serving as the basis for his library. Starting with its inception in 1946, the library tried to increase its visibility and secure outside funding through publication of the *Wiener Library Bulletin*. Over the following years, Wiener collected eyewitness accounts of Nazi persecution; with the appointment of the sociologist Eva G. Reichmann, a Wiener Library board member since 1946, as head of the library's research department in the mid 1950s, such efforts would become more systematic.<sup>35</sup>

If the experience of the Wiener Library contained a lesson for the LBI in its early years, the lesson was negative in nature: despite the fact that until his death in 1963 Hans Reichmann, director of the United Restitution Organization,<sup>36</sup> was a close friend and supporter of the library, it was incapable of securing its financial existence through its scholarly activities, and largely failed to stimulate empirical historical research. This assessment was confirmed by the library itself in the *Bulletin's* twentieth anniversary issue, its lead article being entitled "Twenty Testing Years" and calling for the institution to receive enough backing "to make its contribution to planned research."<sup>37</sup> While the financially potent Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany had agreed in the 1950s to incorporate the Wiener Library into the circle of its funding recipients, together with *Yad Vashem* in Jerusalem, the YIVO Institute in New York, and the *Centre de Documentation Juive Contemporaine* in Paris, the material results of this step were meager. According to Walter Laqueur, director of the library between 1964 and 1991, the reasons for this were political, "a German-Jewish institution" always being "slightly suspect in view of the traditional antagonism towards German Jewry among those of East European background."<sup>38</sup>

The precarious and largely isolated existence of the Wiener Library may have furnished the LBI founders with a strong sense that there was little room for Holocaust-related historical research undertaken from the perspective of

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<sup>34</sup> According to Barkow, *Wiener*, p. 54, Wiener remained critical to the Büro's "aggressive attitude on the question of propaganda" and favored a more traditional approach. On Wiener see also Barkai, "*Wehr Dich!*" pp. 227–227, 458.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 107, 118–123.

<sup>36</sup> On Reichmann's work for the URO, see the contribution by Norman Bentwich in *Zum Gedenken an Hans Reichmann*, p. 42–46.

<sup>37</sup> *WLB*, vol. 8, no. 1–2, 1954, p. 1.

<sup>38</sup> W. Laqueur, "Dr. Wiener and his Library," *WLB* (special issue) 1983, quoted from Barkow, *Wiener*, p. 129.

German-Jewish exiles.<sup>39</sup> The Council of Jews from Germany saw itself as the sole legitimate representative of German Jews; early postwar efforts by Jews living in Germany to establish officially recognized community organizations and receive compensation payments were criticized by the LBI as strongly as any action by Jewish organizations in America or Israel that smacked of slighting German exiles.<sup>40</sup> Those leaders of the LBI who had previously been involved in work for the Council feared they had insufficient experience in – as Robert Weltsch put it – “Jewish ‘*Weltpolitik*’” to confront an “emotional dislike of German Jews” from other Jewish organizations and to prevail in the “brutal fight for power and money.”<sup>41</sup> Israel’s *Yad Vashem* (founded in 1953) figured prominently in the LBI’s plans, if only because funding from Claims Conference sources depended on a working agreement with the Israeli institution.<sup>42</sup> The parameters of the scholarly responsibilities to be held by each institution remained vague, leading Robert Weltsch to anticipate, in 1955, “difficulties which will especially ensue in Jerusalem due to competition with others”;<sup>43</sup> however, in 1955–56 agreement was reached between *Yad Vashem* and the LBI that the institute would refrain from dealing with topics such as Nazi persecution as well as from creating its own archive on the post-1933 years.<sup>44</sup>

Despite this agreement, archival overlap could not be avoided. *Yad Vashem*, the Wiener Library, and Columbia University’s Institute of Social Research already had collections of testimonies related to Jewish self-defense before and after 1933 when the LBI began its own efforts in this realm in the late

<sup>39</sup> In mid-1955 with his attempts to secure the future of his library having failed, Alfred Wiener suspected “plans of *Yad Vashem* and *YIVO* for ‘world domination’” (Barkow, *Wiener*, p. 131). For the Wiener Library’s cooperation with the Germania Judaica library in Cologne since the late 1950s, see *ibid.*, p. 138. Oddly, it appears from Barkow’s book as if the Wiener Library and the LBI London had little to do with each other until the early 1970s despite the fact that they occupied the same building (see *ibid.*, p. 163).

<sup>40</sup> For Britain see Marion Berghan, *Continental Britons: German-Jewish Refugees from Nazi Germany*, Oxford and Berg 1988; Werner E. Mosse (ed.), *Second Chance. Two Centuries of German-speaking Jews in the United Kingdom*, Tübingen 1991 (Schriftenreihe wissenschaftlicher Abhandlungen des Leo Baeck Institutes 48); for the “residents,” see Michael Brenner, *After the Holocaust: Rebuilding Jewish Lives in Postwar Germany*, Princeton, NJ 1997.

<sup>41</sup> Weltsch to Moses, April 15, 1954, *LBIJMB*, MF 491, reel 2, folder 1/40.

<sup>42</sup> See Minutes of the joint meeting of the research and publication and administrative boards of the LBI, July 17, 1955, *ZfA Archive*, AmFed Coll. 14/16; Gruenewald to Moses, December 6, 1954, *ZfA Archive*, AmFed Coll. 17/10; Reichmann to Gruenewald, February 28, 1955, *ZfA Archive*, AmFed Coll. 16/27.

<sup>43</sup> Weltsch to Kreutzberger, July 19, 1955, *LBIJMB*, MF 491, reel 5, folder 2/12.

<sup>44</sup> K. J. Ball-Kaduri to LBI, September 3, 1964, with memorandum “Das LBI. Eine grundsätzliche Auseinandersetzung,” *LBI London*, file “Correspondence re Yearbook: not resulting in contributions A–J.” I am grateful to Christhard Hoffmann for a copy of material from LBI London.

1950s, in conjunction with Kreutzberger's project on the "*Reichsvertretung*."<sup>45</sup> Robert Weltsch did his best to convince eyewitnesses to contribute their recollections to the LBI's yearbook and other publications; at the same time he confronted the limits of internal consensus when raising issues of organizational history.<sup>46</sup> The problem persisted of how collected material should be properly utilized. Simply publishing compilations of sources on the Nazi persecution of the Jews seemed an inadequate solution, partly because there was already a substantial amount of such documentation, from the published series of documents from the Nuremberg trial to works by Léon Poliakov, Joseph Wulf and others;<sup>47</sup> and partly because of a sense that because "raw" documentary evidence did not really speak for itself, rather requiring contextualization and analysis to serve a useful historiographical purpose, offering the evidence without the analysis was to be avoided. Hence in a review in the *Wiener Library Bulletin* of one of the collections published by Poliakov and Wulf, German-Jewish historian Hans Liebeschütz questioned whether "the selection here presented, impressive as it is, is really the best way for the political education of the contemporary world."<sup>48</sup>

While intra-organizational factors did play their role, the reluctance of both the LBI's historians and others to deal with the Nazi era was thus also the outcome of a tension between the appeal by historians to draw "lessons from the past" and their reluctance to provide the groundwork. In face of the ample documentation of Nazi persecution of the Jews, historical discussions of the topic often seemed characterized by, as a *Bulletin* article put it in 1953, "inadequate familiarity with the sources" and a lack of "desire for scientific research"; even the "systematic exploitation" of the Wiener Library's own collection had yet to take place.<sup>49</sup> That year, the decade's standard reference work on the Holocaust was published: Gerald Reitlinger's *The Final Solution: The Attempt to Exterminate the Jews of Europe 1939–1945*. Focusing mainly on Nazi anti-Jewish policies and their implementation and based on Wiener Li-

<sup>45</sup> Kreutzberger to Weltsch, July 26, 1955, *LBIJMB*, MF 491, reel 5, folder 2/12.

<sup>46</sup> See, for example, Weltsch to B. Weil, March 13, 1958, *LBIJMB*, MF 516, folder 19.

<sup>47</sup> L. Poliakov, J. Wulf, *Das Dritte Reich und die Juden. Dokumente und Aufsätze*, Berlin 1955; *idem*, *Das Dritte Reich und seine Diener. Dokumente*, Berlin 1956; *idem*, *Das Dritte Reich und seine Denker, Dokumente*, Berlin 1959. The Wiener Library also produced compilations based on Nazi publications and other sources (see *WLB*, vol. 10, no. 1–2, 1956, p. 49; Barkow, *Wiener*, pp. 196–206).

<sup>48</sup> *WLB*, vol. 10, no. 1–2, 1956, p. 8 (review of *Das Dritte Reich und die Juden*); see also Hans Liebeschütz, "Objektivität und Werturteil," in *In zwei Welten*, pp. 607–626, which contains a plea for a "viewing together [*Zusammensehen*] of German and Jewish history."

<sup>49</sup> "Let There be Research," in *WLB*, vol. 7, no. 3–4, 1953, p. 13 (also quoted in Barkow, *Wiener*, pp. 116–117). One of the earliest books on the Holocaust was Léon Poliakov's *Bréviaire de la haine*, published in 1951.



brary material, the monograph contained very little on the Jewish reaction and next to nothing on pre-1933 events. In addition, like most highly successful books it discouraged scholars and publishers from further elaborating on a topic that seemed already sufficiently covered.<sup>50</sup>

As for Jewish self-defense, not even scholars once engaged heavily in it now confronted the subject. In her widely acclaimed book *Hostages of Civilization* published in 1956, Eva Reichmann explored the historical sources of German antisemitism, yet offered no word on the Jewish response to it either before or after 1933. The omission from the book of any account of her work and that of her husband within the *CV* resulted largely from her stated intention of providing a “book designed to lift personal experience to the level of academic objectivity,” an intention that reflected more than a single individual’s perspective.<sup>51</sup> Indeed, any Jewish scholar treating German antisemitism or Nazi genocide who wished to be taken seriously within the academic community was under severe pressure to avoid even a semblance of partiality; with their call for detached analysis, German postwar historians clearly added to this pressure. For both German-Jewish and German non-Jewish historians, although for different reasons, the insistence on objectivity stemmed from a need to avoid confronting events that seemed too close, too painful and divisive. The result of this shared need was a discourse that, as can be seen from the positive reception of Eva Reichmann’s book in Germany, reflected a shared yet limited understanding of the preconditions and main features of the Nazi system.<sup>52</sup> At the same time, it can be assumed that Hans Liebeschütz, Eva Reichmann and other German-Jewish scholars perceived academic detachment as a means to sustain a historical narrative compatible with personal memory, if only by transcending the latter through abstraction and didactic import.

In view of the LBI’s vulnerability to both political realities and the historiographical limits characterizing the 1950s, its early record of achievements was nevertheless disappointing, particularly in regards to what was understood to be the final chapter of German-Jewish history. While the yearbook was now being published, many contributions were, as Robert Weltsch confided in his private letters, not up to standard; furthermore, the LBI’s output seemed

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<sup>50</sup> Gerald Reitlinger, *The Final Solution: The Attempt to Exterminate the Jews of Europe 1939–1945*, London 1953.

<sup>51</sup> Eva G. Reichmann, *Die Flucht in den Hass. Die Ursachen der deutschen Judenkatastrophe*, Frankfurt 1956, p. 7 (Foreword to the German edition).

<sup>52</sup> Nicolas Berg, *Der Holocaust und die westdeutschen Historiker. Erforschung und Erinnerung*, Göttingen 2003, provides an in-depth analysis of the tension between remembrance and historiographic analysis, including a reassessment of Joseph Wulf’s work and its perception by German historians, but omits the intra-Jewish dimension of the subject. See also Dan Michman, *Holocaust Historiography: A Jewish Perspective*, London 2003.

feeble, work proceeded haphazardly, and no plan existed for the future.<sup>53</sup> Internal rivalries added to Weltsch’s sense of failure: the New York office under Kreutzberger tended to keep all available funding to itself, which threatened elimination of the London office, while neglecting substantive work (the *Reichsvertretung* project was faltering); the LBI’s management was generally weak, and “steadfast Zionists” like Scholem were opposed to the arrival of newcomers who had not already been involved in Jewish institutional politics in Germany.<sup>54</sup> Weltsch’s frustrations while directing the London office’s day-to-day affairs led to his appointment of Arnold Paucker as director in 1959; Paucker, Weltsch hoped, would bring “a new spirit” to the institute. Such a fresh start was sorely needed in Weltsch’s mind as, he explained, one never really knew where old hands like Hans Reichmann and Alfred Wiener stood, “despite all their fine words.”<sup>55</sup> Other members of the LBI’s first generation voiced their own criticism: in late 1957 Kurt Blumenfeld wrote to Weltsch that while someday a historian might record the history of German Jewry’s liquidation, it should not be Weltsch, as he was too much at home in an “atmosphere of passive heroism, with the element of *au goût* belonging to it.”<sup>56</sup> Blumenfeld himself saw the institute’s task as the collection of documentation on German Jewry until 1933.<sup>57</sup>

### Internal Reorientation

In 1961, the LBI’s research agenda began to move towards closer scrutiny of German-Jewish history before and during the Nazi era. Internal and external factors prompted this development. On March 16, 1961, during an LBI Jerusalem board meeting to discuss a “history of the years 1933 to 1940,” Schalom

<sup>53</sup> Weltsch to Kreutzberger, April 5, 1956; *idem* to Tramer, May 8, 1956, *LBIJMB*, MF 491, reel 5, folder 2/12.

<sup>54</sup> Weltsch to Tramer, March 11, 1958; *idem* to H. Kohn, April 6, 1958, *LBIJMB*, MF 491, reel 5, folder 2/12.

<sup>55</sup> Weltsch to Adler-Rudel, July 6, 1959, *LBIJMB*, MF 491, reel 5, folder 2/12. Weltsch remained a critic of the LBI’s achievements, including his own, until the end of his life (*idem* to Tramer, April 13, 1972, *LBIJMB*, MF 491, reel 3, folder 1/52; *idem* to S. Adler-Rudel, April 5, 1966; *idem* to S. Adler-Rudel, April 6, 1966; *idem* to Kreutzberger, April 7, 1966, *LBIJMB*, MF 491, reel 5, folder 2/13.).

<sup>56</sup> Translator’s note: the French culinary phrase *au goût* is used mainly in the context of game that is slightly “off” or beginning to decay (what the English call “high”), hence considered at its most delicious. The phrase would have been quite familiar among bourgeois Germans Jews born in the early twentieth century.

<sup>57</sup> Blumenfeld to Weltsch, December 31, 1957, *LBIJMB*, MF 491, reel 5, folder 2/12. For Blumenfeld’s critical assessment of the LBI and some of its leading functionaries (Gruenewald, Kreutzberger), which he shared with Hannah Arendt, see Hannah Arendt, Kurt Blumenfeld, “... *in keinem Besitz verwurzelt.*” *Die Korrespondenz*, ed. by Ingeborg Nordmann and Iris Pilling, Hamburg 1995, pp. 145–146, 160–163.

Adler-Rudel, director of the Jerusalem office, raised the question of whether the institute should aim at producing a comprehensive study of the *Reichsvertretung* or several more specialized publications instead.<sup>58</sup> Clearly, the broader historical issues surrounding the *Reichsvertretung* – issues unfolding over an expanded time-line – needed consideration. As Adler-Rudel pointed out, *Yad Vashem* had basically neglected any comprehensive research on German Jewry in the Nazi period, so an initiative by the LBI in this respect would not violate the informal agreement entered into at the time of its founding. More importantly, German historians had begun to display their own interest in the topic; it was thus incumbent on the LBI to cover as much ground as it could, “since our description will necessarily be entirely different.”<sup>59</sup>

Several participants in the discussions (among them Benno Cohn, Max Kreutzberger, Dolf Michaelis) agreed that the time had finally come for the LBI to confront the period of Hitler’s rule. For Cohn the real caesura was 1945 – “an abyss into which the whole epoch has sunk” – while the years since 1933 had been marked by a kind of “Jewish renewal” (a term used by Robert Weltsch in the first yearbook). Research on the period was not only called for because of the availability of sources, but also because of the unquestionable achievements of German Jewry under Nazi persecution. In Cohn’s view, these final years constituted a chapter of Jewish history about which one did not have to feel ashamed; everything had been done to extract new social and cultural impulses from disaster and find the right answers to the challenge that German Jewry faced. Strikingly, despite a sense of rivalry with German historiography, the institute seemed to embrace the same methodological approach: in a long lecture on the principles he thought should guide the LBI, the historian Hans Tramer (one of the institute’s founding figures and editor of the *Bulletin* between 1957 and 1965) spoke of scholarly soundness and a critical disposition being placed at the service of reaching the “absolute truth” of what happened under the Nazis.

Some board members remained skeptical regarding such a project. Hans Reichmann and Robert Weltsch flatly rejected anything bordering on “a history of persecution” while agreeing on the need to study the Jewish response to Nazism as reflected in the *Reichsvertretung*. Regarding the call for getting research started, the meeting was split: some thought the Nazi era was still too close to allow as detached and objective an analysis as seemed indispensable; others argued that no time should be lost as key eyewitnesses to the events were dying and the younger generation of Jews lacked the ability to understand the historical context. Both the substantive and methodological

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<sup>58</sup> S. Adler-Rudel, “Anmerkungen betr. Geschichte der Jahre 1933–1940 (Reichsvertretung),” March 10, 1961, *LBIJMB*, MF 491, reel 26, folder 8/2.

<sup>59</sup> Minutes of the LBI Jerusalem board meeting, May 5, 1961, *LBIJMB*, MF 491, reel 26, folder 8/2 (also for the subsequent text passages dealing with this meeting).

dimensions of the issue remained blurred, making clear conclusions difficult: how much attention should the *Reichsvertretung* receive in comparison with other aspects of German-Jewish life? Should the timeline be extended to 1939, 1940, or 1945, or even to a later date (as Alfred Hirschfeld was arguing, in view of the remarkable postwar achievements of German-Jewish emigrants)? Could one take knowledge of the “external history” of Nazi persecution for granted, and if not, how was such history to be addressed? Should there be one author or several, and who was in fact available? And, last but not least, where were the documentary sources?

In an effort to reach some practical conclusions, Siegfried Moses stated that the question of whether the LBI should deal at all with the years after 1933 was moot as a precedent for doing so had been created with the publication, as part of the LBI *Schriftenreihe*, of Ernst Simon's *Aufbau im Untergang*. A consensus was reached that gathering documents and other sources should be a first step, and that Benno Cohn was the right man for this job, yet exactly how to proceed remained a contentious issue: since Hans Reichmann openly doubted Cohn's suitability beyond organizing the collecting effort, it was already clear that it would take longer to find a qualified person for – as Hans Tramer called it – “genuine historiography” lacking sentimentality or bias.

Following the March meeting and subsequent talks in New York and London, the subject received broader attention from leading LBI officials on May 14, 1961, in Jerusalem. Summing up the results of the previous discussion, Benno Cohn disagreed with the assessment – as offered by Weltsch and Reichmann with reference to the books by Poliakov, Wulf, and Reitlinger – that the history of the Nazi persecution had already been written. Instead, he called for approaching the Nazi anti-Jewish measures as a background for understanding intra-Jewish debates and for reconstructing the various spheres of organizational work at the time. Cohn took over Reichmann's skepticism by proposing to restrict his own task to gathering sources, including collecting oral testimonies from “maybe fifteen to twenty people [among those] who are still alive.”

While most present at the meeting backed the project as it was shaping up, it came under heavy attack from Kurt Blumenfeld. The “real history” (“*eigentliche Geschichte*”) of German Jewry had ended in 1933; the uniqueness of the preceding era of emancipation, with the effects of this process on German Jews, had not yet been properly understood. In Blumenfeld's mind, this ignorance was behind the question of why the German Jews had not reacted like their brethren in Warsaw: “The truth is that they could not have acted in any other manner, for they were right in feeling that they belonged more to the German world than their persecutors, the Nazis . . . . For this reason, any attempt to show the greatness of Jewish achievement after 1933 must fail, as there was no great Jewish achievement *per se*.” In view of the fact that some of those who had experienced persecution were still alive, Blumenfeld sup-

ported the idea of collecting material on German Jewry in the Nazi era; he was not sure, however, whether this would itself produce the empathy needed to understand the complexities of the Jewish response.<sup>60</sup>

Had it not been for an awareness of mounting outside pressure, Blumenfeld's concerns might have led to the LBI turning away from the Nazi era. The ongoing Eichmann trial loomed large; it was seen as the LBI's duty to help explain the so far unexplained. No one, Dolf Michaelis declared at the meeting, at present understood what had happened in Germany between 1933 and 1939 and how German Jews had responded to their persecutors; ignorance prevailed even among knowledgeable persons sympathetic to the Jewish cause. The ignorance was apparent both inside and – even more so – outside the Jerusalem courtroom where the trial of Eichmann was unfolding. Alarmed Jews born in Israel were asking those who had arrived from Germany what had actually happened and why they had remained silent. This was the context for Franz Meyer taking issue with the basic LBI tenet of “construction in decline”: “Nothing blossomed out of the decline! Most Jews were simply forced back to their Jewishness!” Meyer warned against overstating Jewish achievements, arguing that the historian had a duty to examine all sides of an issue, without glorifying the historical agents. Interestingly, Ernst Simon responded to this implicit critique of *Aufbau im Untergang* by stressing the possibility of “unconscious historical guilt” on his part, resulting from the effort to bridge an all-destroying abyss that had already opened, instead of pushing as hard as possible for emigration.

The debates within the LBI in the first half of 1961 clearly reveal an emerging consensus that the Third Reich period had to be dealt with more intensively; yet the implications of this reorientation collided with established notions about the past and caused internal friction. Like Adler-Rudel, Max Gruenewald was now asking why the LBI had avoided the period for so long – after all, in 1955 it had been included in the institute's agenda. Summing up the debate, Siegfried Moses reiterated the need to find a practical solution; while a final assessment on the reaction of German Jews would remain a task for the future, the collecting effort should begin at once with full support by all LBI branches. After half a year, Benno Cohn was to present a report on the available material as the basis for a final decision on how to proceed with the project. However, as it turned out the issue had started to assume much wider dimensions that were to have a massive impact on the LBI.

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<sup>60</sup> For this and below, see Minutes of the LBI working session, May 14, 1961, *LBIJMB*, MF 491, reel 26, folder 8/2.

## External Challenges

In 1961, Raul Hilberg published his *Destruction of the European Jews*. As part of the opening synopsis of Jewish-Gentile relations over the centuries, Hilberg maintained that since the emergence of the medieval ghettos, alleviation and compliance had been the most frequent Jewish response to outside threats. In many instances this strategy had helped avoid damage; when Hitler came to power, “the old Jewish reaction pattern set in again, but this time the results were catastrophic.”<sup>61</sup> Hilberg’s book was quickly drawn into a bitter public debate in which the LBI participated. Max Gruenewald publicly noted that Hilberg had devoted next to no attention to the years 1933 to 1938, spending less than a page of his book on the *Reichsvertretung* and overlooking its “attempts aimed at an orderly exodus.”<sup>62</sup> And yet this omission had itself not taken place in a vacuum: in the *Festschrift* published in Israel around the same time in honor of Siegfried Moses, many contributors confirmed that the history of the *Reichsvertretung* had not yet been written – this despite Hans Reichmann’s contribution on the *CV*’s “defensive struggle” during the late Weimar Republic.<sup>63</sup> While the volume contained articles on a wide range of topics, these articles generally attested to the lack of focus and contextual analysis vexing the LBI over the past half-decade. Reflecting a sense of this situation, in late 1962 the issue of Jewish self-help before and under Nazism was finally put on the institute’s agenda; this was accompanied by calls for an “authoritative declaration” by the Council of Jews from Germany stressing German-Jewish resistance during the Third Reich.<sup>64</sup>

At a meeting of the LBI’s Jerusalem board on December 12, 1962, with Robert Weltsch as a guest participant, both the institute’s long-discussed “1933–40” project and Hilberg’s book figured prominently. Meanwhile, Benno Cohn had withdrawn from the project for lack of time; Schalom Adler-Rudel thus proposed the “interim solution” (based on Max Gruenewald’s suggestion) of a short annotated sourcebook. While such a volume could not provide a comprehensive history of the period, it would at least make the task of future historians easier. The discussion that followed

<sup>61</sup> Raul Hilberg, *The Destruction of the European Jews*, Chicago 1967, p. 17.

<sup>62</sup> Max Gruenewald, letter to the editor of *Commentary*, August 1962, quoted from *ZfA Archive*, AmFed Coll. 18/7.

<sup>63</sup> See *In zwei Welten*, pp. 556–576 (H. Reichmann); on the lack of research into the *Reichsvertretung* as well as on German-Jewish history in general see *ibid.*, pp. 106 (F. Brodnitz), 601–606 (E. Rosenbaum), 630–635 (M. Kreuzberger), 643–650 (H. Tramer). Reichmann’s contribution was based on earlier interviews conducted by Arnold Paucker originally earmarked for publication in *Entscheidungsjahr 1932* (letter by Arnold Paucker to the author, May 18, 2004).

<sup>64</sup> See H.G. Reissner to Herman Muller, December 10, 1962, *ZfA Archive*, AmFed Coll. 18/7. Among those spreading “irrigue Interpretationen,” Reissner listed Raul Hilberg, Hugh Trevor-Roper and Bruno Bettelheim.

reflected both the earlier differences of perspective and the vulnerability of the LBI's consensual interpretation of the Nazi era, as encapsulated in the phrase "*Aufbau im Untergang*." While indicating agreement in principle with Adler-Rudel, Dolf Michaelis pointed out that in selecting documents on the intra-Jewish situation, one would confront "certain things ... that we ourselves now only understand with great difficulty, or else have forgotten or suppressed." And Gershom Scholem voiced strong reservations about the entire project, based on a lack of distance precluding the objective treatment that would one day be possible.<sup>65</sup>

As in preceding discussions of the project, Siegfried Moses stressed that if one avoided an illusion of comprehensiveness as well as apologetic tendencies, at least a start could be made. Nevertheless, Scholem was not alone in having a sense of its potential drawbacks, Robert Weltsch himself indicating, for instance, that any edition of Nazi era sources, given the specific historical situation in which they had emerged, would be apologetic in import, hence misleading and undesirable. His reluctance was not, he explained, based on a wish to keep the documentation secret; rather, it stemmed from an awareness that understanding it from a contemporary vantage-point would take great effort. Hans Tramer, on the other hand, felt that in light of a decision already having been reached to confront the years after 1933, the LBI had a duty to show, beyond all apologia, "how the situation had really been."<sup>66</sup> In the end, despite increased calls for bridging the gap between document-collecting and analytic research on the Nazi era, the result of the December 1962 discussion was to postpone a decision until more documents had been collected.

The increased pressure being felt at the LBI surfaced when the discussion turned to Hilberg's book. Dolf Michaelis expressed the view that if Hilberg had limited himself to his self-declared aim of describing the Nazi's extermination process, the results would have been good. But in also discussing German-Jewish organizational efforts between 1933 and 1939, he revealed a lack of understanding that their purpose had been "to make the life of the Jews in Nazi Germany bearable and at the same time to organize an orderly emigration." But the book clearly had to be taken seriously and could indeed become a standard reference work. Michaelis thus in turn posed the question of whether the LBI should "engage at all in publishing studies of the Nazi period and the Jewish response to Nazism or simply leave this to others."<sup>67</sup> The best answer to Hilberg, Michaelis and Martin Buber agreed, would be to write a history of the *Reichsvertretung*. In any event, a decision was reached to

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<sup>65</sup> Minutes of the LBI Jerusalem board meeting of December 12, 1962, *ibid*.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>67</sup> A.P. Michaelis, Notes re *The Destruction of the European Jews* by Raul Hilberg (attachment to the Minutes of the December 12, 1962 meeting), *ZfA Archive*, AmFed Coll. 18/7; see also S. Adler-Rudel's review of press comments on Hilberg's book.

prepare a swift “unmasking of a historical lie” (“*Entlarvung einer Geschichtslüge*”), as Siegfried Moses put it, in the form of a pamphlet or public declaration by the Council of Jews from Germany.

Leaving rebuttal of Hilberg’s thesis to the council was largely symbolic as its broad overlap with the LBI meant that basically the same people dealt with the matter under a different letterhead. Nevertheless, opting for a council-sponsored public declaration did indicate a preference for interest group behavior over a more scholarly response. Internal criticism of this decision followed swiftly. In its comment on the December meeting, the New York LBI expressed a belief that the planned declaration would not achieve anything in the long run; Max Kreutzberger reiterated his desire to prepare a history of the *Reichsvertretung* as a way of refuting Hilberg’s thesis, calling for support from the Jerusalem LBI to this end – as a first step, through the collection of accounts by former officials in the *Reichsvertretung* and *Reichsvereinigung*.<sup>68</sup> Kreutzberger’s perspective was supported by one member of the LBI London board, Jacob Jacobson, as follows: “I cannot understand why we should keep on postponing a comprehensive history of the *Reichsvertretung* ... . It is a terrible pity that Herr Dr. Baeck could not be moved to write his memoirs ... . That should be a warning to us ... . What counts here is not glorification, not a belated bridging or veiling of conflicting ideas, but rather a faithful, upright identification and description of the historical truth and reality.”<sup>69</sup>

In response to the New York LBI’s stand on this matter, Siegfried Moses suggested backing up the many council declarations with a series of publications on German-Jewish organizational activities under the Nazis, in order to satisfy “the demand for a history of the years 1933–39”: an overview by Shaul Esh, the already planned monographs on *Haavara* – the 1933 agreement for the transfer of Jews and goods from Germany to Palestine – by Werner Feilchenfeld and on the *Kulturbund* by Herbert Freeden, along with a detailed study of the *Reichsvertretung*;<sup>70</sup> in the short run, the planned declaration would publicize the LBI’s basic perspective. As drafted by Siegfried Moses for the council’s Israeli section at the end of January 1963, the declaration avoided any direct reference to Hilberg’s book; instead it welcomed all efforts to shed light on events of the Nazi era, as long as such efforts were not based on “insufficient knowledge of the real situation” or created a distorted historical image. The question, raised from a post-Holocaust perspective, of why Germany’s Jews had not resisted Nazi persecution early on was, the council ar-

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<sup>68</sup> Kreutzberger to Adler-Rudel, January 25, 1963, *ZfA Archive*, AmFed Coll. 18/7.

<sup>69</sup> J. Jacobson (to Reichmann?), November 23, 1963, *LBI Archives New York*, AR 5890.

<sup>70</sup> S. Moses to the governing board of the Council, February 12, 1963, *ZfA Archive*, AmFed Coll. 18/7.



gued, psychologically understandable but historically unjustifiable: no one, including the Nazis themselves, could have predicted the physical destruction of European Jewry. Newly found documents proved that Hitler himself had ordered a fostering of Jewish emigration to Palestine, apparently out of a belief that this was the only practical way to make Germany *judenrein*.

The declaration's authors were arguing on the basis of firm convictions: according to the draft, the only possible reaction of German Jews in these early years was to help as many people as possible to save themselves. In place of an uprising – an illusionary idea that could only be harbored by those who had not been there – the Jews drew on their own resources to organize relief work and emigration, thus helping about 250,000 individuals, amounting to almost half the Jewish population of Germany in 1933, to leave the country. The Council of Jews from Germany, the declaration concluded, was preparing a series of publications, to appear over the next two years, that would show how during the Nazi era, German Jews had actively and – within the limits of what was possible under the circumstances – successfully encouraged self-help, awareness of Jewish values and traditions, economic and cultural activity, and rescue through emigration. The LBI was not mentioned; but given the differing responsibilities of the different German-Jewish exile organizations, the council declaration could only mean that the LBI was to play a major role in preparing these publications.<sup>71</sup>

### Public Controversy

With the declaration's final form and the LBI's research agenda still under discussion, the publication of Hannah Arendt's book *Eichmann in Jerusalem* in May 1963, following its serialization as two articles appearing in the *New Yorker* in February and March 1963, created a huge public controversy – one extending far beyond the question of the German-Jewish response to Nazi persecution. In the context of her wider argument, Arendt had offended many German-Jewish émigrés by attacking Leo Baeck, the embodiment of German-Jewish perseverance in the face of Nazi persecution, using him *pars pro toto* in her criticism of the actions of Jewish leaders during the war. In the book's American (but not in the German) version, she referred to Baeck as “the Jewish ‘Führer’”; she also suggested that Baeck had collaborated in deportations, and that he had declined to share his knowledge about the mass murder taking place in Auschwitz with his fellow inmates in Theresienstadt. Most of her statements had been taken from Hilberg's book, rarely with proper credit.<sup>72</sup>

<sup>71</sup> Draft statement by Council, January 31, 1963, *ZfA Archive*, AmFed Coll. 18/7.

<sup>72</sup> For Arendt's reliance on Hilberg, see Adolf Leschnitzer, “So war Rabbiner Leo

Following Arendt’s *New Yorker* articles the council and its founding organization, the American Federation of Jews from Central Europe (Amfed), received angry letters demanding a rebuttal of – as Norbert Wollheim wrote – “a series of what objectively are base historical lies,” and “an emerging Jewish stab-in-the-back legend.”<sup>73</sup> On March 10, the council’s directorate, headed by Siegfried Moses and with, in vice-president Hans Reichmann’s words, “a number of friends” including Robert Weltsch and others involved with the LBI as signatories, issued its public response, with “The Reaction of the Jews to Nazi-Period Persecution” as its title. Based on the January draft prepared to refute Hilberg, this final version of the council’s long-planned declaration reflected developments bound to have a strong influence on discussions within the LBI of its research agenda.

The published declaration focused directly on the historical falsification that Hilberg and Arendt now both stood accused of, advancing a very different interpretation of past events: to morally discredit organized German Jewry’s work after 1933 by applying the term “cooperation,” as Arendt had done, seemed as unjustified as damning Jewish officials for their forced involvement in the technical arrangement of deportations, once Nazi Germany had begun to implement its plan for the physical annihilation of European Jewry (“following the war’s outbreak and especially after America’s entry into the war”). Men and women of the *Reichsvertretung* and many other Jewish community leaders had remained at their sentry-posts, disregarding their own safety; they had done their best to take countermeasures and engaged in secret resistance. Most had perished. No one who had not been there at the time, the declaration continued, had a right to cast judgment on such horrific historical circumstances; German Jewry had mustered all its moral and material strength to preserve its self-respect.<sup>74</sup>

Compared to the more matter-of-fact tone of the draft, with its stress on the need for scholarship fostered by the council, moral concepts dominated

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Baeck,” in *Aufbau*, March 29, 1963, also printed in *Nach dem Eichmann Prozess. Zu einer Kontroverse über die Haltung der Juden* (ed. by Council of Jews from Germany), Jerusalem 1963, pp. 25–30; Raul Hilberg, *Unerbetene Erinnerung. Der Weg eines Holocaust-Forschers*, Frankfurt 1994, pp. 128–130. In later English-language editions Arendt’s reference to Baeck as “Führer” (1963 book edition, p. 105) was dropped.

<sup>73</sup> N. Wollheim to H. Muller, February 28, March 15, 1963; see also R.M.W. Kempner to Reichmann, May 18, 1963, *ZfA Archive*, AmFed Coll. 18/7. For an overview on the history of Amfed see Susanne Feld, “‘American Federation of Jews from Central Europe.’ Von der Landsmannschaft deutsch-jüdischer Einwanderer zur amerikanischen Organisation,” in *Menora* 7, vol. (1996), pp. 132–145.

<sup>74</sup> Reichmann to Muller, March 12, 1963, including the Council statement; Muller to Reichmann, March 18, 1963, *ZfA Archive*, AmFed Coll. 18/7. The statement was first published in April in *Aufbau* and *AJR Information*; it appeared in the booklet edited by the Council, discussed above, entitled *Nach dem Eichmann Prozess*, with identical wording except for added reference to Arendt’s book.

the published declaration. In addition, the meaning of the term “German-Jewish response” to Nazi persecution seemed to have expanded without gaining in clarity: the draft had focused on the pre-war years, stressed the unpredictability of later events even in the minds of Hitler and his fellow Nazis, and relegated violent resistance to the realm of wishful thinking; the final version devoted a few remarks to the pre-1939 setting, went on to the implementation of a “plan for the physical extermination of the Jews” by the Nazi government after 1939, and stressed the efforts at resistance, moral integrity, and self-sacrifice of those involved in the “*Reichsvertretung, der Zentralorganisation der deutschen Juden*” – a telling slip in that already in early 1939 Heydrich had in fact replaced this voluntary umbrella organization with the state-controlled *Reichsvereinigung*. In essence, with the stronger emphasis on the war years initiated by Arendt, understanding of the problems posed by the Nazi era meant extending one’s perspective beyond the situation in the Reich; at the same time the public reaction of German-Jewish émigré representatives to this development revealed increased defensiveness and abstraction.

Outside the public arena, efforts were being made to convince Arendt of the need to soften her argument. Shortly after the Council of Jews from Germany decided to issue its declaration, Siegfried Moses met with Hannah Arendt to discuss her book, forthcoming in the USA in May 1963 and in Germany later that year. During the meeting, which took place in March, Arendt agreed to rephrase passages referring to “cooperation” with the Nazi authorities between 1933 and 1939.<sup>75</sup> However, the council’s declaration convinced her that she was faced with, as she put it in a letter to Robert Weltsch from late August 1963, “organized rabble-rousing” (“*organisierte Hetze*”). In the same letter, she explained that much of what she had written was being misinterpreted as an accusation while it was actually intended as a factual account. She had no objections of principle to Jewish cooperation with the Nazi authorities before the war; but she did view the German Zionists’ approach as tainted by ideology, at work in the hope for both a victory over the assimilationists and direct help for Palestine. In Arendt’s mind, then, to accept the possibility of antisemitism serving as an ally of Zionism was “Zionism’s original sin.”<sup>76</sup>

<sup>75</sup> S. Moses, Memorandum on his conversation with H. Arendt in Zurich, March 24, 1963; see also his extracts from a letter by Arendt sent to members of the governing board of the Council, July 30, 1963, *ZfA Archive*, AmFed Coll. 18/7 (also in *LBIJMB*, MF 491, reel 2, folder 1/40). For efforts by one friend of Arendt, Hans Jonas, to persuade her to reverse the positions taken in her book, see Christian Wiese, “‘For a Time I was Privileged to Enjoy his Friendship ...’: The Ambivalent Relation between Hans Jonas and Gershom Scholem” in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 49 (2004), pp. 25–58.

<sup>76</sup> Arendt to Weltsch, August 29, 1963, *LBIJMB*, MF 491, reel 1, folder 1/15. In his response, Weltsch distanced himself from what he somewhat ironically referred to as “professional Jews” and the “Jewish establishment” while seeing Arendt as ally in a

Leading members of the LBI participated publicly in the debate surrounding Arendt's book in a number of venues.<sup>77</sup> As it had to be conceded that Arendt was correct on some counts, for example regarding the actions of Jewish ghetto policemen, Jewish participation in the deportations and mechanics of the death camps, her critics took care to reiterate the objections raised in the council declaration and refrain from anything that might look like what Robert Weltsch termed an “apology” (“*Verteidigungsschrift*”) and Bruno Woyda termed “whitewashing without precise knowledge of the facts.”<sup>78</sup> On the other hand, as Max Kreutzberger noted, here was an issue that “went far beyond German-Jewish matters” and that thus needed to be approached as broadly as possible.<sup>79</sup> In any case, internal constraints were making it difficult for the LBI standpoint to receive appropriate publicity. While expressions of solidarity with Leo Baeck did appear in the American press,<sup>80</sup> a planned English-language booklet to be published by the Council in order to refute Arendt was not moving ahead. With both the American Federation of Jews from Central Europe and the Council of Jews from Germany lacking the needed skills and resources, Robert Weltsch, Schalom Adler-Rudel and Max Kreutzberger (from, respectively, the London, Jerusalem and New York LBI offices) pushed in letters for speedy preparation of a German-language version of the booklet, the goal being to have it available by the time Arendt's translated book appeared.<sup>81</sup> When the booklet was ready in mid-June 1963, Siegfried Moses expressed his hope, on behalf of the council, that it would prove valuable “in the Jewish world and beyond.”<sup>82</sup>

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deeply felt common mission, Weltsch to Arendt, September 3, 1963, *LBIJMB*, MF 491, reel 1, folder 1/15.

<sup>77</sup> See, for example, G. Scholem to H. Arendt, June 23, 1963, printed in *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, October 19, 1963; E. Reichmann, “Antwort an H. Arendt,” in *AJR Information*, vol. 19, no. 1, January 1964 (extracts also printed in F. A. Krummacker (ed.), *Die Kontroverse. Hannah Arendt, Eichmann und die Juden*, Munich 1964, pp. 207–217).

<sup>78</sup> Weltsch to Adler-Rudel, May 6, 1963; B. Woyda to Adler-Rudel, May 2, 1963, *ZfA Archive*, AmFed Coll. 18/7. Kreutzberger searched unsuccessfully for proof for his assumption that the “account” attributed to Baeck in Eric Boehm, *We Survived* was fabricated (Kreutzberger to Reichmann, June 5, 1963; Reichmann to Kreutzberger, June 18, 1963, *ZfA Archive*, AmFed Coll. 18/7).

<sup>79</sup> Kreutzberger to Tramer, May 21, 1963, *ZfA Archive*, AmFed Coll. 18/7.

<sup>80</sup> Reviews critical of Arendt appeared in the *American Zionist*, *Jewish Frontier*, *The Jewish News* (Newark, NJ), *Reconstructionist* and *New York Times*: see, for example, Muller to Reichmann, June 4, 1963; Weltsch to Moses, June 6, 1963; Muller to Kreutzberger, June 13, 1963, *ZfA Archive*, AmFed Coll. 18/7.

<sup>81</sup> Weltsch to Muller, April 17, 1963; H. Gerling to H. Muller, April 21, 1963; Muller to Weltsch, April 26, 1963; Weltsch to Adler-Rudel, April 30, 1963; Adler-Rudel to Muller, May 3, 1963; Tramer to Muller, May 5, 1963; Adler-Rudel to Muller and Kreutzberger, May 7, 1963; Weltsch to Moses, June 6, 1963; Reichmann to Moses, July 4, 1963, *ZfA Archive*, AmFed Coll. 18/7.

<sup>82</sup> S. Moses to members of the governing board of the Council, June 17, 1963, *ZfA Archive*, AmFed Coll. 18/7.

The booklet's full title was *Nach dem Eichmann Prozess. Zu einer Kontroverse über die Haltung der Juden* (*After the Eichmann Trial: on a Controversy over the Conduct of the Jews*). It contained, in addition to the council declaration, an introduction by Siegfried Moses and contributions by Kurt Löwenstein, Adolf Leschnitzer, Hans Tramer and Ernst Simon, along with a "personal remark" by Martin Buber. In reviewing the booklet's contents with the benefit of hindsight, one quickly sees that when discussing contentious issues like German-Jewish resistance or cooperation with the Nazi authorities, the contributors tended to argue in a manner similar to Arendt herself – as if all the relevant historical facts were readily at hand, interpretive differences moot. In his introduction, Siegfried Moses described the booklet's purpose as analyzing the substantively and humanly irresponsible (*nicht verantwortbare*) publications treating such issues. The reader would recognize, Moses asserted, "in what spirit tragic events of this sort *must* be considered; which facts objective research can consider as confirmed; and how, in light of such considerations and such research, the conduct of the Jews is to be judged in actuality."<sup>83</sup> The impression of well-grounded finality conveyed by these words was not duplicated by the contributions themselves. According to Kurt Löwenstein, for example, the books of Arendt and Hilberg underscored the need for "authentic research on the problem, carried out independently and free of resentment."<sup>84</sup> Such efforts had yet to be undertaken, and sooner or later the LBI would have to get involved.

As a result of the clash between Arendt's now famous notion of the "banality of evil" and an at the time prevailing image of brutalized and often psychopathic Nazi killers, the Arendt debate would move increasingly over the coming months and years away from the question of the Jewish response to the Nazis, focusing instead on the question of the motivation of the perpetrators. In the early 1960s, it was easy to overlook the fact that the LBI benefited from these controversies for the simple reason that they generated interest in the Nazi era. Likewise, critical scholarly evaluation increased the willingness of those who had engaged in "defensive struggle" to break their silence, despite an enduring danger of being perceived by a postwar public as apologists for untenable positions.<sup>85</sup> In 1962, Hans Reichmann furnished the first concise account of "*Büro Wilhelmstrasse*" in the LBI's *Festschrift* for Siegfried Moses, agreeing to a series of interviews conducted by the London LBI.<sup>86</sup> And with its accounts of *CV* activities before and after 1933, the col-

<sup>83</sup> *Nach dem Eichmann Prozess*, pp. 5–6 (my emphasis).

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 11–23, here p. 23.

<sup>85</sup> For examples of how former *CV* officials remained aware long after the war of problematic aspects in their organization's history, see Barkai, "*Wehr dich!*" pp. 454, 458.

<sup>86</sup> Hans Reichmann, "Der drohende Sturm" in *In zwei Welten*, pp. 556–577; see also the review of Reichmann's article in *WLB*, vol. 18, no. 1, 1964, p. 8, and see above,

lection published the following year in memory of Hans Reichmann remains a key source: both for understanding the perception of the organization by its former leaders after the war and for studying the general history of German Jewry in the preceding period.<sup>87</sup>

### Emerging Consensus

Despite agreement on the need, in view of now massive public interest, to intensify the LBI's treatment of the Nazi era, it appears that already by 1963, the often discussed *Reichsvertretung* project had become bogged down in intra-institutional rivalry and conflicting expectations. In New York, Max Kreutzberger, in theory desiring the most suitable person to be in charge of collecting the documentary material, in reality was most interested in the New York office being in control; in London, Robert Weltsch wished to leave the entire issue of dealing with the *Abwehrkampf* to Arnold Paucker; and in Jerusalem, Schalom Adler-Rudel was trying to coordinate the different institutional aspects of the project.<sup>88</sup> But in the absence of any real coordination between the London and New York offices, the project was clearly faced with the prospect of impending collapse. For a meeting held at the Jerusalem office on October 17, 1963, a number of specialists in archival research offered advice on how to proceed. A wealth of material had been uncovered in archives in Germany, Israel, and other countries; most of this, however, was on Nazi policy and little on the Jewish response to it. Given the absence of a comprehensive inventory, success in tracing relevant sources would remain haphazard; a decision was thus made to establish a commission responsible for creating a guide to the archival documentation and coordinating a systematic evaluation of it.<sup>89</sup>

It is important to note that accepting the idea of increasing research on the Nazi era did not necessarily lead to a re-evaluation of long-held notions

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note 63. In 1962, Walter Gyßling followed Arnold Paucker's request to write down his experiences with the *Abwehrkampf* and completed a 50-page manuscript for the LBI entitled "Propaganda gegen die NSDAP in den Jahren 1929–1933" (Gyßling, *Mein Leben*, p. 36).

<sup>87</sup> See the contributions by Fritz Goldschmidt and Alfred Hirschberg in *Zum Gedenken*, pp. 18–21, 27–34. On the LBI's response to Arendt and Hilberg, see also the articles by Guy Miron and Mitchell Hart in this volume.

<sup>88</sup> See Kreutzberger to Paucker, June 13, 1963; memorandum M. Nathan for S. Adler-Rudel, August 4, 1963, *LBIJMB*, MF 491, reel 26, folder 8/2, with reference to Kreutzberger's arrangement with Moses, "that the New York LBI should be established as a central office for the collection of material between 1933 and 1945."

<sup>89</sup> Minutes of the discussion on archive policy, October 17, 1963, *LBIJMB*, MF 491, reel 26, folder 8/2. Among the 17 participants of the meeting were Moses (chair), Adler-Rudel, Kreutzberger, Paucker, Weltsch and Leni Yahil.

about Jewish self-defense. During the Jerusalem meeting on archival matters, Weltsch remarked that some of the sources presented an ambiguous picture, with “certain things” incriminating organizations such as the CV. In an editorial in the 1963 *Bulletin*, Hans Tramer wrote that confronting this part of contemporary history – he used the (almost untranslatable) term “*Epoche der Mitlebenden*” – was in fact the LBI’s mission, in order to salvage it from oblivion. After first stressing that the history of German Jewry under the Nazis had yet to be written, Tramer then repeated the familiar criticism of Arendt’s stance – it was nothing short of an “attack on the moral inviolability of the conduct [*Haltung*] of the Jews in the Nazi period.” Tramer’s editorial was directly followed by an essay on German-Jewish activism in the 1920s that, in attacking the CV for waging a “fight against the reawakening Jewish national consciousness [*Volksbewußtsein*],” revealed the same approach to dissenting interpretations of history.<sup>90</sup>

In the wake of the Arendt debate, the LBI now found itself confronted with more focused criticism of its research agenda. In September 1964, Kurt Jakob Ball-Kaduri sent a memorandum to the three LBI offices claiming that the institute was neglecting the years following 1933. After his emigration to Palestine in 1938, Ball-Kaduri became a prolific collector of testimonies by German Jews; he had been involved with *Yad Vashem*’s publication projects, but saw little prospect there for thoroughly researching German-Jewish history during the Nazi era. Turning to the LBI for support, he reminded the institute of its initial, now largely neglected program, “catastrophe” being one of its subject areas. Had the LBI seen through an authoritative history of the *Reichsvertretung* and *Reichsvereinigung*, Ball-Kaduri argued, Arendt’s “remarkable assertions” would not have triggered such a wave of ad hoc publications.<sup>91</sup>

Ball-Kaduri asserted that the neglect he was addressing stemmed from an inability to use the Nazi period as proof of the superior achievements of German Jews as compared to their Eastern brethren; naturally, this did not win him friends within the LBI. In New York, Kreutzberger continued to insist on a leading role in an expanded *Reichsvertretung* project, though conceding that this did not amount to an “exclusive right.”<sup>92</sup> Kreutzberger’s papers reveal that in any case he was struggling with all aspects of the project. Originating from within the framework of the LBI’s historical perception, some of the problems could not even be clearly verbalized, but only omin-

<sup>90</sup> H. T. [H. Tramer], “Rückblick und Vergegenwärtigung,” in *Bulletin des Leo Baeck Instituts*, 6, no. 24 (1963), pp. 293–294; “Leopold Marx, Otto Hirsch – ein Lebensbild,” *ibid.*, pp. 295–312, here p. 298.

<sup>91</sup> K. J. Ball-Kaduri to all LBI branches, September 3, 1964, *LBI London*, file “Correspondence re Yearbook: not resulting in contributions A–J.”

<sup>92</sup> See Moses to Kreutzberger, March 7, 1965, *LBIJMB*, MF 491, reel 26, folder 8/2.

ously hinted at – for example the problem of interpreting what Kreutzberger (similar to Weltsch earlier on) referred to as the “very strange things” (“*ganz eigentümlichen Dinge*”) he had discovered regarding the *Reichsvereinigung*’s dealings with the German authorities.<sup>93</sup> Adler-Rudel, himself grappling with the increasing problem of discovering from the correspondence between the different LBI offices “where we really are” regarding what now was being referred to as “project 1933–1942,” tried to help: reconstructing the reaction of German Jews had to be approached “from the viewpoint of a tendency towards rescue” (“*unter dem Gesichtspunkt der Tendenz zur Rettung*”), as “a contribution dictated by the duty and responsibility of contemporaries.” To Adler-Rudel, the time did not seem ripe for either an assessment of the “dark aspects” of organizational history or for writing “the ‘real history’ [*wirkliche Geschichte*] of this epoch.”<sup>94</sup>

The LBI thus saw itself caught between an awareness that it had to begin historically acknowledging the Nazi era and a fear that addressing history’s “dark aspects” would throw a shadow on established beliefs. The Arendt debate had shown that this fear was well founded – at least whenever reconstructing the Jewish response to Nazi persecution went hand in hand with moral judgments and allegations of guilt. As a result of both this dilemma and the project’s inherent conceptual problems, the LBI now let matters drift. Adler-Rudel’s effort to hand parts of the project to others outside the LBI – for instance to Avraham Margaliot and Otto Dov Kulka – reflected the fact that the LBI itself was not making much progress. Nevertheless, Kreutzberger continued to guard jealously what he regarded as his project against outside incursions – he found it “somewhat strange that we help others to produce works we ourselves have planned and initiated.”<sup>95</sup> As a recipient of Kreutzberger’s complaints, and being in the uncomfortable position of having to coordinate the project, the Jerusalem office, for its part, did not think it was either possible or advisable to “block” external participation, especially in view of the efforts the LBI had made to get Israeli professors and students interested in German-Jewish history.<sup>96</sup>

The project became increasingly pigeon-holed, communications more feeble. In May 1967, discussions held in the London LBI ended with a confirmation that “a description of the conduct of the Jews in the years 1933–1943 is a pressing responsibility of the institute,” and that Kreutzberger was to di-

<sup>93</sup> M. Kreutzberger, Memorandum “1933–1942,” undated (c. April 1965); Kreutzberger to Adler-Rudel, June 11, 1965, April 5, 1967, *LBIJMB*, MF 491, reel 26, folder 8/2.

<sup>94</sup> Adler-Rudel to Kreutzberger, July 15, 1965, *LBIJMB*, MF 491, reel 26, folder 8/2; response by Kreutzberger, August 19, 1965, *LBIJMB*, MF 491, reel 5, folder 2/13.

<sup>95</sup> Kreutzberger to Adler-Rudel, March 28, April 5, 1967, *LBIJMB*, MF 491, reel 26, folder 8/2.

<sup>96</sup> Adler-Rudel to Tramer, April 11, 1967; *idem* to Kreutzberger, July 24, 1967, *LBIJMB*, MF 491, reel 26, folder 8/2.



rect the project. In August, Kreutzberger sent Adler-Rudel yet another work plan, now extended to 1945, asking for help in tracing material and confirming his determination to move ahead.<sup>97</sup> Half a year later, during a meeting of the Jerusalem board at which Kreutzberger was not present, Adler-Rudel announced that while four chapters of the planned documentary on the *Reichsvertretung* had been drafted, its continuation remained difficult. Even after years of discussion, the project was not accepted by everyone in the LBI: Scholem reiterated his concerns that such a publication might create more misunderstandings than enlightenment and called for leaving this task “to history, postponing it to a point in time when it does not escape historical perspective, as is the case at present.”<sup>98</sup>

Long after he left the LBI in 1967 and retired to Switzerland, Kreutzberger continued to collect documentary material and stress his plans to confront the Nazi era. Availability of sources presented one set of problems, interpretation another. In dealing with the *Reichsvertretung* and *Reichsvereinigung*, he explained to Adler-Rudel in 1972, it was not sufficient to focus on how the organizations’ officials did their duty to the very end, as there had been major internal conflicts and “odd aspects and aspirations of power [*eigentümliche Machtaspekte und -aspirationen*].”<sup>99</sup> Kreutzberger’s misgivings, displayed until shortly before his death, did not prevent the publication of reports on the *Reichsvertretung* by Adler-Rudel in 1974; the same misgivings prompted the historian and Zionist educator Jochanan Ginat (Hans Gärtner), the Jerusalem LBI’s director between 1970 and 1978, to deplore the LBI’s lack of enthusiasm when it came to the topic.<sup>100</sup> The sources Kreutzberger collected since 1981 form part of the LBI’s archival holdings; an LBI-sponsored edition of documents tied to the *Reichsvertretung* would finally appear in 1997.<sup>101</sup>

With the *Reichsvertretung* project in limbo, the pressure grew to stabilize the beleaguered conventional understanding held by the institute’s founders

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<sup>97</sup> Note on decision of working discussion in London, May 18–22, 1967; Kreutzberger to Adler-Rudel, August 23, 1967, *LBIJMB*, MF 491, reel 26, folder 8/2.

<sup>98</sup> Minutes of the meeting of the *LBI Jerusalem* board of February 25, 1968, *LBIJMB*, MF 491, reel 26, folder 8/2. The meeting centered round the need to find active supporters for the LBI among the younger generation.

<sup>99</sup> Kreutzberger to Adler-Rudel, March 14, 1972, *LBI Jerusalem*, file 1001. My thanks go to Guy Miron for providing copies from *LBI Jerusalem*.

<sup>100</sup> Salomon Adler-Rudel, *Jüdische Selbsthilfe unter dem Naziregime 1933–1939. Im Spiegel der Berichte der Reichsvertretung der Juden in Deutschland*, Tübingen 1974; see also *idem* to Kreutzberger, May 8, 1972, *LBI Jerusalem*, file 1001. For Kreutzberger’s later assessment, see his correspondence with Jochanan Ginat in early 1978, *ibid.*

<sup>101</sup> M. Kreutzberger Research Papers, *LBI Archives New York*, AR 7183 (containing material later incorporated into the Memoir Collection); Otto Dov Kulka *et al.* (eds.), *Deutsches Judentum unter dem Nationalsozialismus*, vol. 1: *Dokumente zur Geschichte der Reichsvertretung der Juden 1933–1939*, Tübingen 1997 (Schriftenreihe wissenschaftlicher Abhandlungen des Leo Baeck Instituts 54).

of what initially had been termed “the catastrophe.” In a general manner, this required a shift in emphasis away from the largely negative perception, shared by many in the LBI, of Jewish self-defense prior to the Nazi rise to power and greater willingness by those who had been involved in it to discuss it. A step was made in this direction by Eva Reichmann when she proposed a synthesis of “assimilationist” and Zionist perspectives in her critique of Arendt, defending organized German Jewry for its contacts with the Nazi authorities by pointing out that “in all of Germany, the German Jews were the first to recognize the Nazis as the common enemy of humanity.” Eva Reichmann here mainly had in mind “that group within German Jewry in which I worked myself, the Jewish *Central-Verein*,” but her approach was broad enough to integrate other factions as, especially in the first years of the Third Reich, both the *CV* and a host of other organizations were guided in their relief efforts by the hope that Nazi rule would collapse.<sup>102</sup>

Linking other German-Jewish organizations to the *CV*’s pre-1933 defense efforts supported the claim of surviving members that they sensed the Nazi threat early enough to avoid being fooled into cooperating with the Third Reich; in turn, this interpretation suggested that attention should be paid to other aspects of the *CV*’s history than its “defensive struggle,” which opened a way for clearing the organization of the “assimilationist” charge. In an article published in early 1965, Eva Reichmann thus argued that the time had come to see the *CV* “in a more detached way”: as an “organization *sui generis*” with “a very definite, elaborate ideology” – an organization whose younger generation pursued brave and energetic defense activities that were rendered futile through a lack of support within German society at large. Rather than fostering what its critics called “undignified assimilation”, the *CV* “had a most honorable tradition as a force fostering Jewish self-respect and combating baptism”; in this capacity, it would become “the center of comprehensive Jewish activities, a real Jewish rallying point against abundant centrifugal temptations.”<sup>103</sup> Seen from this perspective, the *CV* represented both the tragic dimension of German-Jewish history and the ongoing struggle between reason and prejudice: as Reichmann saw things, while the battle had been lost the wider struggle was continuing.<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>102</sup> Eva G. Reichmann, “Antwort an Hannah Arendt,” quoted from Krummacher, *Die Kontroverse*, p. 213.

<sup>103</sup> Eva G. Reichmann, “Alfred Wiener – the German Jew,” *WLB*, vol. 19, no. 1, 1965, pp. 10–11 (the article was the text of a memorial address delivered in March 1964).

<sup>104</sup> Eva G. Reichmann, “Diskussionen über die Judenfrage 1930–1932,” in Werner E. Mosse and Arnold Paucker (eds.), *Entscheidungsjahr 1932. Zur Judenfrage in der Endphase der Weimarer Republik*, Tübingen 1966 (Schriftenreihe wissenschaftlicher Abhandlungen des Leo Baeck Instituts 13), pp. 503–531, here p. 531.

The 1965 publication of *Entscheidungsjahr 1932* indicated that the old front lines regarding the assessment of the *CV*'s pre-1933 activities had started to waver. The volume contained Arnold Paucker's long article on the *Abwehrkampf*, focusing on the *CV*'s struggle to uphold the dignity and self-esteem of German Jewry against all odds, and although the volume's editor Werner Mosse introduced it with a disclaimer to the effect that the LBI was itself not taking any position on the issues that were being raised but simply providing a forum for scholarly exchange, the shift in emphasis was evident.<sup>105</sup> Nevertheless, the incorporation of the *CV* into the ranks of those German-Jewish organizations associated with Jewish revival met with resistance from some of the LBI's founders. Robert Weltsch, for example, despite a softening of his personal relations with former rivals in the *CV* camp and despite his public acknowledgment that all the major German-Jewish organizations had – each “in its own way and with varying success” – contributed to an increased sense of self-acceptance and self-worth, still continued to perceive Jewish self-defense as a topic burdened “with all kinds of propaganda, and ‘boasting’ [word written in English].”<sup>106</sup> Others were more outspoken. Noting the difficulty of formulating a truly historical critique of Jewish actions within such a catastrophic context, Gershom Scholem attacked *Hostages of Civilization* in the *Bulletin* as reflecting a tendency to portray the Third Reich as “a kind of historical slip-up” (“eine Art historischer Betriebsunfall”), Eva Reichmann's uncritical enthusiasm for the epoch of Jewish assimilation explaining the success of her book in Germany.<sup>107</sup> Her response in the same venue signaled a new willingness by prominent non-Zionist German Jews to defend their view of history: as a result of his “Judeocentric perspective,” Scholem had neglected historical reality. For Eva Reichmann, in the context of the Nazi rise to power, externally determining factors left little room for a “correct” decision, even on the part of wise men or saints.<sup>108</sup> Scholem refrained from publicly answering her in turn, instead expressing his outrage at her “shameless statement” in a private letter.<sup>109</sup>

To a large degree, the changing perception within the LBI of “assimilationist” defensive activism before and during the Nazi era was a result of the

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<sup>105</sup> Arnold Paucker, “Der jüdische Abwehrkampf,” in *ibid.*, pp. 405–488; Werner E. Mosse, Foreword in *ibid.*, p. xiii.

<sup>106</sup> Robert Weltsch, “Entscheidungsjahr 1932,” in *ibid.*, pp. 535–562, here p. 561; Weltsch to Hamburger, April 27, 1971, *LBIJMB*, MF 491, reel 2, folder 1/29. Compare Weltsch to E. Reichmann, May 21, 1974, January 6, 1977, *ibid.*, folder 1/41.

<sup>107</sup> Gershom Scholem, “Noch einmal. Das Deutsch-Jüdische ‘Gespräch,’” in *Bulletin des Leo Baeck Instituts*, 8, no. 30 (1965), pp. 167–172, here p. 169.

<sup>108</sup> Eva G. Reichmann, “Zur Klärung in eigener Sache,” in *Bulletin des Leo Baeck Instituts*, 9, no. 36 (1966), pp. 342–344.

<sup>109</sup> “Die Stirn dieser Assimilanten ist doch wahrlich erstaunlich,” Scholem to R. and I. Weltsch, January 4, 1968, *LBIJMB*, MF 491, reel 2, folder 1/45.

slow erosion of Zionist historiographical dominance combined with a generational shift. It should be noted, however, that younger Jews of German background who came into prominent positions within the LBI had at first been no more inclined towards the *CV* and its efforts than members of the older generation. Reflecting upon his assessment of the *CV* and its *Abwehrkampf*, Arnold Paucker observed as follows:

When it came to this theme, I first had to overcome my own prejudices, which I had clung to for a long time. Most Jewish historians around my age adhered to a sense of national Jewish identity, despising the assimilative strivings of their fathers, who behaved like Germans and wished to defend themselves strictly as such. If we were socialists, we made fun of the bourgeois narrow-mindedness of the *Centralverein*; if we came out of the Zionist-socialist youth movement, we at the same time damned our entire parents' generation wholesale. It seemed proven that the *Centralverein* had been ruined by mismanagement, and after 1945 it would remain banished from historical research for two full decades.<sup>110</sup>

Even afterwards progress remained slow. Despite Paucker's own article for the *Entscheidungsjahr 1932* anthology,<sup>111</sup> his book on the topic, containing both analysis and documentation and relying heavily on accounts provided by the Reichmanns and other erstwhile *CV* activists, was published in 1968 by the *Forschungsstelle für die Geschichte des Nationalsozialismus* led by Werner Jochmann in Hamburg, not by the LBI. Although announced by Paucker in 1968, a full-length study of the *CV* under the aegis of the LBI never materialized; it would take nearly 35 more years for the first extensive and coherent history of the organization, written by Avraham Barkai, to appear.<sup>112</sup> In 1969, influential voices from within the institute were still complaining that in London Paucker was excessively inclined towards such topics; for Siegfried Moses, his participation in a history of the *CV* seemed “objectively problematic, if not dubious” (“*sachlich problematisch, wenn nicht bedenklich*”). It was fine and good for Eva Reichmann to write a history of the *CV* as she saw it, but an “objectification” of this history by Paucker seemed out of place. Warding off this criticism by stressing that Paucker was by no means “a belated child of *CV* ideology” and that the initiative for his *Abwehrkampf* book had come from the Hamburg research center, Robert Weltsch described the issue as indicative of the crisis the institute was currently facing.<sup>113</sup>

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<sup>110</sup> Arnold Paucker, “Erfahrungen und Erinnerungen. Ein Rückblick,” in *idem*, *Deutsche Juden*, p. 383.

<sup>111</sup> See note 105.

<sup>112</sup> Paucker, *Der jüdische Abwehrkampf* pp. 28–29 (see note 4); Barkai, “*Wehr Dich!*” For Werner Jochmann's relation with the LBI see the contribution by Stefanie Schüler-Springorum in this volume.

<sup>113</sup> Moses to Weltsch, January 1, 1969; Weltsch to Moses, January 9, 1969, (both

Without a doubt, the representation by the LBI of German-Jewish self-defense during the late Weimar period and the Nazi era reflected the weight exerted by various founding factions within the institute. However, as can be seen from the debates taking place in all three of the institute's branches until the late 1960s, it would be too easy to define the old ideological divide between Zionists and "assimilationists" as the sole or even main reason for its reluctance to examine the most recent past. Other factors clearly also played an important role: an experience of persecution and loss defying simplification and blurring pre-1933 antagonisms while transcending postwar notions of defiant self-assertion; a sense that except for a few survivors, German Jewry, and with it the promise extended to Jews by the German Enlightenment, had perished under the Nazi assault; the awareness of the marginal position held by German Jews in postwar Jewish organizational life in both the Diaspora and Israel; and finally, the failure of mainstream historiography to incorporate the fragmented memories of surviving German Jews into a broader context.

One of the key factors influencing the work of the LBI until the late 1960s was an already existing referential framework, informed by both personal memory and a sense of group identity. Within such a framework, historical complexities were reduced to a set of commonly accepted although – as could be seen in the Arendt debate – vulnerable notions built around the key concepts of Jewish self-assertion before 1933 and of selfless commitment to the cause of rescue after 1933. Many aspects of Jewish life in Germany before and during the Nazi era did not fit within this consensual view of history, appearing too controversial and complex. Starting in the early 1960s with the reinterpretation of the *CV*'s activities as having been directed towards increased Jewish self-acceptance, there was a slow erosion of resistance within the LBI towards "assimilationist" history in general and the history of the self-defense of German Jews in particular. Pushed forward with great energy by the LBI since the 1980s, current analyses and interpretations reflect a striking renaissance of positions once held by leading officials of the *CV*.<sup>114</sup> At the same time, a comprehensive history addressing the role played by the *CV* and other German-Jewish organizations in face of

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letters marked "persönlich"), *LBIJMB*, MF 491, reel 5. While not writing a comprehensive history of the *CV*, Eva Reichmann in 1974 published an essay collection including articles she had written in the 1930s (Eva G. Reichmann, *Größe und Verhängnis deutsch-jüdischer Existenz. Zeugnisse einer tragischen Begegnung*, Heidelberg 1974) and maintained close contacts with Paucker and other *CV* historians.

<sup>114</sup> Barkai, "*Wehr Dich!*" concludes his monograph study with a quote by Hans Reichmann on the *CV* as an organization that developed "from an organization into a Jewish movement" and on its "tragic guilt" in remaining faithful to the hope in the victory of justice (p. 375).

mounting National Socialist pressure and large-scale internal transformations remains to be written.

In view of both the unwieldiness of historical reality and lack of support extended by historians, the Leo Baeck Institute’s early difficulties in taking on a rather recent past is much less remarkable than its determination to create a basis for sound, impartial scholarship. Even after it had succeeded in doing so, vexing methodological and conceptual questions remained: what did “real history” mean when applied to the Nazi era and how close could one get to the actual events? Was there a way to measure the importance of organizations like the *CV* for the revival of Jewish identity before 1933, and to what extent were their policies based on an awareness of the problems faced by their rank and file? What were the internal front lines in the *Abwehrkampf* and how had other Jewish groups reacted to German antisemitism before 1933? Were there indeed “dark aspects” to the organized German-Jewish reaction to Nazi persecution, as perceived after the fact by Max Kreuzberger and Robert Weltsch in particular? Not only the LBI but scholarship at large has grappled with these questions for decades. Given the fragmentary character of our knowledge and the need for more in-depth analysis of this crucial era, we should hope for an increasing proximity to historical reality rather than for definitive answers.



The Grandeur and Collapse  
of the German-Jewish Symbiosis:  
Hans Tramer and Jewish Literary Studies  
at the Leo Baeck Institute

Andreas B. Kilcher

The Elegiac Eye

“The ruination of German Jewry is certain. With astonishment we see it happen to us, to the contemporaries of spring 1933. The oppression, the soiling, the economic ruin of a productive element of the German people, all this is certain ... .” Immediately after the Reichstag fire, certain of the outcome and already en route to Palestine via Switzerland and France, Arnold Zweig thus began his essay “Bilanz der deutschen Judenheit.”<sup>1</sup> Published in Amsterdam in 1934, this essay was Zweig’s appraisal of the accomplishments of German Jews in business, technology, the sciences and culture. Zweig’s observations were characteristic of the state of mind of German Jews who had been directly affected by the events of 1933. His observations were underpinned by two realizations. The first was a swift realization that Jewish cultural life in Germany had come to a close after the 1933 National Socialist seizure of power. As Zweig emphasized in his sober formulation, “The topic of German Jews ... can be depicted as a circle, as over, finished.”<sup>2</sup> The second and corollary realization was that there now existed a duty to undertake a commemorative retrospective of the 150 years from the Enlightenment to the Weimar Republic, a period of immense creativity in the history of the Jewish Diaspora.

Siegmund Kaznelson, the head of the Jewish Publishing House, also embarked upon a monumental anthology, *Jews in the German Cultural Sphere*, in 1933.<sup>3</sup> Describing his project as a “final accounting of German Jewry,” Kaz-

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<sup>1</sup> Arnold Zweig, *Bilanz der deutschen Judenheit 1933. Ein Versuch*, Amsterdam 1934, p. 9.

<sup>2</sup> Arnold Zweig, *Bilanz der deutschen Judenheit 1933*, [2<sup>nd</sup> ed.], Berlin 1998, p. 8. See pp. 182–190 for a discussion of Jews in German literature.

<sup>3</sup> Siegmund Kaznelson (ed.), *Juden im deutschen Kulturbereich. Ein Sammelwerk*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Berlin 1959.



nelson aimed to summarize the world that was disappearing before his eyes into an encyclopedic outline of over one thousand pages. As he wrote in his 1934 introduction, this was undertaken not from an apologetic perspective, but rather as a “purely scientific endeavor”:

This anthology attempts an historical retrospective of the participation of German Jews in scientific, artistic, political, and economic life: in short, in the cultural and social life of the German-speaking realm before the year 1933. . . . The goal of this work is nothing short of an image that will approximate historical reality as closely as possible. Because of the abundance of material, the time span of nearly one hundred and fifty years, the multitude of creative realms in which German Jews participated, and the lack of much groundwork on the subject, this proved to be an exceedingly arduous project.<sup>4</sup>

The viewpoints and proposals articulated by Zweig and Kaznelson in 1933 appear in retrospect as an anticipation of the agenda of the Leo Baeck Institute, which was founded in 1955. Indeed Robert Weltsch, the first director of the London LBI, edited and wrote a foreword to the second edition of Kaznelson’s “final account of German Jewry” in 1959, after its initial publication had been thwarted by the censorship of the new Nazi administration in 1934. This intuition of the cultural and social destruction of German Jewry foretold by Zweig and Kaznelson before the war was thus elucidated and expanded upon by Weltsch following the reality of the physical annihilation of the German Jews. In so doing, Weltsch arrived at two historical theses: first, that the 150-year history of Jews in Germany came to a definitive close in 1933; and second, that this epoch was one of the most fruitful in the history of the Jewish Diaspora. Weltsch reiterated his first hypothesis as follows: “The coexistence of Jews with the German people and everything that emerged from it came to an abrupt end in 1933. This end of an epoch imparts a sense of meaning to this account that is perhaps more profound than the original goal of 1933, which was to hold the mirror of truth before the face of National Socialist calumny.”<sup>5</sup>

In his use of the phrase, “the end of an epoch,” Weltsch was echoing Leo Baeck, whose manifesto “End of an Epoch” inaugurated the first *Year Book* in 1956. Leo Baeck had also anticipated Weltsch’s second hypothesis, the idea that the epoch of German-Jewish collaboration was a uniquely fruitful one. Quoting Max Warburg, Weltsch emphasized that “nowhere in the modern era was the cultural cooperation of Jews and Gentiles so fruitful and so positively productive as in Germany during the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century.” “Warburg’s assessment,” Weltsch confirmed,

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<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. xii.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. xix.

coincides with the oft-mentioned belief of the man who became the leader of German Jewry during its most difficult of times, Dr. Leo Baeck. Dr. Baeck, who is now deceased, was frequently known to mention the three periods of successful cultural assimilation in Jewish history: the classical Hellenistic period of antiquity, the Hispano-Arabic period of the middle ages, and the modern German liberal era.<sup>6</sup>

In light of the extinction of German Jewry, Weltsch commented in linking his two historical hypotheses, it must “appear as the greatest irony of history” that “the German cultural world of the classics, of enlightenment and of tolerance, of romanticism, philosophy and music, was the first and the true partner of the Jews” in their path to modernity.<sup>7</sup> Following the awful irony of German-Jewish collaboration, when peaceful and productive coexistence turned to mass murder, the exiled Jewish survivors took stock of their own history after 1945. Within this process of elegiac retrospective, the survivors would embark upon a new “project of history.”

### The Encyclopedia Project and the Status of Literature

Since its inception, the project of historical work at the LBI was guided by the mission of cultural remembrance. The investigation of the truncated “history of German Jewry in its final one hundred and fifty years,” the tracing of the “image of an irretrievably lost German Jewry,” was elevated to a “project of history.” The ultimate goal of the project was a “planned overview” that would constitute a definitive encyclopedic monument to German Jewry. This is how the LBI founders formulated their “task of history,” a task that was articulated by both Robert Weltsch and Siegfried Moses in the first volume of the *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book* in 1956 and by Hans Tramer in the first issue of the *Bulletin für die Mitglieder der Gesellschaft der Freunde des Leo Baeck Institute* in 1957.<sup>8</sup>

The “encyclopedic project” was designed to be written according to the “system of building in sections,” to paraphrase Kafka in “The Great Wall of China.”<sup>9</sup> In this short story, a monumental structure for protection against the “peoples of the north” was to be built in sections. In a similar manner, Weltsch, Moses and Tramer came to believe around 1955 that a “kind of classification of the different fields of specialty,” a segmentation into “separate

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. xvf.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. xix.

<sup>8</sup> See Siegfried Moses, “Leo Baeck Institute of Jews from Germany,” in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 1 (1956), pp. xi–xviii; Robert Weltsch, Introduction in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 1 (1956), pp. xix–xxxi; Hans Tramer, “Die Geschichtliche Aufgabe,” in *Bulletin für die Mitglieder der Gesellschaft der Freunde des Leo Baeck Institute*, 1, no. 1 (1957), pp. 1–6 *passim*.

<sup>9</sup> Moses, “Leo Baeck Institute,” p. xiii.

studies and monograph accounts of all the different fields” would be necessary. This would be accomplished by first gathering “material” and then elucidating “trends within the history of ideas.”<sup>10</sup> Kaznelson’s solution to the dilemma was an “anthology” in the model of a classical encyclopedia. The anthology would proceed through the various faculties and depict the arts and sciences individually, from literature, music, theater, film, philosophy and history to the natural sciences, politics, economics, the military, society, sports and games. The Leo Baeck Institute’s project, which was designed as an even more comprehensive project of universal history, envisioned a thousand-page “compilation” as well as two preparatory scholarly journals and a primary source and monograph series.<sup>11</sup> By 1955, however, the decision had been made to structure the project around the concept of history. As the introductory texts in the initial publications made clear, the scholarly perspective at the LBI was to be an historical one. The arts, sciences, and literature in particular were to be subsumed within the historical perspective:

The subject of the research and publication work of the institute is the history of German Jewry – if one uses the term ‘history’ in that extensive interpretation which it has more and more acquired in the course of recent decades. It includes, apart from external events, the inner development in the fields of philosophy, religion, science, economy, and art.<sup>12</sup>

This essay will examine German-Jewish literary scholarship within the central historical project of the LBI, a project that would assume an increasing importance in post-1945 historical consciousness. Literature proved itself as the phenomenon that embodied the “cultural achievement” of Jews in the German-speaking regions of Europe, serving as a paradigm for Jewish participation in the larger German cultural sphere. It comes as no surprise that literature was the subject of the most contentious debates on the part of both Germans and Jews after the nineteenth century.<sup>13</sup> Literature occupied primacy of place in Kaznelson’s compendium. Kaznelson’s study opened with Arthur Eloesser’s seventy-page history of German-Jewish literature from Moses Mendelssohn to the “generation of 1933.” This was one of the first comprehensive accounts of this immensely fertile contribution to German culture. In 1959, Kaznelson also edited his own anthology of German-

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<sup>10</sup> Tramer, “Die Geschichtliche Aufgabe,” p. 4.

<sup>11</sup> See Max Kreuzberger and Irmgard Foerg (eds.), *Publikationen des Leo Baeck Instituts aus zwei Jahrzehnten*, Jerusalem 1977.

<sup>12</sup> Moses, “Leo Baeck Institute,” p. xiii. In the *Bulletin’s* index (no. 49, 1974), history also predominates while the topics of literature and culture assume a secondary role.

<sup>13</sup> See Andreas Kilcher, “Was ist deutsch-jüdische Literatur? Eine historische Diskursanalyse,” in *Weimarer Beiträge*, vol. 45, no. 4 (1999), pp. 485–517.

Jewish poetry, *The Jewish Destiny in German Poetry: A Farewell Anthology*.<sup>14</sup> As Kaznelson explained in his introduction, the anthology was intended as a final testament after which the Jewish people would retire from the German-speaking world: "This anthology is 'conclusive' ... because in all likelihood there will be no more Jewish poetry in the German language after our generation, or perhaps the next one. The anthology is an exhortation, a legacy ... of the German Jewry that perished to its survivors."<sup>15</sup> In Kaznelson's study of German Jewry after the Holocaust, it was clear that any retrospective of German-Jewish cultural achievement before 1933 would first and foremost take place via an analysis of literature, the sphere in which German Jews had experienced their greatest aspirations for integration as well as their most profound disillusionment.

The question remains of the status that literature assumed within the larger historical project of the LBI. In the agenda-setting essays published after the Institute's founding in 1955, literature was addressed only within the framework of the larger historical undertaking. In his 1956 "outline of a programme," for example, Siegfried Moses assigned literature to the subordinate category of "the problem of cultural symbiosis," alongside the arts and sciences.<sup>16</sup> When the discussion turned to the "great ones," the "creative," and the "Jewish achievement," the focus remained primarily historical, with politics, society and the economy at its core.<sup>17</sup> Any discussion of these topics as cultural phenomena typically took place within the paradigm of the "problem of cultural symbiosis." It is also worth noting that early analyses did not focus on fictional texts such as novels, plays and poetry. Instead, following Hans Tramer's repeated exhortation, the focus remained on documentary, historical texts such as memoirs, autobiographies and letters.<sup>18</sup> These texts could be read as personal, lived testimony of a lost era and thus serve as historical "documents" to be integrated directly into the encyclopedic retrospective monument to German Jewry. While literature was not ignored, it was functionalized for the purpose of history. Thus functionalized and accorded documentary status, literature became the paradigm for German Jewry's problematic cultural project of assimilation.

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<sup>14</sup> Siegmund Kaznelson, *Jüdisches Schicksal in deutschen Gedichten. Eine abschließende Anthologie*, Berlin 1959, p. 14.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 14. See also Andreas Kilcher, "Spuren einer verschwundenen Welt. Hozaah Ivrit – jüdische Verlage im deutschen Sprachraum," in *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, no. 136, June 16, 1997, p. 20.

<sup>16</sup> Moses, "Leo Baeck Institute," p. xv.

<sup>17</sup> Tramer, "Die Geschichtliche Aufgabe," p. 3.

<sup>18</sup> See, for example, Tramer, "Dokumente europäischer Kultur," in *Bulletin für die Mitglieder der Gesellschaft der Freunde des Leo Baeck Institute*, 1, no. 1 (1957), pp. 45f.; Tramer, "Briefsammlung und ihre Bedeutung für die historische Forschung," in *Bulletin des Leo Baeck Instituts*, 4, no. 15 (1961), pp. 169f.

## Hans Tramer and the Bulletin

It was Hans Tramer who took the lead in focusing attention on the topic of literature. In Tramer's *Bulletin* (where he authored more than a third of the contributions) and to a lesser extent in Robert Weltsch's *Year Book*, literature became a topic of historical and critical analysis alongside the LBI's focus on politics and society. One of the important factors to note was that the *Bulletin*, which was published in Israel, was issued in German. As Tramer explained in the first issue, this would allow the *Bulletin* to appeal to the "largest possible readership" amongst German-speaking Jews in Israel and abroad. The *Year Book*, in contrast, was published in London in English.<sup>19</sup> While the *Year Book* published only occasional contributions on literary topics, essays on literature assumed both qualitative and quantitative importance in the *Bulletin*. This is largely due to Hans Tramer who, as publisher and editor of the *Bulletin* and vice-president of the LBI, was a formative influence. During his near twenty-year tenure from 1957 to 1978, Tramer published fifty-four issues of the *Bulletin*.

Tramer's first essays on literature were written prior to assuming leadership of the new journal. Born on September 17, 1905 in Bunzlau in Silesia, he completed rabbinical studies at the Jewish theological seminary in Breslau between 1928 and 1932. For a brief period prior to his 1933 emigration to Palestine, he was employed as a Liberal rabbi in Berlin.<sup>20</sup> However, he had already developed a keen interest in literature, an interest that was neither academic nor journalistic. Rather, it derived from a lived acquaintance with literature, first in the cafés of Berlin and Prague, and after the late 1930s in the literary circles of Tel Aviv populated by German-speaking immigrants from Central Europe and Germany. In the words of Arnold Paucker, Tramer's "immense passion for literature took shape in the coffee-houses of Vienna

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<sup>19</sup> Tramer, "Die geschichtliche Aufgabe," p. 8.

<sup>20</sup> See the obituary in the *LBI Year Book*, vol. 24 (1979) (unbound insert, n.p.) "Hans Tramer (1908–1979)": "Hans Tramer, Vice-President and Treasurer of the Leo Baeck Institute, member of the Executive of its Jerusalem Board, and Editor of the *Bulletin des Leo Baeck Instituts*, died on 6th January 1979 in Tel-Aviv in his 71st year. Trained as a Rabbi at the Breslau Jewish Theological Seminary, in Israel from 1933, he became first Secretary of the *Alijah Chadasha*, eventually General-Secretary of the *Irgun Olej Merkas Europa* and Editor of its weekly, the *MB*. A key figure in Jewish social work, he was active in the representative Jewish organizations. He edited many publications of the Leo Baeck Institute, amongst them the *Festschriften* for Siegfried Moses and Robert Weltsch and the recollections of Kurt Blumenfeld. Of his copious literary production we here single out only the brilliant essays, 'Prague – City of Three Peoples' (1964) and 'Der Beitrag der Juden zu Geist und Kultur' (1971). One of the founders and central personalities of the Leo Baeck Institute, Hans Tramer is irreplaceable as one who inspired and directed its work for almost quarter of a century."

and Prague. His knowledge of modern German literature, particularly of poetry, was phenomenal. I know of no trained scholar of the German language and literature who is comparable to him. Tramer turned the *Bulletin*, which first appeared in 1957, into a journal of literary studies.”<sup>21</sup> Tramer’s essays on literature for the *Bulletin* after 1957 were not, however, his first publications on the topic. He had been a leading figure among German-speaking émigrés since his arrival in Palestine in 1933. He spent nearly forty years as the general secretary of the association of German-speaking immigrants from Europe (the *Irgun Olej Merkas Europa*, founded in 1943, which succeeded the *Hitachduth Olej Germania*, founded in 1932). Tramer also edited the association’s newsletter, the *Mitteilungsblatt* or “MB,” first published in 1932 under the direction of Theodor Zlocisti.<sup>22</sup> Although the MB was primarily intended to address practical issues of immigration, it also provided a haven for literary and cultural commentary by Tramer and other writers. Finally, together with Eli Rothschild he occupied a managerial role in Bitaoon, the company that published both the *Mitteilungsblatt* and later the *Bulletin*.<sup>23</sup>

In 1939, Tramer’s essay *The Poet’s Responsibility* appeared as the first publication in a series entitled *Current Issues*.<sup>24</sup> This series was edited by Tramer and published by Joachim Goldstein, who had just moved his publishing house from Berlin to Tel Aviv. Tramer’s agenda-setting essay documented his cultural and journalistic work in the *Yishuv*, his outlook on literature, and his assessment of the “Jewish poets” who were arriving from Germany and, after 1938, from Austria. These included Max Brod, Gerson Stern, Josef Kastein, Arnold Zweig, Werner Kraft, Mosche Ya’akov Ben-Gavriël (Eugen Hoeflich), Manfred Sturmman, Ludwig Strauss, Sammy Gronemann, Schalom Ben-Chorin and Else Lasker-Schüler. The émigré writers soon began to cluster in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem. In Tel Aviv, the most important group formed around the salon organized by Nadia and Ernst Taussig. Ernst Taussig was a brother-in-law of Max Brod, who arrived from Prague in 1940.<sup>25</sup> Beginning in 1941, the cultural elite among the German-speaking émigrés met here for evenings of lecture and discussion. Max Brod, Sammy Gronemann, Schalom Ben Chorin and Margot Klausner were among the

<sup>21</sup> Arnold Paucker, personal communication with the author, October 6, 2004.

<sup>22</sup> On Tramer’s work in the *Irgun*, see the obituary in *MB*, December 1988, p. 3.

<sup>23</sup> Many issues of the *Mitteilungsblatt* display the notice “Bitaoon Ltd Publishers and Editors, Rambamstr. 15, Tel Aviv, Director: Hans Tramer, Tel Aviv”; see, for example, the September 1975 issue. See also Joachim Schlör, “‘Alija Chadascha und öffentliche Meinung.’ Das *Mitteilungsblatt* des *Irgun Olei Merkas Europa* (Tel-Aviv) als historische Quelle,” *Menora. Jahrbuch für deutsch-jüdische Geschichte*, vol. 8 (1997), pp. 70–79.

<sup>24</sup> Hans Tramer, *Die Verantwortung des Dichters*, Tel Aviv 1939.

<sup>25</sup> Joachim Schlör, *Endlich im Gelobten Land? Deutsche Juden unterwegs in eine neue Heimat*, Berlin 2003, pp. 138ff.

regular lecturers and included among the many occasional lecturers were Felix Weltsch, Leo Perutz and Arnold Zweig. Hans Tramer, a close acquaintance of Arnold Zweig, did not give lectures, but is known to have been a guest at the evening events.<sup>26</sup> These writers also comprised a large portion of the authors published in the German-language anthologies of Tel Aviv; these included the 1936 volume *The Harvest: An Anthology of Jewish Poetry*, edited by Adolf Chajes and *Menorah: A Selection of Literary Works in Eretz Israel*, published in 1941 by Gerson Stern and Schalom Ben-Chorin.<sup>27</sup> Tramer was also able to acquire some of these authors for his *Current Issues* series published by Joachim Goldstein. In 1939, Goldstein published Max Brod's *Miracle on Earth* and Schalom Ben-Chorin's *Essays on Present-Day Jewish Belief*.<sup>28</sup> In 1940, Goldstein published Hans Simon's *We Jews*.<sup>29</sup> Additional contributions were planned by Josef Kastein and Felix Weltsch. Tramer's close association with the German-speaking literary circles of the *Yishuv* around 1940 culminated in his own attempt to prove himself as an author of fiction. In 1940, his novella, *Michal: A Queen's Loves and Sorrows*, was issued by the Tel Aviv publishing house Matara, where Tramer was also the editor of a series.<sup>30</sup> The theme was the biblical tale of the unhappy life of Saul's daughter, Michal, whose love for the future King David was crushed in an oedipal struggle for family control and wartime political intrigue. The novella did not establish Tramer as a writer of fiction. Nonetheless, it is significant that in this novella as well as in other short prose works, Tramer chose to address a specifically Jewish theme.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Tramer's name is not included on the list of Taussig House Lectures, one of the few records of the activities of this circle. For permission to examine this list, I wish to thank Joachim Schlör. According to Usi Werner, who was also a member of the circle, Tramer was a guest and participant at Taussig's salon.

<sup>27</sup> Schalom Ben-Chorin and Gerson Stern (eds.), *Menora. Eine Auswahl literarischen Schaffens in Erez-Israel*, Tel Aviv 1941; Adolf Chajes (ed.), *Die Ernte. Ein Sammelheft jüdischer Dichtung*, Jerusalem 1936.

<sup>28</sup> Schalom Ben-Chorin, *Jenseits von Orthodoxie und Liberalismus. Versuch über die jüdische Glaubenslage der Gegenwart*, Tel Aviv 1939; Max Brod, *Das Diesseitswunder oder die jüdische Idee und ihre Verwirklichung*, Tel Aviv 1939.

<sup>29</sup> Hans Simon, *Wir Juden*, Tel Aviv 1940.

<sup>30</sup> Hans Tramer, *Michal. Liebe und Leid einer Königin*, Tel Aviv 1940. Tramer's essay entitled "Zionistisches Mönchstum und jüdische Wirklichkeit" appeared in the series *Palästina im Kriege* in 1939.

<sup>31</sup> See also two other literary texts by Tramer, "Der wahre Shylock" (published in *Der Morgen*, vol. 13 (1937), no. 5, pp. 208–210) and "Die Messiasbraut" (published in *Der Morgen*, vol. 12 (1936), no. 4, pp. 179–182). Both address explicitly Jewish themes, the former the character of Shylock, and the latter the figure of Sabbatai Zwi, or, more precisely, his "bride." Sabbatai Zwi's "bride" was the topic of earlier novels that Tramer obviously had in mind, including *Die Messiasbraut. Die Geschichte einer verlorenen Hoffnung* (1925), by Selig Schachnowitz, and *Dein Reich komme! Ein chilias-tischer Roman aus der Zeit Rembrandts und Spinozas* (1924), by Felix Theilhaber.

In fact, when Tramer enjoined German-Jewish writers to take a stand on current issues in his essay *The Poet's Responsibility*, he demanded that they do so from a specifically Jewish perspective. Tramer argued that the Jewish writer had to be both “poet and Jew.”<sup>32</sup> This was by no means a casual comment. Rather, it was intended as a renunciation of German-Jewish writers who distanced themselves from Judaism and regarded language and literature – indeed, their very participation in German culture – as a vehicle for integration and assimilation. Both here and elsewhere, Tramer cited the example of “the German-Jewish poet Rudolf Borchardt,” whose advocacy of a “union through and beyond the enemy” remained a thorn in Tramer’s side.<sup>33</sup>

In opposition to an assimilationist attempt to become German, Tramer thus demanded that German-Jewish writers adopt a specifically Jewish perspective. “Only then, when being a Jew becomes the natural precondition for speech, will the ‘incompleteness’ disappear. According to Romain Rolland, a gentile, ‘this insufficiency that is apparent in their inner being’ adheres to the ‘most distinguished Jewish intellects of our time.’”<sup>34</sup> In imagining writing from an unabashedly Jewish perspective, Tramer’s thinking was in line with that of Jewish nationalist literary theorists from Moritz Goldstein to Max Brod. In his 1914 essay “Jewish Poets in the German Language,” Brod had already called upon Jewish writers to “experience” national “unity” via a detour through the German language by the promotion of genuine Jewish subjects. These included, for example, “national enthusiasm,” “the mystical descent into the depths of Judaism” and, finally, “the whole Jew.” All this was to be transformed into a “literary problem” and “literary substance,” formulated in the German language in order to, as it were, practice “national speech values.”<sup>35</sup> In *The Poet's Responsibility*, Tramer had cited Max Brod as an exemplary “Jewish writer” in the German language, alongside such figures as Zweig, Beer-Hofmann, Roth, Wolfskehl and Herzl.<sup>36</sup> Brod’s 1933 novel *The Dependable Woman*,<sup>37</sup> which Schalom Ben-Chorin called a “Zionist didactic novel,” employed the figure of Justus Spira to portray the “fate of a Jewish writer” as an “allegory for all intellectual Jewish men of our time.”<sup>38</sup> Brod’s

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<sup>32</sup> Tramer, *Verantwortung*, pp. 24f.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 24.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 25.

<sup>35</sup> Max Brod, “Der jüdische Dichter deutscher Zunge,” in *Vom Judentum. Ein Sammelbuch*, ed. by Verein jüdischer Hochschüler Bar Kochba Prag, Leipzig 1914, pp. 261–263. On Brod, see Claus Ekkehard Bärsch, *Max Brod im Kampf um das Judentum*, Vienna 1992.

<sup>36</sup> Tramer, *Verantwortung*.

<sup>37</sup> Max Brod, *Die Frau, die nicht enttäuscht*, Amsterdam 1933.

<sup>38</sup> Schalom Ben-Chorin, “Die ersten fünfzig Jahre. Der Dichter und Philosoph des neuen Judentums,” in Hugo Gold (ed.), *Max Brod Gedenkbuch*, Tel Aviv 1969, pp. 23–46, here p. 33; Tramer, *Verantwortung*, pp. 27–29.



concept of “*Distanz-Liebe*,” which refers to the lingering attachment of Zionist writers to German culture, epitomizes the cultural ambivalence of the generation to which both Tramer and the founders of the Leo Baeck Institute belonged.

The impulse behind this 1939 essay also guided the article in which Tramer proposed an agenda for research on the history and literature of German Jewry. Published in the second issue of the *Bulletin* in February 1958, the essay was entitled “On German-Jewish Literature: Towards a Morphology of Jewish Affirmation.”<sup>39</sup> The essay’s importance is also demonstrated by the fact that it was included in Robert Weltsch’s 1963 anthology, *German Jewry: Ascent and Crisis*, which reprinted representative work from the institute’s first years.<sup>40</sup> The premise of Tramer’s essay was the elevation of literature to the organ of German-Jewish history as such:

This is the legacy of our generation, the responsibility entrusted upon us, the true accomplishment of Jewish writers in the German language. What they experienced consciously and unconsciously, what had taken on form and word, was testament and property of the connection that existed between the German and Jewish spirit for nearly fifteen decades.<sup>41</sup>

This mention of a union of the German and Jewish “spirit” seemed to imply a successful cultural symbiosis within the medium of literature. However, Tramer immediately pointed out that this was merely “a brief, albeit intense and ultimately tragic dream of the fusion of Jewry with the German spirit.”<sup>42</sup> The phrase “a dream” here anticipates Gershom Scholem’s famous reference to the German-Jewish symbiosis as a form of “myth.” Scholem’s controversial 1964 essay “Against the Myth of German-Jewish Dialogue” would later be published by the *Bulletin*.<sup>43</sup>

Written in 1957, Tramer’s simultaneously elegiac and critical retrospective on the failed experiment of cultural integration was even more emphatic in its rejection of the lure of cultural integration than was the case in his 1939 essay. Describing such integration as an “obfuscation” and a “misjudgment,” Tramer called upon German-speaking writers to articulate a “Jewish affirmation.” He thus opposed the assimilationist interpretation of German-Jewish culture, which the destruction of German Jewry had proven to be a “tragic

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<sup>39</sup> Hans Tramer, “Über deutsch-jüdisches Dichtertum. Zur Morphologie des jüdischen Bekenntnisses,” in *Bulletin für die Mitglieder der Freunde des Leo Baeck Institute*, 2/3 (1958), pp. 88–103.

<sup>40</sup> Robert Weltsch (ed.), *Deutsches Judentum – Aufstieg und Krise. Gestalten, Ideen, Werke*, Stuttgart 1963.

<sup>41</sup> Tramer, “Über deutsch-jüdisches Dichtertum,” p. 88.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 89.

<sup>43</sup> Gershom Scholem, “Wider den Mythos vom deutsch-jüdischen Gespräch,” in *idem, Judaica*, vol. 2, Frankfurt am Main 1970, p. 7–11.

error.” Instead, he replaced it with a Jewish nationalist agenda that attempted to articulate a process of cultural self-discovery and cultural Zionism.

Tramer’s “morphology of Jewish affirmation” in literature thus encompassed two paradigms: “disavowal,” the habit of the majority of German Jews until 1933, and “affirmation,” the call for a return to Jewishness that began no later than 1933. The cultural and political reasoning behind his logic is clear: the paradigm enables a dual perspective on the 150 years of German-Jewish modernity following its end in disaster. In so doing, it arrives at an important thesis about the origins of the catastrophe: the catastrophic end of this culture, however glorious, was predestined at the very moment that granted its initial success – a moment of cultural hubris. This same logic, however, also made it possible to imagine an alternative: a successful Jewish modernity. According to Tramer’s postulate, it would be the result of a national and cultural Jewish renaissance, one abandoning the dangerous state of cultural division in favor of a new state of unity and clarity.

Let us now consider the examples Tramer employed in the interpretive paradigm of his later work. Here he again returned to his 1939 essay, repeating the names that he had already cited in “The Poet’s Responsibility.” Rudolf Borchardt, Karl Wolfskehl and Max Brod were also central figures in “On German-Jewish Literature,” now interwoven into what had become a more detailed and comprehensive analysis.

### Borchardt and Wolfskehl as the Antipodes of German-Jewish Literary Life

Citing Rudolf Borchardt as the premier example of the tragically misguided “project of cultural assimilation,” Tramer expanded upon his condemnation of the poet, who had gone so far as to describe himself as a Prussian nationalist friend of Hofmannsthal. Tramer first emphasized that his vehement criticism of Borchardt was shared by the writer Willy Haas. In Gustav Krojanker’s 1922 anthology *Juden in der deutschen Literatur*,<sup>44</sup> Haas had “sharply taken to task, from the Jewish point of view” Borchardt’s assimilatory “attempt to penetrate into the Germanic essence.”<sup>45</sup> This criticism, Tramer believed, was all the more necessary and justified in light of the Holocaust. Tramer quite obviously wished to turn Borchardt into a kind of negative example. Although he claimed that he intended merely to “gather material about the problem as such,” he was clearly suggesting that Borchardt was one

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<sup>44</sup> Willy Haas, “Der Fall Rudolf Borchardt,” in Gustav Krojanker (ed.), *Juden in der deutschen Literatur. Essays über zeitgenössische Schriftsteller*, Berlin 1922, pp. 231–40.

<sup>45</sup> Scholem, “Wider den Mythos,” p. 97.

of the most striking examples of the problem of assimilation in German-Jewish literature:

We can see in him [Borchardt], a Jew, not a half Jew or even a baptized Jew, more clearly than in anyone else of similar stature, the apotheosis of mimicry, indifference, yes, deliberate disavowal of Jewishness. The whole of Jewish inheritance ... is denied, repudiated, willfully suppressed ... It is a sad stubbornness with which Rudolf Borchardt, despite his arrest and abduction by the Gestapo, insists on his Germanness, nay, his exclusive Germanness.<sup>46</sup>

As evidence of Borchardt's uncompromising "effort to penetrate into the Germanic essence," Tramer cites an anecdote first recounted by Max Rychner. According to this anecdote, Borchardt rebuffed a Jewish classicist who had attempted to remind Borchardt of his Jewish background and appeal to him as a Jew. Borchardt replied with irritation, in true oedipal fashion:

Anyone who has, as I have, allowed the current of German music to flow through his innermost being; who has, as I have, thought all the thoughts of the greatest of this land afresh by their side; who is, as I am, inspired and defined by the spirit of this language, by sharing in its spirit, the years going back to their origins, in myself an origin, my being as a poet; anyone who experienced this, as I did, within himself, may not and should not longer be called a Jew. You must heed this!<sup>47</sup>

Tramer thus established Borchardt as the archetype of the hubris and the blindness of the "culture-creating" German Jew whose hopes for integration have led, on the one hand, to a rejection of the Jewish cultural inheritance – a rejection stamped with an aggression bordering on self-hatred – and, on the other hand, to a naïve adoption and celebration of German culture. According to Tramer's Jewish nationalistic doctrine, this dangerous desire to be someone different, someone else, was the source of the catastrophe wrought upon the German Jews.

Karl Wolfskehl, a close friend of Stefan George, served as the counter-example to Borchardt's hubris. After decades of searching for a common foundation for Roman-Jewish-German existence, the Nazi persecution caught Wolfskehl by surprise. He went into exile in 1933, departing first for Italy and later emigrating to New Zealand. Wolfskehl's importance as a figure of identification is demonstrated by the fact that many contributions to the *Year Book* and the *Bulletin* were devoted to him.<sup>48</sup> Wolfskehl and other Jews in the

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 93.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 95.

<sup>48</sup> See, for example, Fred B. Stern, "Karl Wolfskehls Stellung zum Judentum," in *Bulletin des Leo Baeck Instituts*, 5, no. 17 (1962), pp. 13–22; Fritz Bamberger, "A visit to Karl Wolfskehl" (Letter to the Editor), in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 6 (1961), pp. 289–290; Ernest Kahn, "Jews in the Stefan George Circle," in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 8 (1963), pp. 171–183; Wera Lewin, "Die Bedeutung des Stefan George-Kreises für die deutsch-jüdische Geistesgeschichte," in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 8 (1963), pp. 184–213.

George circle served as models of a German-Jewish cultural symbiosis realized without renunciation of Jewishness – a symbiosis that succeeded, however temporarily, within the “hidden Germany.” For Tramer, Wolfskehl was the embodiment of the German-Jewish writer whose works arose “from both roots,” the German and the Jewish alike:<sup>49</sup> “From the very beginning, alongside and through the song of the German and for the German, the Jewish side also sounded within him.”<sup>50</sup> Despite his allegiance to this belief, Wolfskehl was not blind to its difficulties. After the 1933 publication of his volume of poetry entitled *The Voice Speaks*,<sup>51</sup> Wolfskehl abandoned his previous ideals in favor of a fateful return to Judaism. According to Tramer, the “ballads” in this volume “represent the final union with the ancestors, a return to the ancient peoples, a reaffirmation of belief.”<sup>52</sup>

Apart from the essays on Wolfskehl and the George circle, the *Year Book* and the *Bulletin* include additional contributions treating consciously Jewish writing in the German language (the contributions in the *Bulletin*, of course, were written largely by Tramer himself). The most frequently cited examples were the expressionist Jewish authors and the German-Jewish literature of Prague. The two journals cite other examples as well. These include Joseph Roth, the subject of a December 1970 conference held by the New York LBI (with proceedings published in the 1973 *Year Book*), Heinrich Heine, Stefan Zweig, Arthur Schnitzler, Ernst Toller and Lion Feuchtwanger. Two essays by Feuchtwanger cited as representative were “Aspects of the Judaic Element” and “The Jewish Context.”<sup>53</sup> However, in both the *Year Book* and the *Bulletin*, the question of the “Judaic element” and the “Jewish context” in literature are discussed with striking frequency, by way of the examples of Expressionism and the German-Jewish literature of Prague. It was Tramer, again, who wrote landmark essays on both.

### Expressionism as a Medium of Zionism

In 1958, the second year of the *Bulletin's* publication, Tramer published a path-breaking essay on the role of Jewish authors in Expressionism. The essay's subtitle neatly encapsulates its subject: “Some Observations on the

<sup>49</sup> Tramer, “Über deutsch-jüdisches Dichtertum,” p. 91.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 90.

<sup>51</sup> Karl Wolfskehl, *Die Stimme spricht*, Berlin 1934.

<sup>52</sup> Tramer, “Über deutsch-jüdisches Dichtertum,” p. 101.

<sup>53</sup> See Elisabeth M. Petuchowski, “Some Aspects of the Judaic Element in the Work of Lion Feuchtwanger,” in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 23 (1978), pp. 213–226; Helen Milfull, “Franz Kafka – The Jewish Context,” in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 23 (1978), pp. 227–238. See also the overview in the two index volumes: *Bulletin des Leo Baeck Instituts*, 49 (1974), pp. 40f.; and *LBI Year Book*, vols. 1–20 (1956–1975), with index compiled by Eli Rothschild, London, Jerusalem and New York 1982.

Participation of Jews in an Artistic Age.” The essay was apparently prompted by a number of recent anthologies; these included Karl Otten’s 1957 anthology of expressionist writing, *Ahnung und Aufbruch* (Premonition and Departure),<sup>54</sup> and accounts by Gottfried Benn and Kasimir Edschmid. Monographs such as Heinrich Neumayer’s study of Expressionism also served as inspiration. Tramer’s aim here was similar to that in “On German-Jewish Literature.” In Tramer’s view, Expressionism was simply a more vivid example of the 150 years of German-Jewish literature until 1933 as a whole. More than any other literary and artistic movement in Germany, Expressionism had been decisively influenced by Jews.

Tramer proposes a structural and “morphological” explanation for this phenomenon, employing the paradigm of the father-son conflict. For Tramer, this paradigm, as the social and cultural foundation of Expressionism, framed the subjectivity of modernist Jewish intellectuals around 1910. The generation of their fathers had achieved success in Wilhelmine Germany and continued to be guided by an optimistic, bourgeois liberalism. This older generation advocated assimilation in an uncompromising manner, regarding any insistence on Judaism as a step back into the pre-modern past as well as a provocation to antisemitism. Their sons, expressionist youth, opposed the generation of assimilated fathers loyal to Germany. They developed a new, provocative Jewish consciousness politically expressed either as revolutionary Diaspora cosmopolitanism or, as Tramer stresses, in a Zionism that was equally revolutionary in conception. This Zionism was advocated by many who left for Palestine in the 1930s, including Max Brod, Ludwig Strauss, Arnold Zweig and Else Lasker-Schüler.<sup>55</sup> It thus becomes clear why Expressionism became one of Tramer’s favorite topics in this and other essays.<sup>56</sup> He approaches the movement as a youthful Jewish dawn after the aberration of assimilation. More pointedly, he sees it as an anti-bourgeois, revolutionary renunciation of the misguided project of German-Jewish symbiosis:

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<sup>54</sup> Karl Otten (ed.), *Ahnung und Aufbruch. Expressionistische Prosa*, Darmstadt 1957.

<sup>55</sup> Hans Tramer, “Der Expressionismus. Bemerkungen zum Anteil der Juden an einer Kunstepoche,” in *Bulletin für die Mitglieder der Gesellschaft der Freunde des Leo Baeck Instituts*, 2, no. 5 (1958), pp. 33–46. See Andreas Kilcher, “Interpretationen eines kulturellen Zwischenraums. Die Debatte um die deutsch-jüdische Literatur 1900 bis 1933,” in *Menora. Jahrbuch für deutsch-jüdische Geschichte*, vol. 13 (2002), pp. 289–312.

<sup>56</sup> See, for example, Hans Tramer, “Materialien zum Thema Juden am Rande,” in *Bulletin für die Mitglieder der Gesellschaft der Freunde des Leo Baeck Instituts*, 2, no. 6 (1959), pp. 102–110; Tramer, “Berliner Frühexpressionisten. Leben und Schaffen von Erwin Loewenson,” in *Bulletin des Leo Baeck Instituts*, 6, no. 23 (1963), pp. 245–254; Tramer, “Jakob und Hoddis – ein deutsch-jüdisches Dichterschicksal,” in *Bulletin des Leo Baeck Instituts*, 13, no. 50 (1974), pp. 76–80; Paul Hatavi, “Über den Expressionismus,” in *Bulletin des Leo Baeck Instituts*, 8, no. 31 (1965), pp. 177–206.

In reality, they [the young Jewish authors of 1910] were in the same position [as the Expressionists]: they were also shaped by the father-son problem, and perhaps doubly or triply so. Their fathers were also members of the complacent classes, and at the same time advocates of an utterly lifeless, assimilatory and diluted concept of religion, or else disciples of a rigid juridical religion that in many cases served to only heighten the conflict. They were convinced that the transformation of social and political conditions would also be a step forward into progress towards the Jewish destiny. This was why some of the Jewish Expressionists of the period (Max Brod, Ludwig Strauss, Arnold Zweig) also came out in opposition to the generation of their fathers, against society and political narrow-mindedness, finally undertaking the logical step toward Zionism.<sup>57</sup>

This interpretation of Expressionism as an anti-assimilatory, potentially left-wing Zionist movement is preceded by Tramer's largely quantitative enumeration of the significant Jewish writers and artists in all possible fields and genres. He focuses on the poets Arno Nadel, Else Lasker-Schüler, Alfred Wolfenstein, Albert Ehrenstein, Paul Adler, Ludwig Rubiner, Leo Greiner and Mynona. As was the case with the former Expressionist writer Karl Otten, who along with his above-mentioned expressionist anthology published two anthologies of German-Jewish literature (in 1959 and 1962),<sup>58</sup> Tramer here attempts to quantify the importance of Expressionism for the Jewish people by calculating that "twenty-one" of the "fifty-one" Expressionist authors were Jewish.

Of course, this process of quantification also implies a qualitative judgment. It confirms a generally Zionist stance among this generation of young, anti-bourgeois and anti-assimilatory Jewish authors, located at the border of the Jewish nationalist renaissance. In a second, complementary interpretation, the Jewish Expressionists are described as the "final representatives of a formerly great flock" of Jewish writers in the German language.<sup>59</sup> For Tramer, they constituted the final generation of German Jews prior to their destruction; among their most prominent members, he indicates, was the writer Jakob Wassermann.<sup>60</sup> The Expressionist generation thus embodied

<sup>57</sup> Tramer, "Der Expressionismus," pp. 34f.

<sup>58</sup> Karl Otten (ed.), *Das leere Haus. Prosa jüdischer Dichter*, Stuttgart 1959; Karl Otten (ed.), *Schofar. Lieder und Legenden jüdischer Dichter*, Neuwied 1962.

<sup>59</sup> Here Tramer cites Otten, *Ahnung und Aufbruch*, p. 38.

<sup>60</sup> In a sketch "on the occasion of the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the poet's birth," subtitled "A German-Jewish Destiny," which appeared in the *Mitteilungsblatt* in March 1973, Tramer characterized Wassermann as "the most powerful literary representative of the late German-Jewish symbiosis." According to Tramer, Wassermann initially saw himself as wholly German. However, after the 1921 essay *Mein Weg als Deutscher und Jude*, Wassermann increasingly adopted a Jewish identity and became a model of the "dual problem of the German-Jewish artist and writer." See Hans Tramer, "Jakob Wassermann – ein deutsch-jüdisches Schicksal. Zum 100. Geburtstag," in *MB*, vol. 12, March 23, 1973, p. 3.

both extinction and transition: the extinction of German Jewry and the transition to a Jewish nationalist people outside of Germany. They represented both the final flowering and the imminent end of the cultural coexistence of Germans and Jews. United in support of this political and artistic movement, their paths would now diverge.

### Prague as the Heart of German-Jewish Modernity

Tramer and many other contributors to the *Bulletin* and the *Year Book*, some of whom were members of the Prague circle, devoted particular attention to the literature of Prague, manifesting the same relative consensus as was the case regarding Wolfskehl and Expressionism.<sup>61</sup> Tramer wrote one of his longest essays on the topic, "Prague – City of Three Peoples,"<sup>62</sup> published in German for the 1961 volume commemorating the seventieth birthday of Robert Weltsch, who was born in Prague. The essay then appeared in the 1964 *Year Book* in English translation. The importance of Tramer's essay is underscored by the fact that Max Brod cited it at the end of his 1966 account, *The Prague Circle*.<sup>63</sup> It is not surprising that the LBI contributors devoted so much attention to Prague: on the one hand, the city was in actuality one of the most important centers of Jewish culture in German-speaking Europe; on the other hand, quite a few of the LBI's most important founders were born there, from Robert Weltsch, head of the London LBI to Hugo Bergman, who occupied a leading position in the Jerusalem LBI after 1959.<sup>64</sup> Various contributors to LBI publications were also originally from the city, including Felix Weltsch, Max Brod and Hans Kohn. Hence a portion of Prague's Jewish modernist movement lived on, in a sense, at the LBI. More precisely, it was Prague's Zionist modernist movement: the above individuals were leaders in the *Bar Kochba* Zionist students' association or editors and writers for the Jewish weekly *Die Selbstwehr* ("Self-Defense"). The Jewish intellectuals and institutions of Prague were thus part of the LBI's inheritance.

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<sup>61</sup> See, for example, Johannes Urzidil, "Der lebendige Anteil des jüdischen Prag an der neueren deutschen Literatur," in *Bulletin des Leo Baeck Instituts*, 10, no. 40 (1967), p. 276–297; Felix Weltsch, "Der Weg Max Brods," in *Bulletin des Leo Baeck Instituts*, 6, no. 23 (1963), pp. 228–244. Numerous articles dealt with the topic of Franz Kafka: see below.

<sup>62</sup> Tramer, "Die Dreivölkerstadt Prag," in Hans Tramer and Kurt Loewenstein (eds.), *Robert Weltsch zum 70. Geburtstag*, Tel Aviv 1961, pp. 138–203.

<sup>63</sup> Max Brod, *Der Prager Kreis*, Stuttgart 1966, p. 65.

<sup>64</sup> See also the essay by Guy Miron in this volume.

As the title suggests, “Prague – City of Three Peoples” focuses on co-existence in this city of German, Czech, and Jewish culture.<sup>65</sup> As with his approach to expressionism, Tramer here develops a twofold theme. First, he depicts Prague as a city where three cultures coexisted despite nationalist tensions, but also, more importantly where the Jews had “a special status as bearers of German culture within an overwhelmingly Czech majority.”<sup>66</sup> Located some distance from Germany geographically as well as politically, culturally on the fringes of German-speaking Europe, turn of the century Prague appeared to be a successful experiment in German-Jewish cultural symbiosis. Tramer refers to the Jewish “idyll of a German Prague.”<sup>67</sup> This idyll was, again, deceptive. Although it made possible a cohabitation of cultures, the cohabitation itself had a negative side. Tramer’s first example in this respect is a portrait of the city’s German-Jewish “culture creators” in the Concordia writer’s association. These included its head Alfred Klaar, the editor of the conservative newspaper *Bohemia*; its avowedly anti-Zionist secretary, Heinrich Teweles, director of the Prague New German Theater, who in 1925 published a book on Goethe and the Jews; and the writers Friedrich Adler and Hugo Salus, whom Tramer characterizes as “extreme assimilationists,” borrowing a phrase from Max Brod.<sup>68</sup>

As this polemical epithet makes clear, Tramer did not approve of the Concordia authors or their approach. Instead, like Brod, he denounced it as illusory and doomed. For Tramer, the Concordia circle and Prague’s many other Jewish cultural figures ultimately exemplified, as had Borchardt, the hopeless assimilatory yearnings of German Jews, striving for social integration by way of their artistic existence. In 1912 Moritz Goldstein’s famous essay “The German-Jewish Parnassus”<sup>69</sup> examined the popular myth that Jews were using German culture to “control” a realm to which they were not entitled.<sup>70</sup> Raised by the Germans, this very question of legitimacy with its attendant accusation of usurpation proved that the cohabitation model was doomed to fail:

In *Im Prager Dunstkreis*, the title of the novel by the Prague poet Oskar Wiener, a remarkably large number of gifted individuals flourished and developed their talents. Most were Jews who, though rooted in their Prague milieu, found their life’s meaning in their artistic vocation. They were Jews and most remained so ... but they regarded this merely as a matter of origin. Apart from that, they regarded themselves as

<sup>65</sup> According to information received from Arnold Paucker, Tramer often visited the city after the war.

<sup>66</sup> Tramer, “Die Dreivölkerstadt Prag,” pp. 138 ff.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 141.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 147f.

<sup>69</sup> Moritz Goldstein, “Deutsch-jüdischer Parnaß,” in *Der Kunstwart*, vol. 25 (1912), pp. 281–294.

<sup>70</sup> See Kilcher, “Interpretationen.”



artists above all, as pioneers of a new future, as witnesses for a liberal, progressive world in which Jews would also have access to unlimited scope for achievement. Certainly, for a short period it appeared as though this illusion would be indulged, particularly in the artistic sphere.... But very soon, even before Moritz Goldstein's famous essay in *Kunstwart*, doubts about the legitimacy of Jews in the German artistic world again became apparent. ... The status of Jews within the cultured German stratum of Prague was no doubt peculiar, and the concentration of Jews among the bearers of German culture was both unusual and conspicuous.<sup>71</sup>

According to Tramer, even in Prague the future did not belong to Jewish apologists for German culture but rather to a second group of German Jews: Prague was the home not only of the Concordia, but also of an old cultural and national Jewish consciousness starting to gather strength around the turn of the century. In Tramer's view it was here, where the "boundaries were clearly drawn ... that [one] knew where one belonged."<sup>72</sup> The search for a Jewish identity was carried forward by Zionist institutions like the *Bar Kochba* student association and organs such as the weekly *Selbstwehr*. For Tramer, then, Prague's importance was less as a "Jewish colony" of German culture in the Diaspora, more as a foundation for a newly blossoming Jewish culture, perhaps even for the coming Zionist state:

... if Prague has a special place and status in Jewish history, this is due to the exceptional contribution to the Zionist movement of a relatively small number of people who had come together there. ... Located at the juncture of German and Czech culture, German and Czech nationality, these young people of Prague were well placed to realize that they had, or should have, a special consciousness as Jews.<sup>73</sup>

Among these "young people," Tramer concentrates on a collection of figures who, as noted, became leading Zionist intellectuals in the *Yishuv* as well as important members of the LBI staff. He first cites Hugo Bergman, described as one of the most important initiators of Zionism in Prague. Bergman and some leading members of *Bar Kochba*, including Hugo Hermann and Hans Kohn, formed *Bar Kochba*, a group that invited Martin Buber to Prague for a series of three lectures; Tramer viewed both the published texts<sup>74</sup> and an anthology published by the group in 1913 entitled *On Judaism*<sup>75</sup> that expanded on the project of a Jewish cultural renaissance as key Zionist manifestos. Along with Bergman, Hermann, and Kohn, Tramer refers to Siegmund Kaznelson, Felix Weltsch, Max Brod and Robert Weltsch as the most important

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<sup>71</sup> Tramer, "Die Dreivölkerstadt Prag," pp. 174f.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 158.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 158.

<sup>74</sup> Martin Buber, *Drei Reden über das Judentum*, Frankfurt am Main 1911.

<sup>75</sup> *Vom Judentum. Ein Sammelbuch*, ed. by Verein jüdischer Hochschüler in Prag, Leipzig 1913. Prague contributors included Hans Kohn, Hugo Bergman, Hugo Hermann, Wilhelm Stein, Robert Weltsch, Oskar Epstein and Max Brod.

of the Prague Zionists. In his view, this group embodied the ideal of theoretical, practical and ethical Zionism. In contrast to a “Zionist monasticism,” it represented the “Jewish reality” in the most eloquent possible fashion.<sup>76</sup>

### Franz Kafka as a Figure of Identification for the LBI

The most distinguished Jewish writer in Prague was Hugo Bergman’s schoolmate Franz Kafka – also the university companion of Felix Weltsch and, most famously, Max Brod. Kafka is mentioned repeatedly but not discussed in detail in Tramer’s “Prague – City of Three Peoples.” This is probably due to Kafka being difficult to situate within either the assimilatory or Zionist paradigm of German-Jewish literature. Instead he displays elements of both: Goethe-worship on the one hand and commentaries on Herzl on the other, a cosmopolitan rejection of nationalism and territorialism on the one hand, an opposing impulse toward Zionism on the other. This is the context for the controversies over Kafka and Judaism that developed between Walter Benjamin and Gershom Scholem and between Hans-Joachim Schoeps and Max Brod.<sup>77</sup> The debate has continued over recent years, as reflected in the 1999 LBI-sponsored conference in Israel on “Kafka, Zionism, and Beyond.”<sup>78</sup> But how did Tramer himself read Kafka, and how did other essays in the LBI periodicals interpret the phenomenon of Kafka and the Jews?<sup>79</sup>

After neglecting Kafka in his essay on Prague, Tramer does eventually refer, albeit briefly, to this central figure in literary modernism in his 1970 essay “The Jewish Renaissance in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries”<sup>80</sup> (in

<sup>76</sup> Hans Tramer, *Zionistisches Mönchtum und jüdische Wirklichkeit*, Tel Aviv 1939.

<sup>77</sup> See Hermann Schweppenhäuser (ed.), *Benjamin über Kafka. Texte, Briefzeugnisse, Aufzeichnungen*, Frankfurt am Main 1981; Julius H. Schoeps (ed. and intr.), *Im Streit um Kafka und das Judentum. Max Brod, Hans-Joachim Schoeps – Briefwechsel*, Königstein 1985. See also Karl Erich Grözinger, Stéphane Mosès and Hans Dieter Zimmermann (eds.), *Kafka und das Judentum*, Frankfurt am Main 1987.

<sup>78</sup> International conference, “*Ich bin Ende oder Anfang.*” *Kafka, Zionism, and Beyond*, Jerusalem and Beersheva, in cooperation with the Franz Rosenzweig Center, Hebrew University Jerusalem, Goethe-Institute, Jerusalem and Ben-Gurion University, Beersheva, October 24 – 29, 1999. The contributions were published in the collection *Kafka, Zionism, and Beyond (Conditio Judaica*, vol. 50), ed. by Mark H. Gelber, Tübingen 2004.

<sup>79</sup> Although Tramer and especially Felix Weltsch are the focus here, other authors are also worth mentioning: Hartmut Binder, “Franz Kafka and the Weekly Paper ‘Selbstwehr,’” in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 12 (1967), pp. 135–148; Walter Sokel, “Franz Kafka as a Jew,” in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 18 (1973), pp. 233–238; Felix Weltsch, “The Rise and Fall of German-Jewish Symbiosis: The Case of Franz Kafka,” in *LBI Year Book*, vol. 1 (1956), pp. 255–276.

<sup>80</sup> Hans Tramer, “Jüdische Renaissance im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert,” in Karl Hein-

essence, the essay retraces the history of Zionist thought from Moses Hess to Leo Baeck). At one point Tramer indicates that “publication of the *Letters to Felice* in 1967 again made apparent with what keen and burning interest Kafka observed everything that had to do with ideas of Jewish renewal.”<sup>81</sup> This typifies his approach which, unsurprisingly, follows other interpreters, particularly Gershom Scholem and Max Brod, in reading the writer in the framework of the “Jewish Renaissance.” In this respect, it is telling that in a footnote to his remarks on Kafka, Tramer cites Brod’s 1948 volume *Franz Kafka’s Teachings and Belief*, with an afterword on Religious Humor in Franz Kafka by Felix Weltsch.<sup>82</sup> This author was able to purchase Tramer’s personal copy of that book, inscribed with the note “Hans Tramer 1948” and containing frequent underlinings and annotations eloquently revealing his own reading of Kafka.<sup>83</sup> The annotations on page forty-one, where Brod argues against Pierre Klossowski’s interpretation of Kafka’s diaries, are evocative of the struggle over, or more precisely, *for*, Kafka’s Jewishness.<sup>84</sup> Here Tramer underlined the following passage: “Klossowski’s invention, which has no basis in reality, to the effect that Kafka rejected the paternal traditions of the Jewish community ... is the central error in his didactic Catholic interpretation.” Brod continues his rebuttal of Klossowski further down on the same page:

Kafka never felt the need to leave the Jewish community. Quite the contrary. The ties that first bound him to this community were weak, conventional. But later in life, Kafka strengthened this bond, over and over. He replaced the inauthentic Judaism that he may or may not have been taught by his father, over the years, by a more authentic, lived connection with genuine Judaism.”

Handwritten in the margin across from the last sentence is Tramer’s “correct!”<sup>85</sup> His underlining of another of Brod’s assertions reflects the same focus: “Franz Kafka should be included among the ranks of the revivers of the Jewish faith of the present day” (p. 62). At the end of the book, one finds a full page of Tramer’s comments and citations, including a quote from Kafka referring to page 63 of Brod’s book, “Zionism a last tassel of the Jewish prayer

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rich Rengstorf and Siegfried von Kortzfleisch (eds.), *Kirche und Synagoge. Handbuch zur Geschichte von Christen und Juden. Darstellung mit Quellen*, vol. 2, Stuttgart 1970, pp. 668–705.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 691.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 705, n. 41.

<sup>83</sup> Max Brod, *Franz Kafkas Glauben und Lehre (Kafka und Tolstoi)*, with an afterword by Felix Weltsch, “Religiöser Humor bei Franz Kafka”, Winterthur 1948. Most of Tramer’s outstanding library ended up in the hands of antiquarian booksellers.

<sup>84</sup> Franz Kafka, *Journal intime Esquisse d’une autobiographie, Considérations sur le péché, Méditations*, transl. by Pierre Klossowski, Paris 1945.

<sup>85</sup> Brod, *Franz Kafkas Glauben und Lehre*, p. 41.

shawl,” and a comment on pages 81 and 82, “Kafka as the reviver of ancient Jewish religiosity.”

Tramer was able to gain support for his reading from another of Kafka’s friends who also lived and wrote in Israel, Felix Weltsch. Weltsch’s 1956 essay, “The Rise and Fall of the Jewish-German Symbiosis: The Case of Franz Kafka,” was given primacy of place in the first issue of the *Year Book*. Tramer would certainly have been familiar with the essay, which depicts Kafka in much the same light as Tramer would later depict the Zionist youth of Prague: as a Jewish prodigal son who, in opposition to parental assimilation, had found his way back to a Judaism that had nearly been lost. The essay opens with an explanation of purpose, that being

... to show how Jewish consciousness revived in a certain Jew, gradually, spontaneously, as though flowing from some underground source. This took place in a city in the heart of Europe, in a place where German literature and art were thriving, and when the most intensive assimilation of the Jews to German culture was the order of the day. The city is Prague, the period is the first quarter of the century, the man is Franz Kafka.<sup>86</sup>

The essay closes with an equally pointed observation that Kafka had found his way from a negative to a positive conception of Judaism, from assimilation to Zionism, and from a single “cornerstone of historical consciousness” – language – to the triumvirate of “language, ancestry, religion.”<sup>87</sup> Weltsch concludes that “Kafka’s path led from assimilation to Zionism, from an historical consciousness limited to language to a full historical consciousness. He demonstrated two things in his life and work: the grandeur and the collapse of the German-Jewish symbiosis.”<sup>88</sup>

For Felix Weltsch, Kafka’s work thus exemplifies the glory and downfall of the German-Jewish symbiosis. The same may be said for literary studies at the LBI as a whole. Focusing on Kafka, Wolfskehl, or Expressionism, essays on literature in LBI publications repeatedly present two seemingly contradictory theses. On the one hand, there is an emphasis on and identification with the extraordinary contribution of Jews to German culture, whether from a dispassionately historical or apologetic perspective. On the other hand, there is a persistent reminder that this very contribution to German culture was borne by a dangerous yearning: a hubris of assimilatory self-abandonment, the only escape from which was the path of Zionism, Judaism’s self-reaffirmation.

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<sup>86</sup> Weltsch, “The Rise and Fall,” p. 255.

<sup>87</sup> See Felix Weltsch, “Drei Eckpfeiler des Geschichtsbewusstseins,” in *Bulletin für die Mitglieder der Gesellschaft der Freunde des Leo Baeck Institute*, 1, no. 1 (1957), pp. 30–34.

<sup>88</sup> Weltsch, “The Rise and Fall,” p. 275.

During the nearly twenty years of Tramer's tenure (from 1956 to 1979) literary studies at the LBI by and large was oriented towards such a thesis. The emphasis was on the dual role of German-Jewish authors, from Heine and Wolfskehl to Kafka and Brod, as German authors who enriched German literature only then to return to Judaism as their true well-spring and inspiration – Weltsch referred to language, ancestry, and descent – and this for reasons going well beyond the existence of antisemitism. Great German writers were thus transformed into great Jewish writers; well into the 1970s, the LBI thus remained loyal to the principle of remembrance in the wake of the Holocaust. One aspect of such loyalty was, in a way, attributing the Holocaust to a phantasm of symbiosis: this attribution is presented in near-canonical form in Scholem's above-cited essay on the myth of German-Jewish symbiosis. A corollary postulate to such thinking is, of course, that the Holocaust can only be countered through national and cultural Jewish self-consciousness.

### The Bulletin after Hans Tramer

This scholarly ethos and its cultural politics guided the LBI's publications, especially the *Bulletin*, during the institute's first twenty years – more specifically until Tramer's death in January 1979.<sup>89</sup> This raises the question of how literary studies at the *Bulletin* developed after the Tramer era, until the publication's demise in 1991. Briefly stated, while it continued to focus on identifying and analyzing the Jewish aspects of German-Jewish literature and culture, there were some shifts in scholarly assumption leading to several important changes of emphasis and perspective.

This development reflected a broader change in the preconditions for scholarly work at the institute, its younger members not belonging to the generation of German Jews born between 1900 and 1933 that was the focus of the LBI's own research. Felix Weltsch had died in 1964, Max Brod in 1968, Hugo Bergman in 1975, Hans Tramer in 1979 and Robert Weltsch in 1983. The experiences of this generation, the participation in and shaping of the very history of which they wrote and the witnessing of the end of the culture into which they were born, inevitably had a decisive influence on scholarly work. The generation's scholarship had been guided by an elegiac ethos of remembrance. It was a scholarship centered on the great contributions of Jews to German culture, methodologically inclined towards the collection of letters, memoirs and autobiographies, and historically delimited to the irrevocably severed 150 years of German-Jewish history before 1933. As Hans Tramer wrote in an important letter to Gershom Scholem about the

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<sup>89</sup> This period covers issues 1 through 54 of the *Bulletin*.

LBI's conception of history, the period focused on by the LBI's founding generation "had become a true shibboleth" for the Jews and especially "for us Zionists," auguring "the end, the collapse of a flawed construct."<sup>90</sup>

As manifest in the *Bulletin*, these assumptions began to change around 1980. For the most part, the new contributors were no longer direct witnesses to the destruction of German Jewry. Within the LBI as elsewhere, an ethos of remembrance had gradually receded in favor of a scholarship centered on objective evidence; there was manifestly less reliance on autobiographical testimony, more on literary sources. Secondly, the scholarly focus had moved beyond pre-1933 limits that had previously been consensually agreed on, now extending both to the Holocaust itself and into the postwar era of German-Jewish literature. After 1980 the *Bulletin* thus contained no essays on Karl Wolfskehl and the George circle, and only scattered essays on Expressionism and – with the exception of the proceedings of the Kafka conference held in Jerusalem – on Prague and Kafka. Instead, essays began to appear on wartime and postwar authors, including the poets Gertrud Kolmar, Paul Celan and Nelly Sachs, and the literary historian Peter Szondi. The *Bulletin* also began to publish essays on topics such as non-Jewish perceptions and representations of Jews, and the methodological approaches became more varied.

A glance at the thirty-five issues of the *Bulletin* published between 1979 and 1991, mainly edited by Joseph Walk with the assistance of several colleagues, confirms that the submissions on German-Jewish literature increased in quantity over the *Bulletin*'s final twelve years. Despite the pluralization of approaches and perspectives, the essays were still guided by a tendency to examine German-Jewish literature for Judaic elements. Clearly reflecting Tramer's enduring influence on the journal's interpretive agenda, this tendency is typified by a pair of essays written by, respectively, the literary historian Itta Shedletzky and the literary theorist Gershon Shaked (both of the Hebrew University), appearing in 1986.<sup>91</sup> Both essays are concerned with the issue of the literary representation of Jewish topics. In an analysis of Joseph Roth's novel *Job*, Shaked approaches the issue through the question "How Jewish is a Jewish-German novel?" In 1956, Felix Weltsch had already considered the "Criteria for Jewish Literature in the German Language" in respect to Kafka, focusing on the triad of "language, ancestry, religion." In his essay, Shaked identifies an assortment of socio-

<sup>90</sup> Hans Tramer to Gershom Scholem, August 3, 1960, *LBI London*, file "LBI Jerusalem 1.1. 1960 ff."

<sup>91</sup> Itta Shedletzky, "Im Spannungsfeld Heine-Kafka. Deutsch-Jüdische Belletristik und Literaturdiskussion zwischen Emanzipation, Assimilation und Zionismus," in *Bulletin des Leo Baeck Instituts*, 25, no. 75 (1986), pp. 29–40. Gershon Shaked, "Wie jüdisch ist ein jüdisch-deutscher Roman?" in *Bulletin des Leo Baeck Instituts*, 25, no. 73 (1986), pp. 3–12.

cultural characteristics he refers to as “sociosemiotics,” theoretically extrapolating from Roland Barthes’s “cultural code.” Such a “number series” within the medium of literature, Shaked indicates, “can only be deciphered using the code of a specific social group,” in this case the Jewish group.<sup>92</sup> Shaked reads Roth’s *Job* novel as symbolizing a “Jewish world” by means of linguistic, thematic and cultural codes as well as the literary traditions that convey them. On the basis of its sociosemiotics, *Job* is identified as a “Jewish novel,” a text intelligible primarily as “Jewish” rather than as “German.” In this manner, developing an older interpretive framework, Shaked poses a kind of phenomenology of fixed and heritable Jewish cultural elements within literature.

By contrast, Itta Shedletzky reconstitutes the historical debate on “Jewish *belles lettres*” in nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century journals. Over this time-span, she observes a shift in the “concept of ‘the Jewish’” and an “increasing abstraction of the ‘Jewish in literature’ . . . away from concrete Jewish themes,” a trajectory that moves from an “increasing alienation from Jewish tradition” to a mere “disputation of aesthetic issues.”<sup>93</sup> By way of a Jewish literary self-image, she thus describes a narrative of decline for the assimilatory project, which began with positive “Jewish themes” but culminated in a preoccupation with formal, aesthetic issues. It is, of course, difficult to assess how representative these two general essays in the Jerusalem *Bulletin* might be of scholarship on German-Jewish literature as a whole. It is in any case clear that each of the essays adheres to a distinct interpretive tradition within the LBI: on the one hand, an analysis of assimilation as a loss of Jewishness (Shedletzky); on the other hand, a focus on positive symbolic representation of Jewish cultural identity and way of life (Shaked).

All in all, the LBI’s many essays on German-Jewish literature, initially written by the Holocaust generation living in Israel, provided an important impetus for the new research on that literature starting in the late 1980s in Germany and abroad. However, it is clear that a scholarly price had to be paid for the older generation’s embrace of a Jewish nationalist definition of German-Jewish authors. In 1939, Walter Benjamin had already complained about this tendency to Gershom Scholem. Objecting to Benno Jacob’s revision of his 1930 *Encyclopedia Judaica* article, “Jews in German Culture,” Benjamin complained that, “everything that one can read about ‘Jews in German literature’ to date has been driven by this current alone.”<sup>94</sup> This project of “re-

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4.

<sup>93</sup> Shedletzky, “Im Spannungsfeld,” p. 37.

<sup>94</sup> Walter Benjamin, *Briefe*, ed. by Gershom Scholem and Theodor W. Adorno, Frankfurt am Main 1966, p. 804. The revision of Benjamin’s encyclopedia article, “Juden in der deutschen Kultur,” was undertaken by Nachum Goldmann and Benno Jacob. See also Gershom Scholem, *Walter Benjamin – Geschichte einer Freundschaft*, Frankfurt am Main 1975, pp. 199f.

deeming” German-Jewish writers for Judaism became a paradigm in the wake of the Holocaust. Written from outside the LBI, Werner Kraft’s 1951 interpretation of Else Lasker-Schüler is another notable example of this impulse: he sees her “poetic personality” as “rooted in a uniquely confident monotheistic certainty of belief that she owed to Judaism.”<sup>95</sup> As we have observed, Tramer’s essays, like those of many other authors – mainly from the Jerusalem LBI – are marked by a similar impulse, most particularly in Tramer’s own rather rigid distinction between “Jewish affirmation” and “disavowal.”

The literary historical research at the institute in the 1980s was thus faced with the task of historicizing the critique of assimilation as well as the call for a Jewish national standpoint. Following the Holocaust, such a stance could only have been considered legitimate. But the more recent perspective, meanwhile also evident in central Europe, is broader, the focus now shifted to the ways various texts participate in the multivocal debates within Jewish modernity. The older literary scholarship at the Jerusalem LBI wished to establish certainties regarding literary origin, substance, subject matter, themes, language and style, in the course of establishing affirmative certainties in respect to a Jewish national character. Recent scholarship on German-Jewish literature in central Europe, which with its roots, in part, in methods of discourse analysis, aims instead at analyzing the constitutive process of literature in general, while at the same time considering the multiplicity and ambiguity of modern Jewish culture. Put somewhat differently, the focus is now on modes of argument employed by individual writers and texts, and those at work in diverse historical discourses, in order to interpret the heterogeneous intercultural arena of German-Jewish literature.<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> Werner Kraft, Introduction in Werner Kraft (ed.), *Else Lasker-Schüler. Eine Einführung in ihr Werk und eine Auswahl*, Wiesbaden 1951, pp. 7–19, here p. 8. See also Jakob Hessing, *Die Heimkehr einer jüdischen Emigrantin. Else Lasker-Schülers mythisierende Rezeption 1945–1971*, Tübingen 1993, pp. 13ff.

<sup>96</sup> This is the methodology adopted by, for example, the *Lexikon der deutsch-jüdischen Literatur*, Frankfurt am Main 2003. See also A. Kilcher, “Interpretation von Interpretationen. Was bedeutet deutsch-jüdische Literatur heute? Eine Replik,” in *Frankfurter Rundschau*, no. 137, June 15, 2000, p. 20.





## Looking Forward: A Global Research Community as the Cornerstone of the LBI Program

Robert Liberles

The jubilee of the Leo Baeck Institute offers an opportunity to reflect upon an institution that has made its mark within the spheres of both German and Jewish academic history, and also to reflect upon a dispersed community of survivors that set out to find diverse ways to recollect the community it had once been and to memorialize its past achievements. The studies in this book have shown us how, long before global structures had become commonplace in the academic world, a dedicated group of Jews who had been born and raised in Germany overcame numerous obstacles to build an institution based on international cooperation.

Institutions dedicated to studying the history of the Jews of a specific country date back to the closing years of the nineteenth century. That period saw the founding of both the American Jewish Historical Society and the Jewish Historical Society of England. Around the same time in Germany, Gustav Karpeles established a network of local societies known as the *Verband der Vereine für jüdische Geschichte und Literatur*.<sup>1</sup> These organizations differed from the LBI in one fundamental respect: they were formed to celebrate past achievements under external pressures seen as threatening the continued welfare of their communities, while the LBI was founded to study the past of a community that no longer existed. But there were also similarities: as would later be the case with the LBI, each of the earlier organizations persistently confronted the question of whether its main purpose was scholarly research or a general spreading of knowledge and awareness. In addition, each struggled to decide whether its mandate was to study their country's Jewry in isolation or as part of a broader Jewish historical canvas. All of these societies eventually concluded that reciprocal influences and comparative analysis had to play an integral role in their research programs. How, for example, could

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<sup>1</sup> Robert Liberles, "Postemancipation Historiography and the Jewish Historical Societies of America and England," in *Studies in Contemporary Jewry*, vol. 10 (1994), pp. 45–65. On the German societies, see Ismar Schorsch, *Jewish Reactions to German Anti-Semitism, 1870–1914*, New York 1972, pp. 111–112.

one understand the beginnings of American Jewish history without considering the Spanish expulsion and subsequent Sephardic dispersion, or the “great migration” to America without examining conditions in the Russian Pale of settlement?<sup>2</sup> How could one study the early Anglo-Jewish community while neglecting its personal, economic and religious ties to communities in Amsterdam and Poland? Although the LBI focused primarily on the history of German-speaking Jewry, it too has, with time, demonstrated an increased awareness of the need for a broader comparative perspective.

Each of the societies also began with decisions to emphasize certain subjects and periods and to exclude others. The AJHS laid great emphasis on the role played by Jews both in the American Revolution and in the discovery of America itself. For the JHSE, the medieval expulsion of the Jews from England and their seventeenth-century readmission under Cromwell and the Restoration were central themes but, significantly, the English society gave little attention to the drawn-out and frustrating struggle for emancipation.<sup>3</sup> In the case of the LBI, an early decision to sponsor research extending from Germany’s Jewish Enlightenment movement to the Nazi accession to power in 1933 not only provides a clear statement of what the institute’s leaders wished to include, but also of what they wished to leave out: this chronological framework suggests an overriding focus on the aspirations of Germany’s Jews for successful integration into the broader society and culture.

Although the present volume could not explore the question of the LBI’s role in the adaptation of German-Jewish immigrants to their new environments, it has offered useful material for future research into their migration. Such research will itself best proceed in a comparative manner. It is notable that each of the institute’s three branches developed in such a way that reflected both the continuity of its origins and the change accompanying the move from Germany to a new location. In Israel, just to provide one example, the ethnic component of German Jewry, in other words the qualities defining a distinct German-Jewish identity, vanished rather rapidly. Why this happened is a complex question, but as a result, in contrast with the London and New York branches of the LBI, the Jerusalem LBI has only been able to maintain rather weak ties with a German-Jewish immigrant community that has all but vanished from the social fabric, a development with significant implications for the nature of its program and the sources of its support.

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<sup>2</sup> For Cyrus Adler’s eloquent critique of an “isolationist” approach, see Liberles, “Jewish Historical Societies,” pp. 51–52.

<sup>3</sup> Liberles, “Jewish Historical Societies,” pp. 53–54.

In its fifty years of existence, the Leo Baeck Institute of Jerusalem, London, and New York has published well over a hundred volumes and a thousand essays under its imprimatur on the history of Jewish life in German-speaking societies. This publishing activity invites a number of general observations on the research sponsored by the LBI.

In the first place, from early on the institute has emphasized the need for “an academic infrastructure” to open a path to future research. Established at the institute’s founding, the LBI Year Book, with its research articles and documentation as well as authoritative bibliography of “Publications on German-Speaking Jewry,” has provided a solid foundation for such an infrastructure. The importance placed on providing scholars with tools necessary to pursue their work was further advanced by development of the archives and library within the New York LBI. Max Kreutzberger’s early catalog of the LBI’s archival and library holdings provided vital bibliographic information for scholars wherever they worked, for instance through a detailed listing of German-Jewish periodicals.<sup>4</sup> Monika Richarz’s three-volume selection of memoirs from the LBI’s vast manuscript collection later appeared in a one-volume selection in English and Hebrew and is probably the most cited work in the field of German-Jewish history.<sup>5</sup> After the reunification of German states, the LBI undertook, under the direction of Stefi Jersch-Wenzel and Reinhard Rürup, a project to catalog materials related to German Jewry that had been located in archival collections in the new German states.<sup>6</sup> These are now being followed by a new series cataloging similar documents found in Polish archives.<sup>7</sup>

Secondly, long before globalization became an academic leitmotif, LBI projects and conferences reflected the development of an international community of scholars working in German-Jewish history. This global community of scholars has brought about a meaningful framework for the exchange

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<sup>4</sup> Max Kreutzberger (with Irmgard Foerg) (eds.), *Leo Baeck Institute New York, Bibliothek und Archiv. Katalog*, vol. 1, Tübingen 1970 (Schriftenreihe wissenschaftlicher Abhandlungen des Leo Baecks Instituts 22).

<sup>5</sup> Monika Richarz (ed.), *Jüdisches Leben in Deutschland*, 3 vols., Stuttgart, 1976–82; Monika Richarz (ed.) *Jewish Life in Germany: Memoirs from Three Centuries* (transl. by Stella P. Rosenfeld and Sidney Rosenfeld), Bloomington, IN 1991; Monika Richarz (ed.), *Ezrahim altenay: yehude Germany - pirqa zikronot; 1780–1945* (transl. by Avraham Qadima), Jerusalem 1993.

<sup>6</sup> Stefi Jersch-Wenzel and Reinhard Rürup (eds.), *Quellen zur Geschichte der Juden in den Archiven der neuen Bundesländer*, 6 vols., Munich 1996–2001.

<sup>7</sup> Stefi Jersch-Wenzel (ed.), *Quellen zur Geschichte der Juden in polnischen Archiven*, Munich 2003 ff.

So far, the first volume has been published in this series: *Ehemalige preußische Provinzen. Pommern, Westpreußen, Ostpreußen, Preußen, Posen, Grenzmark Posen-Westpreußen, sūr- und Neuostpreußen*, compiled by Annekathrin Genest and Susanne Marquardt, Munich 2003.

of ideas between scholars coming from both different countries and different disciplines. With the current blossoming of research on Jewish subjects in German-speaking countries, including considerable interest in German-Jewish history, the LBI, through development of the *Wissenschaftliche Arbeitsgemeinschaft* and its seminars for doctoral and post-doctoral scholars, has played a central role in integrating young German scholars into the international framework of German-Jewish studies.

Thirdly, the LBI has maintained a high level of commitment to pure scholarship and has facilitated publication of significant works that might well not have appeared without the support of the LBI. Many of these volumes appeared in the institute's distinguished series, the *Schriftenreihe Wissenschaftlicher Abhandlungen des Leo Baeck Instituts*, others under the imprint of series developed by the different branches. The result of this commitment to scholarship is that citations to monographs published by the LBI and articles that appeared in the *Year Book* permeate scholarly research in the field of German-Jewish studies.

Fourthly, despite the many conflicting currents that ran through German-Jewish life, the LBI has transcended insular perspectives and supported a research program that has been inclusive and not exclusive, in order to provide as full a picture as possible of German-Jewish life. As Christhard Hoffmann has indicated in his discussion of the *LBI Year Book* in this volume, that publication has never favored intellectual history over social history, assimilated Jews over Zionists, or Reform Jews over Orthodoxy. The list of books published also indicates a spectrum that ranges from highly identified Jewish personalities and movements, including a number of volumes on German orthodoxy and Zionism, to books on contributions by Jews to music in Germany.

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The appearance of a comprehensive, four-volume *German-Jewish History in Modern Times* in 1996–8 represented the culmination of a long-term objective of the institute.<sup>8</sup> As the project offered a summary of the current state of research into German-Jewish history, the problems it raised and responses to it were tied to the research program of the LBI in general. Most importantly, after 40 years of work begun in the aftermath of destruction, was there – indeed should there be – more life for the institute after the appearance of such a comprehensive history? There was also concern that with the *Gesamtgeschichte* being aimed at a general readership, the institute might now neglect the specialized scholarship that had, in fact, laid the foundation for that very

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<sup>8</sup> Michael A. Meyer (ed.), *German-Jewish History in Modern Times*, 4 vols., New York 1996–8.

project. In some ways, the emergence of a new project in the institute that focused on the everyday life history of German Jewry provided an early – almost immediate – response to such concerns. With discussions on the *Alltagsgeschichte* project beginning in 1994, the LBI issued a clear statement even prior to the appearance of the *Gesamtgeschichte* that research would continue with a renewed emphasis on the basic importance of archival research and additional attention to newer trends, including family and gender history.<sup>9</sup>

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At this jubilee crossroads, several signposts hint at possible directions in the next stages of development. Two of the most significant developments are reflected in twin moves of the New York LBI, the opening of a branch of its archives within the Jewish Museum in Berlin and simultaneous move into the Center for Jewish History in downtown New York, with which it joined as an active partner. The surge of interest in German-Jewish history in German-speaking countries – obviously a development of vast historical and sociological interest in its own right – provides new impetus in many different ways to the study of German-Jewish life. Far beyond the significance of the number of young scholars and the obvious skills they bring to their research, this scholarly grouping contributes new strengths involving both diversity of perspective and methodological sophistication to German-Jewish studies in general. While in Germany as elsewhere some choose to work outside the circles of LBI activity, the LBI in Germany continues to represent a force that can harness a global framework enriching the work of the many scholars who participate in its programs.

Having emphasized the notion of an international scholarly community, I feel obliged to add a reminder that such communities also have their drawbacks. Perhaps chief among them is a natural tendency towards compromise and consensus that works against the right, indeed the duty within an academic intellectual framework, to consider critically the work of one's colleagues. Exercise of this critical capacity can, to be sure, lead to some strain. On the other hand, at least in my personal view, scholarship gains more than it loses through the communal framework: the collegiality that develops facilitates a free exchange that ranges from abstract ideas to specific bibliographic references. These countervailing considerations have led some to work more closely within the orbit of the institute, while other outstanding scholars have opted for distance.

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<sup>9</sup> Marion Kaplan (ed.), *Geschichte des Jüdischen Alltags in Deutschland*, with contributions by Marion Kaplan, Robert Liberles, Steven M. Lowenstein and Trude Maurer, Munich 2003. Publication of the English and Hebrew editions is expected in 2005.

The New York LBI's move into the Center for Jewish History is the most dramatic example of a tendency on the part of each of the institute's branches to increase its institutional partnerships. London has increased its cooperation with the Wiener Library while establishing new alliances in the academic world, in particular with the University of Sussex. The Jerusalem branch has entered into concrete partnerships involving publication and conferences with research centers such as *Merkaz Shazar*, *Yad Ben Zvi*, and *Yad Vashem*. Once again, as with the American and English Jewish historical societies of the last century, we have concluded that the history of the Jews of Germany is most suitably studied within broader contexts: in relation to the history of the Jews of other countries, and as part of the general history of German-speaking countries.

The *Gesamtgeschichte* provided a point of departure for research possessing renewed vigor. Research now being carried out by the LBI is more sensitive to issues involving gender than that carried out in earlier decades. Comparative Jewish history, once seen as outside the LBI's purview, has become a normative position. The chronological framework of the institute's research has itself recently been widened to include both earlier and later periods. As we have seen in this volume, there were a number of reasons why in its early years the LBI was reluctant to confront the Nazi period that the institute's founders had survived. From our own perspective and with the advantage of hindsight, matters naturally seem very different in some ways than they did to the founders. On the one hand, it is clear that the end of an historical period should not wholly define our understanding of that period, German Jewry's history thus not being interpretable entirely in terms of its demise; on the other hand, it is also inadequate to view the final phase of German-Jewish life as a mere aberration from the German-Jewish past. But by including the Nazi period, we do encounter the possibility that the powerful hold of the Holocaust on the contemporary historical consciousness will come to dominate the institute's agenda.

How appropriate, then, that while extending the chronological framework in one direction, recent research has also extended its range in the other direction. The *Gesamtgeschichte* signaled this tendency, followed by the *Alltagsgeschichte*, both projects beginning considerably before the Enlightenment, in the early seventeenth century. A framework defined by the Enlightenment at one end and 1933 at the other paints the German-Jewish experience in a certain light. The beginning represents the hope for integration and dialog, and although retrograde phases within the Wilhelminian and Weimar periods are included, there is an omission of the total breakdown and tragedy that followed. Such a schema has made it easier for some historians to offer rather simplified generalizations about German-Jewish history. As this author has argued in a recent Leo Baeck Memorial Lecture, considering the history of German Judaism from the early modern

period through the Nazi era presents the historian with a far more complex picture.<sup>10</sup>

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Over the course of the last half-century, most of the institute's leaders have been men born in Germany who struggled to combine their role as participants and witnesses with their status as academic analysts. The continued vibrancy of the institute and its program owes much to their success in that endeavor. During recent years, the LBI has continued to adapt, as increasing numbers of scholars who in their personal biographies are ever more distant from the historical experience of German Jewry have become deeply involved in its academic study. This shift has been reflected in the evolution of the institute's German-language publications. For decades, its *Bulletin*, which (in contrast to the *Year Book*) appeared in German, published research for those more comfortable in that language. It also served the useful purpose of informing mainly German emigrants of the LBI's research agenda. In 1993, the decision having been reached that the *Bulletin* had served its purpose, it was replaced by the *Jüdischer Almanach*, an annual publication intended to inform the German-reading public, largely non-Jewish, of Jewish cultural matters, especially, but not exclusively, pertaining to German Judaism and German Jewry. In retrospect, it seems quite possible that the *Bulletin* was eliminated at exactly the time a German-language scholarly platform was all the more needed, albeit for different reasons than those conceived at the start: to serve the rapidly expanding number of German speaking scholars writing on Jewish subjects. At present, finding the best way to harness the expanding research in German-Jewish history emerging from the German-speaking world, in conjunction with an English language *Year Book* that continues to maintain high standards of scholarship and editorial excellence, represents an appropriate challenge for the institute as it enters yet newer phases of active research.

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<sup>10</sup> Robert Liberles, "Persistent Myths and Stereotypes in the Image of German Jews: A Social Perspective," *Leo Baeck Memorial Lecture* 47, New York 2003.







1. Leo Baeck, London 1951.



2. During the founding conference of the LBI in Jerusalem, a meeting of the planning committee was held in Martin Buber's house in Tabiyeh on the morning of May 30, 1955. In the collective memory of the LBI, the founding of the institute has remained closely associated with Buber's home. This picture, taken in the 1950s by David Rubinger, shows Buber at home with Ernst Simon and Shmuel Hugo Bergman.



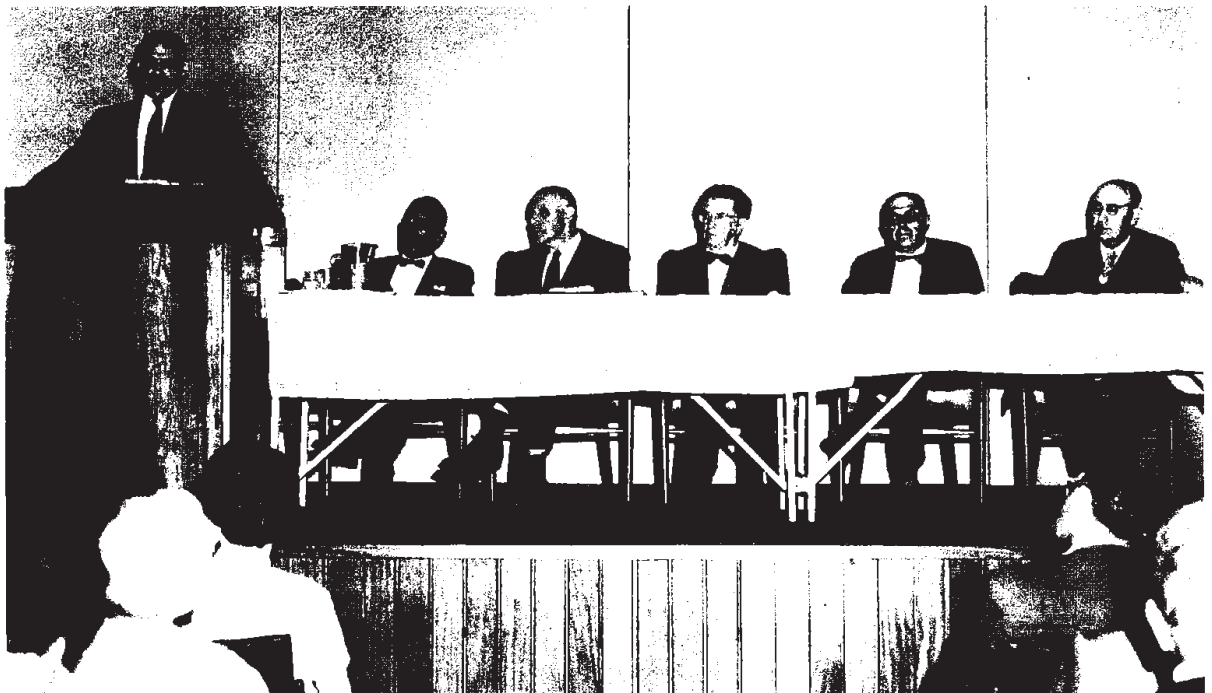
3. The director of the LBI New York Max Kreuzberger with two of his staff, Lou Landauer and Annalise Kamenetzki, and an unknown visitor in the first office of the LBI New York at 1239 Broadway, c. 1958 (photograph by Hilde Casey, Lynbrook, NY).



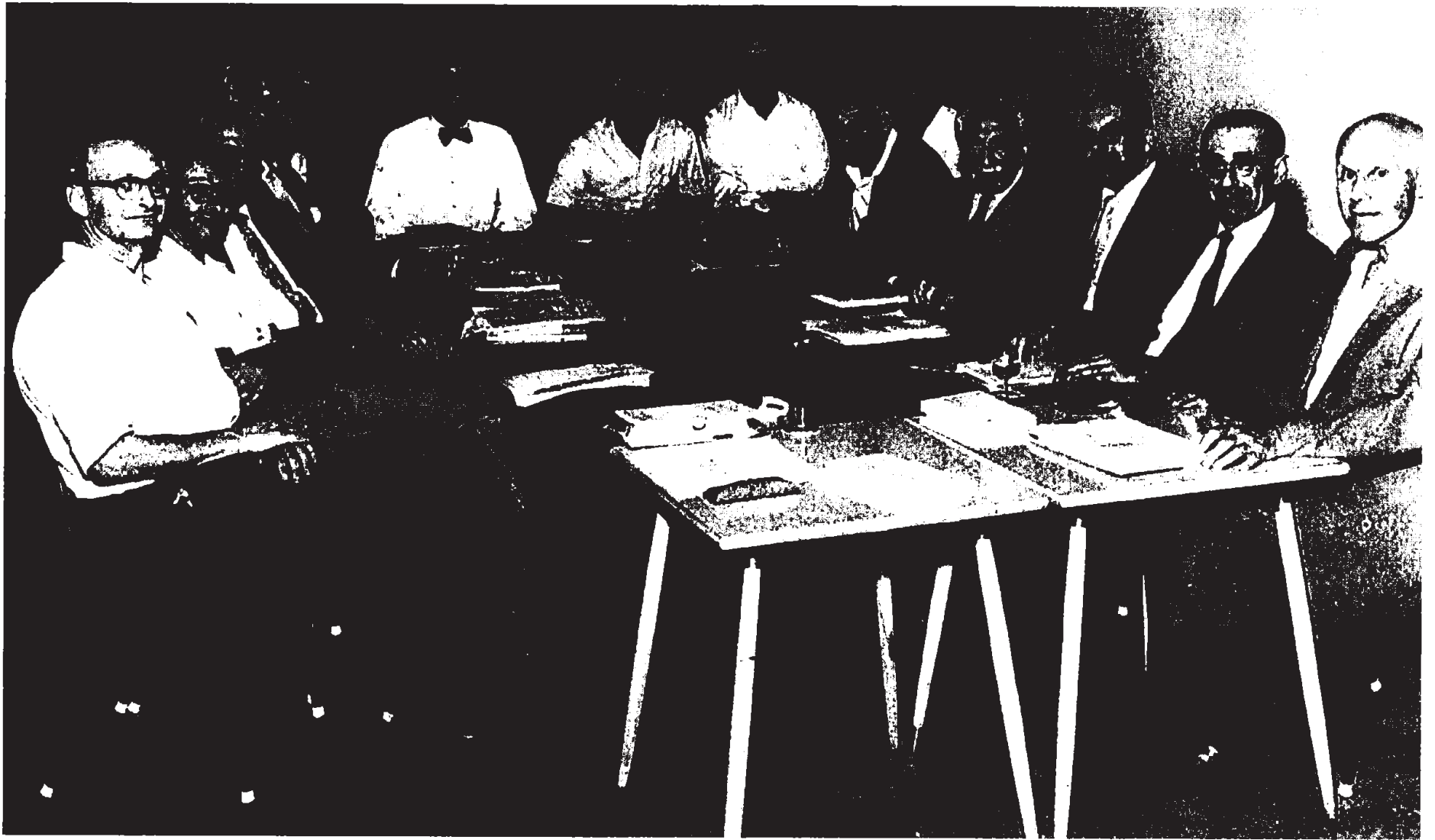
4. The first librarian of the LBI, Irmgard Foerg in the reading room of the LBI New York, c. 1958, (photograph by Hilde Casey).



5. Vice-president of the LBI New York Fritz Bamberger presenting a book to the German Federal President Theodor Heuss during his visit of the LBI on June 21, 1958. The volume included three manuscripts from the memoir collection of the LBI archives about Otto Hirsch, the director of the Reichsvertretung of Jews in Germany who died in the Nazi concentration camp of Mauthausen in June 1941, and who had been a friend of Heuss since fellow student times.



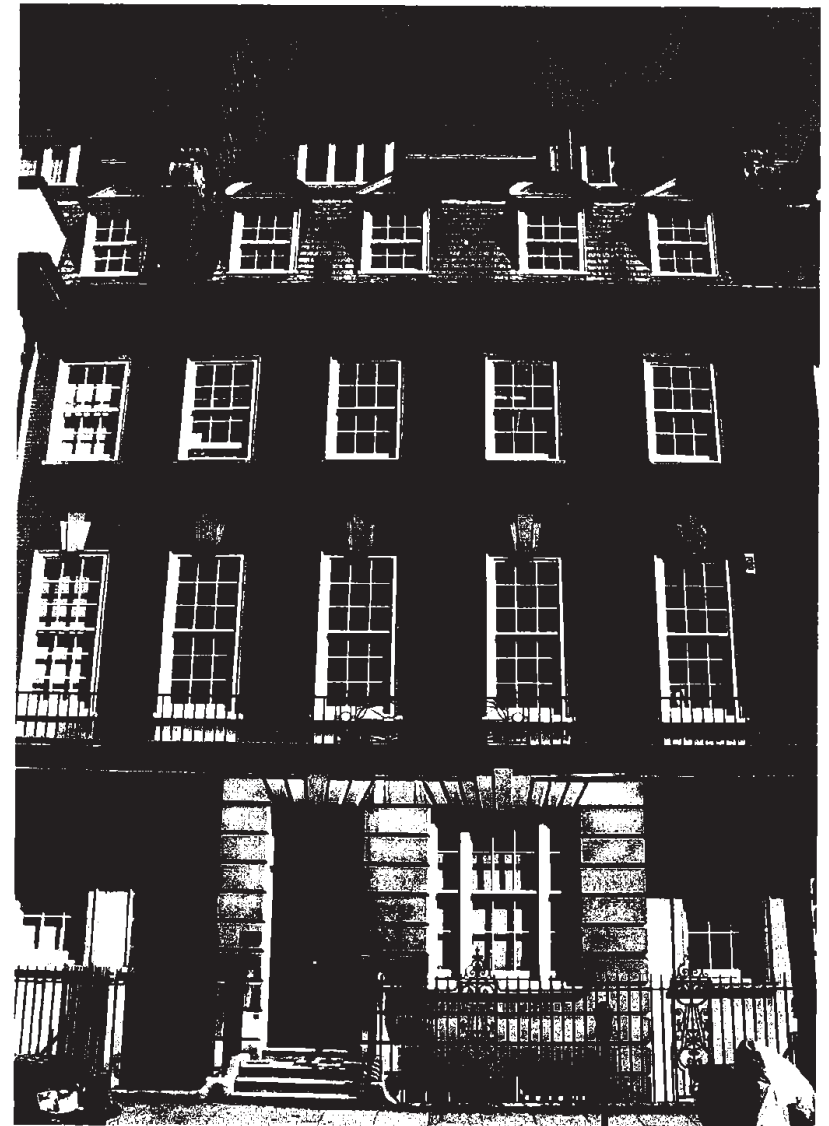
6. Gershom Scholem delivering a lecture on *Wissenschaft des Judentums* at the LBI conference in London, September 7, 1959. On the podium (left to right): unknown, Ernst Simon, Siegfried Moses, unknown, Hans Liebeschütz (photograph by E. H. Emanuel, Hampstead).



7. Board Meeting of the Jerusalem LBI on July 20, 1960. Left to right: Moshe Unna, Heinz Gerling, Shlomo Krolik, Dolf Michaelis, Curt David, Siegfried Moses, Schalom Adler-Rudel, Franz Meyer, Gershon Scholem, Max Nathan (person in the back), Shmuel Hugo Bergman, Josef Burg, Hans Tramer and Ernst Simon (photograph by W. Braun).



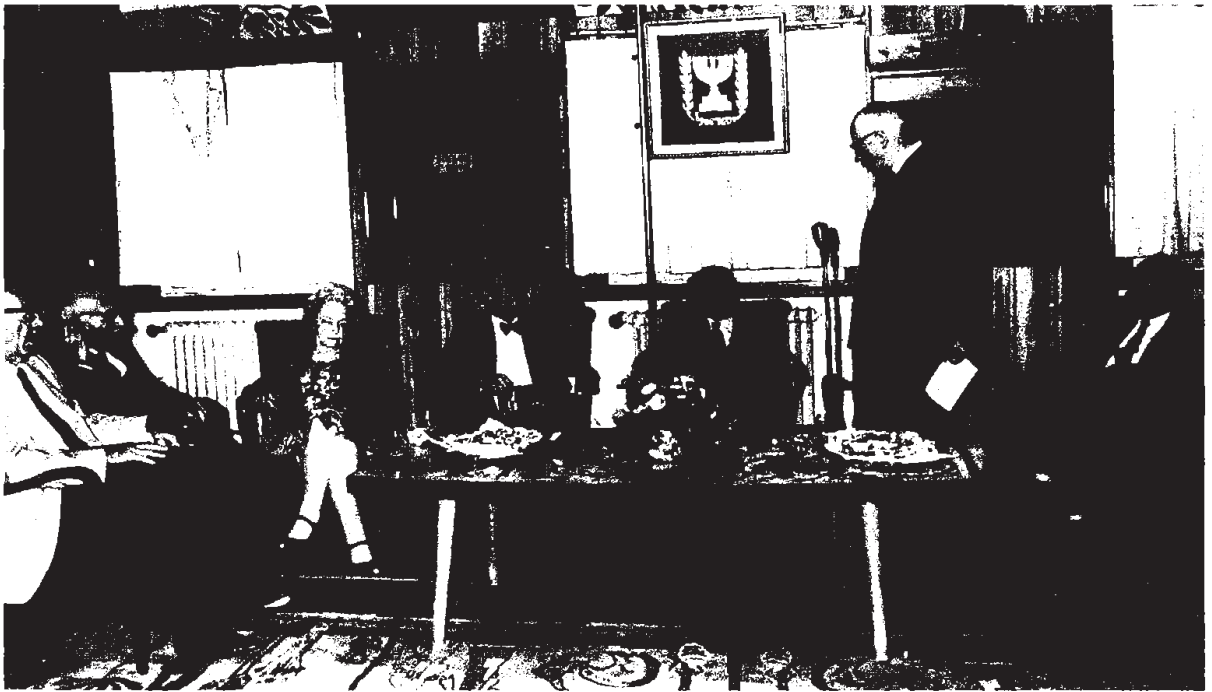
8. The townhouse at 129 East 73<sup>rd</sup> Street, housing the LBI New York between 1962 and 2000 (photograph by Hilde Casey).



9. 4, Devonshire Street, home to the Wiener Library and the London LBI (photograph by Janek Peter).



10. Professor Paul Moesanyi, Director of the Art Center, New School of Social Research, and Mrs. Howard B. White (née Maria Riezler) in front of the Liebermann painting „Granddaughter as a Child“ at the opening of the Max Liebermann Exhibition organized by the LBI New York in cooperation with the American Bank and Trust Company in New York on April 14, 1969. Mrs. White is the granddaughter of Liebermann, portrayed in the painting (photograph by Eli Attar).



11. On the rostrum during the reception given by the President of Israel on the occasion of the Conference on the Research into the History of Central European Jewry from the Emancipation to its Destruction, organized by the Leo Baeck Institute in Jerusalem 1970.

Left to right: Fritz Bamberger, Robert Weltsch, Mrs. Moses, Siegfried Moses, President Shazar, Pinhas Rosen, Gershom Scholem (photograph by Emka Photo, Jerusalem).



12. A podium of „founding fathers“ at the LBI conference in Jerusalem 1970. Left to right: Heinz Gerling, Schalom Adler-Rudel, Ernst Simon, Siegfried Moses, Hans Tramer, Robert Weltsch (photograph by Emka Photo, Jerusalem).





13. Fritz Bamberger opening the Arden House Conference *Exploring a Typology of German Jewry* in April 1973 (photograph by Whitestone Photo, NY).



14. Left to right: Uriel Tal, Guy Stern, Alexander Altmann, Jakob Petuchowski at the Arden House Conference (photograph by Whitestone Photo).



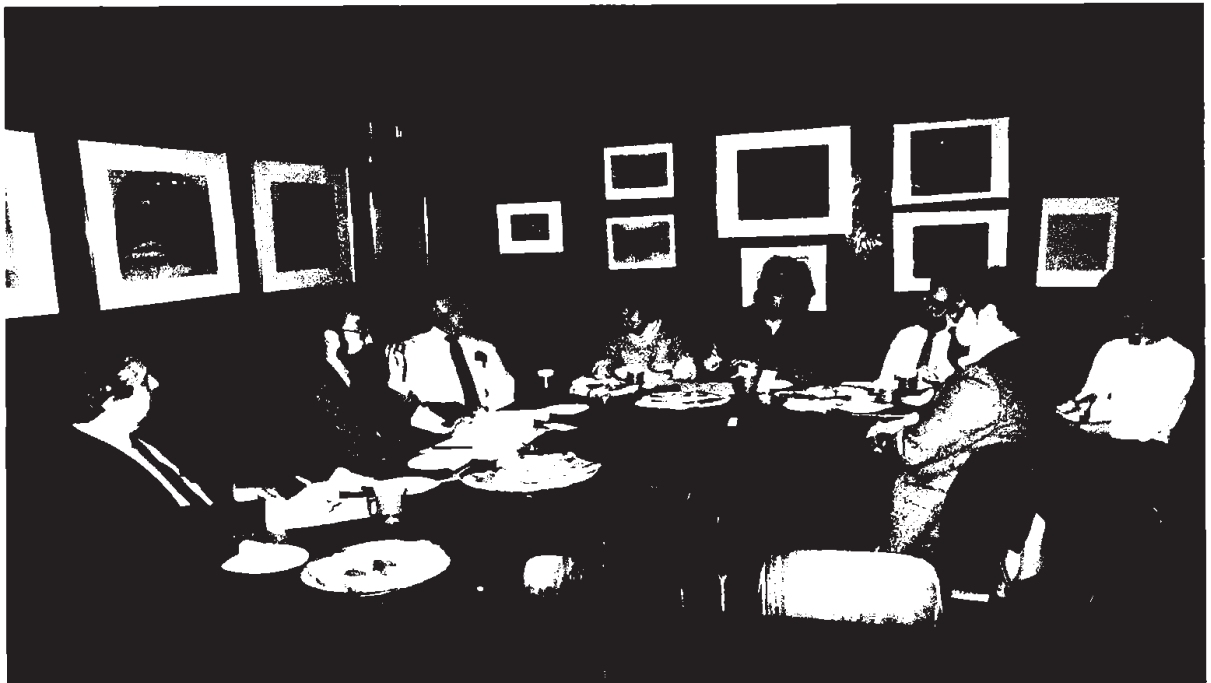
15. Peter Gay and Reinhard Rürup at the Arden House Conference (photograph by Whitestone Photo).



16. Michael Meyer (speaking) and David Landes at the Arden House Conference (photograph by Whitestone Photo).



17. The directors of the New York and London branches, Fred Grubel and Arnold Paucker, presenting the LBI at the annual convention of the American Historical Association in Chicago, December 27–30, 1974 (photograph by Oscar & Associates, Inc., Chicago).



18. The 1983 LBI Fritz Bamberger Faculty Seminar in New York, discussing a paper by David Sorkin. Left to right: Henry Feingold, David Sorkin, Fred Grubel, Marion Kaplan, Alan Divack, unknown, Jack Wertheimer, Gabrielle Bamberger.



19. International President of the LBI Max Gruenewald and German Federal Chancellor Helmut Kohl at the opening of the LBI conference *Selbstbehauptung in der Not. Die Juden im nationalsozialistischen Deutschland, 1933–1939* on October 28, 1985 in Berlin (photograph by Picture-Alliance/dpa).



20. Opening of the LBI New York exhibition *Jettchen Gebert's Children: The Contribution of German Jewry to German Culture from the Eighteenth to the Twentieth Centuries* at the Berlinische Galerie in Berlin, October 31, 1985. Left to right: German Federal President Richard von Weizsäcker, director of the LBI New York Fred Grubel, head of the Berlinische Galerie Winnetou Kampmann and the Governing Mayor of West Berlin Eberhard Diepgen (photograph by Hans Albert Scherhauser).



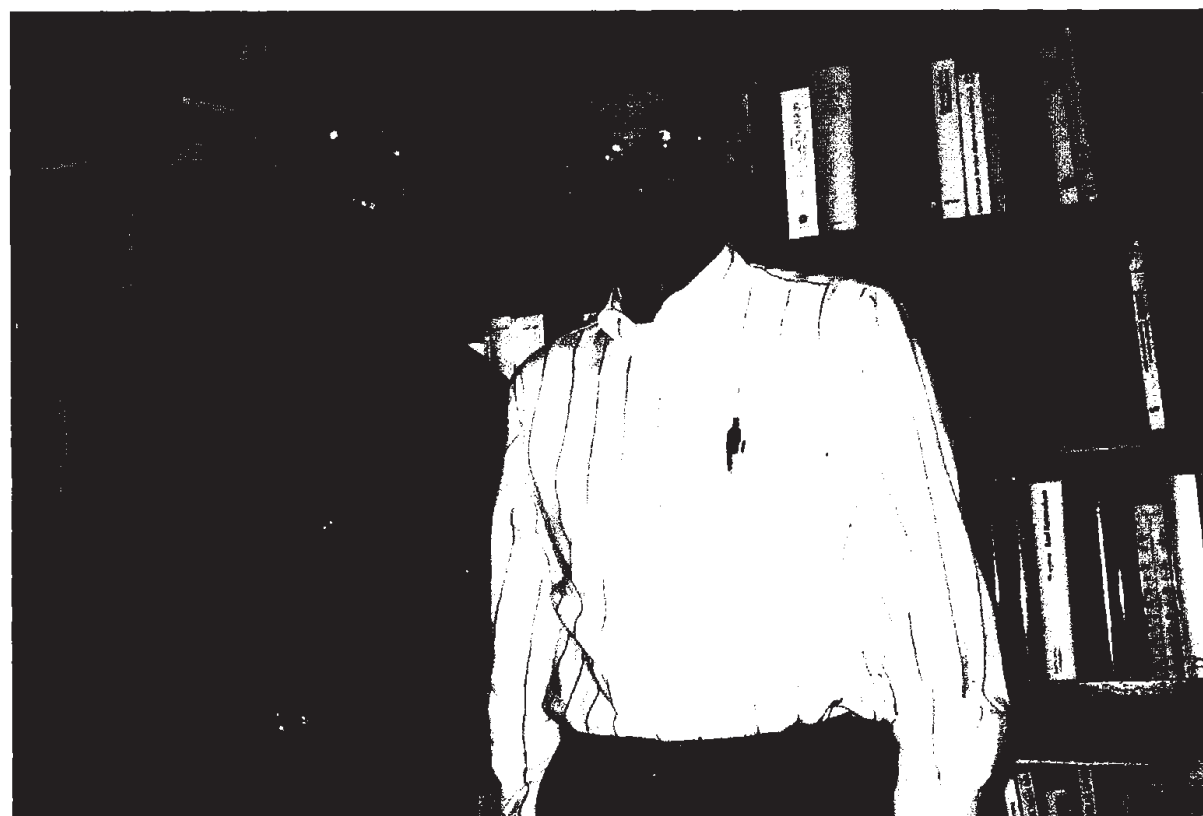
21. Constituent meeting of the planning committee for the *Gesamtgeschichte* (the four-volume *German-Jewish History in Modern Times*) on July 12 and 13, 1987 at the LBI Jerusalem. Left to right: Peter Pulzer, Mordechai Breuer, Fred Grubel, Paul Mendes-Flohr, Michael Meyer, Jacob Katz, Werner Mosse, Monika Richarz and Reinhard Rürup (photograph by Johannes Blum).



22. Historian Sir Geoffrey Elton, addressing the participants of the Conference *The History of German-speaking Jews in the United Kingdom* at Clare College, Cambridge, September 1988. Left to right: Kurt Lipstein, John Grenville, Sir Geoffrey Elton, Werner Mosse, Aubrey Newman (photograph by Pauline Paucker).



23. After another successful conference, the two organizers Werner Mosse and Arnold Paucker seem to be mightily pleased with themselves. The picture was taken after the LBI conference *Integration and Identity: The Jewish Experience in Germany and Italy from the Enlightenment to Fascism* at the Goethe Institute in Rome, November 15–18, 1993 (photograph by Pauline Paucker).



24. Michael Brenner and Michael Meyer working on the *German-Jewish History in Modern Times* project, Weiden July 1994 (private photo).



25. Meeting of the International Board of the LBI, November 1995 in Bonn. Left to right: John Grenville, Shlomo Mayer, Georg Heuberger, Arnold Paucker, Fred Grubel, Michael Meyer, Zeev Estreicher, Shmuel Neumann, Shulamit Volkov, Peter Pulzer, Reinhard Rürup (privat photo).



26. Participants of the conference *New Perspectives in Jewish History*, organized by the LBI Jerusalem and the *Wissenschaftliche Arbeitsgemeinschaft*, in Jerusalem June 9–12, 1996; sitting (left to right): Cili Kaspar-Holtkotte, Susanne Willems, Angelika Kipp, Martin Liepach, Raphael Gross, Ulrich Sieg, Jörg Hackeschmidt, Till van Rahden, Tilde Bayer; standing (left to right): Christian Wiese, Rainer Liedtke, Olaf Blaschke, Andreas Gotzmann, Reinhard Rürup, Richard Mehler, Wolf Gruner (photograph by Morten Reitmayer).



27. Participants of the symposium *Ungleiche Nachbarn. Soziale Beziehungen zwischen Juden und Nichtjuden in Deutschland vom 17. Jahrhundert bis 1945* at the Jewish Museum Berlin, July 1, 2003. Left to right: Aubrey Pomerance, Carol Kahn Strauss, Claudia Ulbrich, Trude Maurer, Monika Richarz, Frank Mecklenburg, Robert Liberles, Steven M. Lowenstein, Marion Kaplan (photograph by Joe Diener).



28. Professors Michael Brenner (Munich) and Jacques Picard (Basel) with participants of the doctoral seminary organized by the *Wissenschaftliche Arbeitsgemeinschaft* at Schloss Elmau in February 2004 (private photo).





29. The president of the LBI New York Ismar Schorsch talking to the German Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer at the 10th Annual Leo Baeck Institute Gala Dinner which took place on November 14, 2004 in New York City (photograph by Simona Aru).



30. Director of the London LBI Raphael Gross (left) welcoming Anson Rabinbach (Princeton University), speaker in the Joint Lecture Series of the Wiener Library, the Centre for German-Jewish Studies (University of Sussex), and the LBI London, Holocaust Memorial Day, January 27, 2005 (photograph by Kathrin Wittler).

# Publications of the Leo Baeck Institute, 1955–2004

## Abbreviations:

DVA	Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, Stuttgart
LBML	Leo Baeck Memorial Lecture [publ. LBINY]
Mohr	Verlag J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), Tübingen
SR	Schriftenreihe wissenschaftlicher Abhandlungen des LBI

## Periodicals

### ***Leo Baeck Institute Year Book. 1956–.***

Vols. 1 (1956) – 16 (1971), London: East and West Library

Vols. 17 (1972) – 45 (1999), London: Secker & Warburg

Vols. 46– (2000–), New York: Berghahn Books

General Index (vols. 1–20) (1982)

General Index (vols. 21–39) (1995)

CD (vols. 1–40) (New York 1999)

### Editors:

Robert Weltsch (1956–1978)

Arnold Paucker (1970–1992)

John A.S. Grenville (1993–)

Raphael Gross (2003–)

### Associate Editors:

Julius Carlebach (1993–2000)

Raphael Gross (2001–2002)

***Bulletin des Leo Baeck Instituts.* 1957–1991**

Previous titles:

Vol. 1, no. 1 (1957) – vol. 2, no. 8 (1959): *Bulletin for sponsoring and contributing members of the Leo Baeck Institute, Inc.*

Vol. 3, nos. 9–12 (1960): *Bulletin für die Mitglieder der Gesellschaft der Freunde des Leo Baeck Instituts.*

Vol. 1 (1957) – vol. 12 (1969) = nos. 1–48

No. 49 (1974): Index

Vol. 13 (1974) – vol. 19 (1980) = nos. 50–56/57

No. 58 (1981) – no. 88 (1991)

No. 89/90 (1991): Index

Publishers:

Nos. 1–57, Tel Aviv: Bitan Verlag

Nos. 58–84, Frankfurt am Main: Jüdischer Verlag/Athenäum

Nos. 85–90, Frankfurt am Main: Anton Hain Verlag

Editors:

Hans Tramer (nos. 1–53/54)

Joseph Walk (nos. 61–90)

Daniel Cil Brecher (nos. 61–75)

Eve Strauss (nos. 64–75)

Sarah Fraiman (nos. 76–83)

Itta Shedletzky (nos. 76–90)

Jacov Guggenheim (nos. 84–90)

***Jüdischer Almanach des Leo Baeck Instituts.* 1993–.**

Frankfurt am Main: Jüdischer Verlag im Suhrkamp Verlag

Editors:

Jakob Hessing (1993–1999)

Alfred Bodenheimer (1999)

Anna Birkenhauer (2000)

Gisela Dachs (2001–)

Volume titles:

*Orte und Räume*, 2001

*Vom Essen*, 2002

*Kindheit*, 2003

*Humor*, 2004

**Stammbaum: The Journal of German-Jewish Genealogical Research.** 1993–.  
Leo Baeck Institute New York

Previous subtitles:

Vol. 1, no. 1 – vol. 1, no. 3: *Ahnenforschung in Aschkenas, the newsletter of German-Jewish genealogical research.*

Vol. 1, no. 4 – issue no. 5: *Ahnenforschung in Aschkenas, the journal of German-Jewish genealogical research.*

**LBI News.** 1960–.

Leo Baeck Institute New York

**Library & Archives News.** 1975–1996

Leo Baeck Institute New York

**LBI Information.** 1991–.

Freunde und Förderer des Leo Baeck Instituts, Frankfurt am Main

Subtitle: *Nachrichten aus den Leo Baeck Instituten in Jerusalem, London, New York und der Wissenschaftlichen Arbeitsgemeinschaft des LBI in Deutschland.*

## Books

1955

**Hirschler, Eric E. (ed.).** *Jews from Germany in the United States.* New York: Farrer, Straus and Cudahy, X, 182 pp.

1957

**Arendt, Hannah.** *Rahel Varnhagen: The Life of a Jewess.* London: East and West Library, XIV, 222 pp.

**Landauer, Georg.** *Der Zionismus im Wandel dreier Jahrzehnte. Ausgewählte Schriften,* hrsg. und eingeleitet von Max Kreuzberger mit einem Nachwort von Robert Weltsch. Tel Aviv: Bitan Verlag, 478 pp.

1958

**Baeck, Leo.** *Aus drei Jahrtausenden. Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen und Abhandlungen zur Geschichte des jüdischen Glaubens.* Mit einer Einführung von Hans Liebeschütz. Mohr, VI, 402 pp.

**Baeck, Leo.** *Judaism and Christianity: Essays,* translated with an introduction by Walter Kaufmann. Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America for the Leo Baeck Institute New York, 292 pp.

**Bamberger, Fritz.** *Leo Baeck: The Man and the Idea.* LBML 1, 20 pp.

**Glatzer, Nahum N. (ed.).** *Leopold and Adelheid Zunz: An Account in Letters 1815–1885.* London: East and West Library, XXVI, 427 pp.

### 1959

**Adler-Rudel, Shalom.** *Ostjuden in Deutschland 1880–1940. Zugleich eine Geschichte der Organisationen, die sie betreuten.* Mit einem Vorwort von Siegfried Moses. Mohr (SR 1), XII, 169 pp.

**Kisch, Guido/Kurt Röpke.** *Schriften zur Geschichte der Juden. Eine Bibliographie der in Deutschland und in der Schweiz zwischen 1922–1955 erschienenen Dissertationen.* Mohr (SR 4), XI, 49 pp.

**Kohn, Hans.** *Heinrich Heine: The Man and the Myth.* LBML 2, 24 pp.

**Reichmann, Eva (ed.).** *Wörter des Gedenkens für Leo Baeck.* Heidelberg: Lambert Schneider, 263 pp.

**Simon, Ernst.** *Aufbau im Untergang. Jüdische Erwachsenenbildung im nationalsozialistischen Deutschland als geistiger Widerstand.* Mit einem Vorwort von Siegfried Moses. Mohr (SR 2), X, 109 pp.

**Stern-Täubler, Selma.** *Josel von Rosheim. Befehlshaber der Judenschaft im Heiligen Römischen Reich Deutscher Nation.* DVA, 280 pp.

**Susman, Margarete.** *Die geistige Gestalt Georg Simmels.* Mohr (SR 3), IV, 40 pp.

**Wallach, Leopold.** *Liberty and Letters: The Thoughts of Leopold Zunz.* London: East and West Library, XI, 157 pp.

### 1960

**Eliav, Mordechai.** *Jewish Education in Germany in the Period of Enlightenment and Emancipation.* Jerusalem: Published by the Leo Baeck Institute, Jerusalem, in cooperation with the Hebrew University, the Ministry of Education and Culture and the University of Haifa, 370 pp. (Hebrew).

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## Index of Names

- Abs, Hermann 327  
Adenauer, Konrad 26  
Adler, Cyrus 149  
Adler, Friedrich 425  
Adler, H.G. 381  
Adler, Paul 423  
Adler-Rudel, Shalom 39, 61 f., 71 f., 89,  
105, 107, 116, 120, 174, 206, 241, 256,  
299, 388, 390 ff., 397, 399, 401 f.  
Alba, Richard 370  
Alsberg, Paul 254  
Altmann, Alexander 75 f., 88, 156, 173,  
176, 182  
Angress, Werner T. 210, 305, 328  
Arendt, Hannah 11, 52, 68, 87, 93–96,  
100, 120 f., 139 f., 186 ff., 303, 315,  
394–398, 400 f., 403, 406  
Aronsfeld, Caesar C. 378  
Aronson, Shlomo 220  
Asch, Adolph 176  
Aschheim, Steven E. 370  
Assmann, Jan 122  
Auerbach, Elias 54  
  
Bach, Hans 175  
Bacharach, Zvi 133  
Baeck, Leo vi, 15, 23 f., 32 f., 36, 38, 43,  
45 ff., 52, 60, 62, 65 ff., 70, 73, 75–79,  
82–86, 89 ff., 94–97, 108, 115, 120 f.,  
132, 139, 148, 151, 173 ff., 181 f., 186,  
189, 238, 243 f., 295, 320, 376, 379,  
381 f., 393 f., 397, 410 f., 428  
Baer, Yitzhak Fritz 35, 52, 65, 104, 108,  
357  
Baerwald, Leo 88, 141  
Bahrtdt, Hans Paul 251  
Ball-Kaduri, Kurt Jakob 400  
Ballin, Albert 181, 295  
  
Bamberger, Fritz 7, 88, 97 f., 135 ff.,  
145, 153, 156 f., 193, 242  
Bamberger, Gabrielle 157  
Bamberger, Gay 139  
Bamberger, Michael 170, 257  
Bankier, David 130  
Barkai, Avraham 132, 330, 332, 334,  
340 f., 405  
Baron, Salo W. 22, 24 f., 32, 34 f., 46 f.,  
148, 157, 315  
Barthes, Roland 432  
Battenberg, Friedrich 315 f.  
Baumann, Zygmunt 368 f.  
Beer-Hofmann, Richard 417  
Bein, Alex 54, 254  
Belke, Ingrid 217  
Beller, Steven 335 f.  
Ben-Chorin, Schalom 415 ff.  
Ben-Gavriel, Moshe Ya'akov 415  
Ben Gurion, David 65  
Benjamin, Walter 295, 427, 432  
Benn, Gottfried 422  
Bennathan, Ezra 64, 66, 76, 87, 100,  
175, 183  
Benz, Wolfgang 231  
Berding, Helmut 231  
Berg, Nicolas 209  
Bergman, Shmuel Hugo 53, 61–64,  
67 f., 73 f., 109 f., 113, 129, 132, 292,  
424, 426 f., 430  
Berlin, Isaiah 174  
Berney, Arnold 18  
Bernstein, Leonard 142  
Bernstein, Michael André 370  
Biermann, Franz J. 151  
Bleichröder, Gerson 335  
Bloch, Jochanan 127  
Blumenfeld, Kurt 39, 42, 54, 61 ff., 70,

- 74, 95 f., 100 ff., 104 f., 112 f., 116 ff.,  
120, 123, 266, 282 ff., 355, 363, 387,  
389 f.
- Blumenthal, W. Michael 163 ff., 255
- Boas, F. G. 32
- Bodenheimer, Max 358
- Böhm, Franz 206, 227, 320
- Bonné, Alfred 54, 61
- Borchardt, Rudolf 417, 419 f., 425
- Bracher, Karl Dietrich 220
- Braun, Christina von 369
- Braun-Vogelstein, Julie 88, 154, 267
- Brecher, Daniel Cil 131
- Brenner, Michael 12, 166, 204, 232 f.,  
255, 260, 330 f., 342 f., 367
- Breslauer, Walter 176
- Breuer, Mordechai 130, 329–335, 345
- Brod, Max 109, 415–419, 422–428,  
430
- Brodnitz, Friedrich 380
- Bronfen, Elisabeth 368
- Broszat, Martin 224
- Brunner, Constantin 151
- Brunner, Frederick H. 88, 137, 159
- Buber, Martin v, viii, 7, 18, 29 f., 34–39,  
42 f., 54, 60, 62 ff., 66 f., 69, 73 f., 77,  
96, 100 f., 116, 119, 121 ff., 181, 282,  
292 f., 296, 299, 363, 392, 398, 426
- Burg, Joseph 61, 130
- Burgess, Ernest 370
- Cahnmann, Werner 156, 321
- Callmann, Rudolf 21, 39, 88 f., 97
- Carlebach, Alexander 176
- Carlebach, Joseph 295, 358
- Carlebach, Julius 195, 198, 259, 305,  
311 f.
- Carsten, Francis L. 176
- Carter, Jimmy 163
- Caruso, Enrico 143
- Casanova, José 373
- Cassirer, Ernst 81
- Celan, Paul 431
- Chajes, Adolf 416
- Chakrabarty, Dipesh 370
- Chasanowitsch, Leon 358
- Cohen, Daniel 254
- Cohen, Gerson 156, 175, 185, 194,  
361 f.
- Cohen, Hermann 79, 108, 296, 341
- Cohn, Benno 54, 61, 64, 119 f., 388–  
391
- Cohn, Eva Brunner 170
- Conze, Werner 219 f.
- Cromwell, Oliver 436
- Dam, Hendrik van 245 f.
- Dannwolff, Friedrich 13
- Dawidowicz, Lucy 325–328
- Derrida, Jacques 264
- Dinur, Benzion 65, 104, 107, 371
- Edelheim–Mühsam, Margaret see  
Mühsam (-Edelheim), Margaret
- Edschmid, Kasimir 422
- Ehrenberg, Victor 175, 197
- Ehrenstein, Albert 423
- Eichmann, Adolf 390
- Einstein, Albert 320
- Elbogen, Ismar vi, 79, 296
- Eliav, Mordechai 113
- Eloesser, Arthur 412
- Elon, Amos 128 f., 315
- Eloni, Yehudi 195
- Elsas, Charlotte 144
- Elton, Geoffrey 197
- Eschelbacher, Max 53, 173, 175
- Esh, Shaul 122, 124, 211, 393
- Ettinger, Shmuel 128 f.
- Ettlinger, Shlomo 202
- Feilchenfeld, Werner 393
- Feingold, Henry 166, 367
- Feuchtwanger, Lion 421
- Fischer, Bernd 165
- Fischer, Fritz 208
- Fischer, Horst 251
- Fischer, Wolfram 213, 218
- Foerg, Irmgard 91, 138, 151, 153
- Fohrmann, Jürgen 263
- Formstecher, Salomon 363
- Fraenkel, Abraham A. 267
- Fraiman, Sarah 131
- Frankel, Zacharias 296

- Freeden, Herbert 123, 293, 393  
 Freimark, Peter 221 f.  
 Freud, Siegmund 295  
 Friedländer, Saul 381  
 Fuchs, Richard 75 f., 176  
 Funck, Marcus 275 f.  
 Funkenstein, Amos 218, 370 f.  
 Furtmüller, Lux 286
- Galinski, Heinz 203  
 Gärtner, Hans (Yochanan Ginat) 124 f.,  
 129, 221, 293, 402  
 Gay, Peter 166, 337  
 Gebhardt, Miriam 11, 13  
 Geiger, Abraham 296, 363  
 Geis, Manfred Moshe 53  
 Gelber, Yoav 130 f.  
 George, Manfred 88, 143 f.  
 George, Stefan 74, 80, 363, 420 f., 431  
 Gerling, Heinz 39, 61, 64  
 Gilbert, Felix 154  
 Gilchrist, Silvia 286  
 Ginat, Yochanan see Gärtner, Hans  
 Ginsburg, Sigmar 359  
 Glatzer, Nachum 88, 151, 292 f.  
 Glueck, Nelson 24 ff.  
 Goebbels, Joseph 117  
 Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von 425,  
 427  
 Goitein, Solomon D. 53  
 Golb, Joel 13, 286  
 Goldmann, Nahum 27  
 Goldschmidt, Ernst Daniel 53  
 Goldstein, Joachim 415 f.  
 Goldstein, Moritz 417, 425 f.  
 Gordon, Milton M. 364  
 Gradenwitz, Peter 53  
 Graetz, Heinrich vi, 296, 360  
 Graetz, Michael 330, 345  
 Graupe, Heinz Moshe 206, 215  
 Greiner, Leo 423  
 Greive, Hermann 213 f., 216, 223, 229,  
 305  
 Grenville, John 198, 260, 311 f.  
 Gronemann, Sammy 415  
 Gross, Raphael 12, 199, 260, 311 f.  
 Gross, Walter 357 f.
- Groys, Boris 270  
 Grubel, Fred 90, 100, 138, 144–150,  
 152 ff., 155, 163, 169, 193, 232, 243,  
 259, 302, 327 f.  
 Gruenewald, Max 7, 21, 23 ff., 36 f., 39,  
 73, 87–92, 97, 116, 136 f., 141 f., 145,  
 148 f., 153, 156 f., 161 f., 243 f., 253,  
 258, 292, 299 f., 330, 356, 390 f.  
 Güdemann, Moritz 295  
 Guggenheimer, Charles 143  
 Guggenheimer, Eliza 143  
 Gundolf, Friedrich 74  
 Guttmann, Julius 180, 288, 296
- Haas, Willy 419  
 Haber, Fritz 291, 295, 357  
 Hahn, Hugo 88 f., 141  
 Hamburger, Ern(e)st 88, 98, 145, 153,  
 156, 259  
 Hantke, Arthur 54  
 Hardtwig, Wolfgang 16  
 Harris, Jay 337 f., 347  
 Hart, Mitchell 10, 255  
 Hase, Karl-Günther von 247 f.  
 Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich 135  
 Heid, Ludger 231  
 Heilbut, Anthony 140  
 Heine, Heinrich 302, 335, 421, 430  
 Heinemann, Isaak 52  
 Hemingway, Ernest 135  
 Herlitz, Georg 54, 61 f., 359 f.  
 Hermann, Hugo 426  
 Hertzberg, Arthur 160, 166  
 Herzfeld, Ernst 380  
 Herzig, Arno 216  
 Herzl, Theodor 417, 427  
 Herzog, David 173  
 Herzog, Roman 146  
 Heschel, Susannah 363  
 Hess, Moses 296, 428  
 Hessing, Jakob 130 f., 337  
 Heuberger, Georg 12, 203, 260  
 Heuss, Theodor 135, 146, 320  
 Heydrich, Reinhard 379, 396  
 Heymann, Michael 177, 254  
 Hilberg, Raul 11, 139, 185–189, 193 f.,  
 303, 391–395, 398

- Hilmes, Carola 277  
 Himmler, Heinrich 379  
 Hindl, Arnold 266 f.  
 Hirsch, Samson Raphael 195, 362 f.  
 Hirschfeld, Alfred 389  
 Hirshler, Eric 161  
 Hitler, Adolf 3, 5, 43, 136, 325, 341,  
 376, 378, 388, 391, 394, 396  
 Hobsbawm, Eric 381  
 Hoffer, Willi 176  
 Hoffmann, Christhard 11, 13, 17, 207,  
 350, 438  
 Hofmannsthal, Hugo von 153, 419  
 Hohls, Rüdiger 214  
 Holdheim, Gerhard 54, 106  
 Holländer, Ludwig 83, 296  
 Hyman, Paula 156
- Iggers, Georg 215  
 Intrator, Miriam 12  
 Isaak, Julius 175, 184  
 Italiener, Bruno 173 ff.
- Jacob, Benno 295, 432  
 Jacobs, Robert 148, 162 f.  
 Jacobson, Jacob 75, 85 f., 175 f., 273,  
 393  
 Jaraus, Konrad 214  
 Jersch-Wenzel, Stefi 203, 217 ff., 231 f.,  
 305, 330, 437  
 Jochmann, Anita 227  
 Jochmann, Werner 192, 208 ff., 213–  
 216, 220 ff., 224 f., 227–231, 305,  
 405  
 Jost, Isaak Markus 296, 360  
 Jütte, Robert 60
- Kafka, Franz 109, 151, 157, 295, 411,  
 427–431  
 Kagan, Saul 90  
 Kahn, Ern(e)st 53, 181  
 Kantorowitz, Gertrud 151  
 Kaplan, Marion 156, 258, 272 ff., 309,  
 346, 350, 366 f.  
 Karpeles, Gustav 435  
 Kastein, Josef 415 f.  
 Katz, Jacob 129, 131 ff., 155 f., 191,  
 219 ff., 223, 242, 299, 305, 327 f., 330,  
 332, 344  
 Kaufmann, Fritz 21, 88, 97  
 Kaufman, Yehezkel 65  
 Kaznelson, Siegmund 409 f., 412 f., 426  
 Kennedy, John F. 140  
 Kertesz, Yitzhak 154  
 Keynes, John Maynard 80 f.  
 Kiesinger, Kurt Georg 247 f.  
 Kiev, Edward 25  
 Kilcher, Andreas 11, 13  
 Kirschner, Bruno 28 f., 33, 39, 52 ff.,  
 61 f., 67  
 Kisch, Bruno 91  
 Kisch, Guido 19 f., 52, 88, 98 ff., 159,  
 293  
 Klaar, Alfred 425  
 Klausner, Margot 415  
 Klossowski, Pierre 428  
 Knütter, Hans-Helmuth 251  
 Kober, Adolf 21, 47–50, 53, 73, 87,  
 91 f., 97, 319 f.  
 Kocka, Jürgen 222, 231, 330, 333  
 Koebner, Richard 75, 78, 86 f., 96, 176,  
 179, 182  
 Kohl, Helmut 146, 169, 252  
 Kohn, Hans 63, 88, 189, 215, 371, 424,  
 426  
 Kolmar, Gertrud 431  
 Kracauer, Siegfried 217  
 Kraft, Werner 53, 415, 433  
 Kraus, Hans-Joachim 189, 251  
 Krauss, Samuel 173  
 Kreisler, Fritz 143  
 Kreutzberger, Max 7, 44, 52, 54, 63 f.,  
 66, 78, 88–91, 96, 98 ff., 111, 113 f.,  
 116, 137 f., 142, 144 f., 150 f., 153 f.,  
 156, 178, 216 f., 223 f., 241, 243,  
 245 f., 248, 253 f., 258 f., 264–269,  
 287, 299, 321 f., 355, 361, 382, 385,  
 387 f., 393, 397, 399–402, 407, 437  
 Krojanker, Gustav 419  
 Kulka, Otto Dov 122, 126, 401  
 Kushner, Tony 198  
 Kwiet, Konrad 215, 218
- Lamm, Hans 179, 204 f., 225

- Landauer, Georg 31 f., 52, 64 f., 73, 89, 349, 362
- Landes, David 156
- Landsberger, Franz 53
- Langer, Lawrence 381
- Laqueur, Walter 383
- Lasker-Schüler, Else 415, 422 f., 433
- Lavsky, Hagit 130
- Lazarus, Moritz 151, 217, 296
- Leibowitz, Yeshayahu 53
- Leschnitzer, Adolf 21, 88 f., 96 f., 204, 217 f., 398
- Lessing, Fred W. 88, 145 f., 164
- Lessing, Joan 169 f.
- Lewin, Wera 363
- Liberles, Robert 12, 130, 132 f., 156, 255, 259, 346
- Libeskind, Daniel 167
- Lichtenstein, Erwin 123
- Lichtheim, Richard 114
- Liebermann, Max 154, 157, 295
- Liebeschütz, Hans vi, 18, 75, 78 ff., 86, 96, 114, 173 f., 176, 180–185, 191 f., 195, 211 f., 216, 219, 240 f., 251, 284, 286, 292, 299, 324, 361, 385 f.
- London, Luise 198
- Löwenstein, Kurt 74, 121, 398
- Lowenstein, Steven 141, 272 f., 330, 332, 335 f., 340, 342, 346
- Lowenthal, Ernst G. 75 f., 83 ff., 89, 176, 179, 192, 202–205
- Lowenthal-Hensel, Cécile 203
- Luckmann, Thomas 276
- Lücke, Paul 248
- Lustiger, Arno 203
- Magnus, Eduard 154
- Mahler, Gustav 295
- Mahler, Raphael 357
- Malinowski, Stephan 275 f.
- Manasse, George 117 f.
- Marcus, Jacob Rader 35
- Margaliot, Avraham 122, 124 f., 401
- Marius, Benjamin 368
- Marx, Karl 295, 302
- Matthäus, Jürgen 11
- Maurer, Trude 346, 367
- Mauthner, Fritz 151 f., 291
- Maybaum, Ignaz 173
- Mayer, Eugen 52
- Mayer, Shlomo 12, 132, 259
- Mecklenburg, Frank 12, 142, 167, 259
- Meisl, Josef 52 f.
- Mendelssohn, Moses 3, 30, 42, 296, 315, 345, 348, 412
- Mendelssohn-Bartholdy, Felix 154, 343
- Mendes-Flohr, Paul 330, 332, 334 ff., 340 f.
- Mertes, Michael 146, 169
- Meyer, Eugen 53
- Meyer, Franz 61 f., 111 ff., 390
- Meyer, Max 53
- Meyer, Michael A. 11, 13, 149, 170, 244, 260, 299, 305, 316, 328–334, 337–339, 343, 345, 347 f., 367 f., 372
- Meyerbeer, Giacomo 291
- Michaelis, Dolf 39, 61 f., 253, 388, 390, 392
- Michaelis, Eva 106, 265
- Michel, Ernst 166
- Michelet, Jules 347
- Milton, Sybil 165
- Miron, Guy 10, 277 f.
- Mommsen, Hans 231
- Mork, Gordon R. 307
- Moser, Claus 197
- Moses, Siegfried 27–30, 32 f., 36–39, 42 ff., 59, 61–66, 70, 72, 74, 77, 89 f., 96, 101, 103 ff., 108 ff., 113 f., 116, 118 f., 121, 123, 126, 129 f., 137, 139, 159, 177 ff., 184 f., 197, 202, 206 f., 211, 219, 223 f., 227, 237–240, 243, 246, 253, 256, 265, 284–287, 293 f., 298 ff., 316, 321, 323, 355, 363, 379, 389–393, 395–398, 405, 411, 413
- Mosse, George L. 156, 170, 299, 305, 335
- Mosse, Rudolf 295
- Mosse, Werner E. 75, 100, 128, 176, 187 ff., 192, 194–197, 199, 210, 212, 215 f., 228, 230 f., 299, 305, 323, 328, 330, 404
- Mühsam (-Edelheim), Margaret 138, 140 f., 143, 159 ff., 217, 293

- Muller, Herman 137, 142  
 Myers, David 341, 357, 370  
 Mynona (Salomo Friedländer) 423
- Nadel, Arno 423  
 Naphtali, Peretz 53  
 Nathan, Paul 295, 358  
 Nattermann, Ruth 8 f., 12 f.  
 Naumann, Michael 163  
 Nee, Victor 370  
 Neumann, Siegmund 88  
 Neumayer, Heinrich 422  
 Newman, Abraham A. 36  
 Nietzsche, Friedrich Wilhelm 372 f.  
 Nipperdey, Thomas 211, 213  
 Nolte, Ernst 220  
 Nussbaum, Felix 154
- Oppenheimer, Franz 291  
 Otten, Karl 422 f.
- Park, Robert 370  
 Pascal, Roy 301  
 Paucker, Arnold 12, 70, 75, 80, 82, 84,  
 100, 175, 177, 181, 186 ff., 190–193,  
 195–199, 206, 209 f., 215 f., 224,  
 227–230, 253, 257 f., 260, 297–303,  
 310 f., 323 f., 375, 377, 387, 399,  
 404 f., 414  
 Paucker, Pauline 12, 84, 286  
 Perutz, Leo 416  
 Philippon, Ludwig 195  
 Pickus, Keith 343  
 Poliakov, Léon 385, 389  
 Pomerance, Aubrey 10  
 Poppel, Stephen 156  
 Popper-Lynkeus, Josef 217  
 Posner, Akiva Baruch 53  
 Prawer, Siegbert 305  
 Pringle, Annette 223, 282, 312  
 Prinz, Joachim v, 73  
 Prokofiev, Sergei 143  
 Pulzer, Peter 191, 195, 259, 305, 330 ff.
- Rachmaninov, Sergei 143  
 Rahaman, Gabriele 286  
 Rahden, Till van 11, 13
- Raphael, Lutz 274  
 Rathenau, Walther 80, 117, 181, 215,  
 295, 335  
 Regge, Jürgen Christian 162  
 Reichmann, Eva (née Jungmann) 52,  
 78, 82–85, 116, 173 ff., 177 f., 186 f.,  
 189 f., 192, 194, 199, 297 f., 301, 321,  
 380, 383, 386, 403 ff.  
 Reichmann, Hans 27 f., 32, 38 f., 44,  
 75–78, 82–85, 89, 116, 174–178, 181,  
 189, 202, 256, 377–381, 383, 387 ff.,  
 391, 395, 398 f., 405  
 Reinharz, Jehuda 330  
 Reinke, Andreas 232  
 Reitlinger, Gerald 385, 389  
 Restle, Wilhelm 152  
 Richarz, Monika 12, 133, 156, 217 ff.,  
 229, 231 f., 249, 269, 271 f., 276, 305,  
 309, 329 ff., 333, 339, 437  
 Riesenfeld, Paul 53  
 Riesser, Gabriel 290, 296  
 Ritter, Gerhard 320  
 Ritter, Gerhard A. 222, 225, 229, 231  
 Roemer, Nils 10  
 Roepke, Kurt 98  
 Romain, Rolland 417  
 Roos, Hans 215  
 Rosenak, Leopold 358  
 Rosenbaum, Eduard 75, 78, 80 f., 86,  
 176, 183  
 Rosenblüth, Felix (Pinchas Rosen) 64,  
 127 f., 195  
 Rosenstock, Werner 76, 178, 181  
 Rosenthal, Berthold 21, 273  
 Rosenzweig, Franz 21, 108, 151, 292,  
 340 f., 363  
 Rotenstreich, Nathan 299  
 Roth, Joseph 151, 417, 421, 431 f.  
 Rothschild, Eli 415  
 Rothschild, Lionel de 13  
 Rottenberg, Dan 273  
 Rozenblit, Marsha 156  
 Rubiner, Ludwig 423  
 Ruppin, Arthur 132  
 Rürup, Reinhard 12, 156, 196, 211,  
 213–216, 225, 228, 230–234, 259,  
 271 f., 299, 305, 329 f., 333 f., 437

- Rychner, Max 420
- Sachs, Nelly 157, 431
- Salus, Hugo 425
- Sambursky, Miriam 132
- Sambursky, Shmuel 53
- Schaeffer, Fritz 33
- Schatzker, Chaim 107
- Scheel, Walter 136
- Scheffler, Wolfgang 220
- Schiff, Jacob 358
- Schmidt, Hemut Dan 176
- Schmitt, Carl 199, 311
- Schnabel, Franz 320
- Schnitzler, Arthur 421
- Schocken, Gershon 77
- Schocken, Salman 296
- Schoenberg, Arnold 295, 343
- Schoenberger, Guido 143
- Schoeps, Hans-Joachim 427
- Schoeps, Julius 218
- Scholem, Gershon v, 24 f., 30, 39, 41 f., 60, 63 f., 67 ff., 74, 95 f., 100 f., 104, 106, 113 ff., 116, 121, 132, 174 f., 184 f., 189 f., 252 f., 292, 316, 337, 339, 347, 387, 392, 402, 404, 418, 427 f., 430, 432
- Schorsch, Ismar 147–150, 156, 162–165, 168–171, 196, 218, 255, 259, 299, 305, 327 f., 330
- Schrag, Raymond 166
- Schüler-Springorum, Stefanie 10, 13, 251
- Schütz, Alfred 276
- Schulin, Ernst 192, 211, 213–216, 222, 228, 305
- Schwab, Hermann 174
- Schwab, Walter 176
- Schwarz, Karl 53 f.
- Schwarz, Mosche 363
- Schwarz, Stefan 204
- Schwarz, Werner 224
- Schwarzschild, Steven 362
- Segall, Dora 287
- Segall, Jacob 52
- Seidenberg, Hans 202, 229
- Sembirch, Marcella 143
- Senator, David Werner 23
- Shaked, Gershon 431 f.
- Shapiro, Judah J. 35, 37, 282
- Shedletzky, Itta 131 f., 431 f.
- Simmel, Georg 151
- Simon, Ernst 28 ff., 33, 35, 38 f., 41, 52 ff., 60, 63 f., 66 ff., 73 f., 93, 96, 100–103, 107 f., 113, 120 f., 123, 127 f., 132, 134, 140, 180, 184, 241, 292, 382, 389 f., 398
- Simon, Hans 416
- Simonis, Rudolf 273
- Slovin, Bruce 170
- Sontheimer, Kurt 212 f.
- Sorkin, David 313, 343 ff., 349 f., 354
- Sparr, Thomas 132
- Spielmann, Diane 272
- Spier, Selmar 61, 72
- Spira, Justus 417
- Springer, Axel 144, 249
- Stahl, Friedrich Julius 302, 357
- Stein, Nathan 21 f., 51 f., 54, 87, 89, 92, 99, 159, 293, 320
- Stein, Siegfried 75, 176
- Steiner-Prag, Hugo 154
- Steinheim, Salomon Ludwig 296, 363
- Steinthal, Heymann 217, 296
- Stern, Frank 147, 315
- Stern, Fritz 305, 330
- Stern, Gerson 415 f.
- Stern, Guy 136, 149, 170, 259, 305
- Stern (-Täubler), Selma vi, 19 f., 30, 52, 86, 88, 92 ff., 156, 175, 179, 185, 246, 351
- Stern, Stephanie 154
- Straus, Rahel 266 f., 278
- Strauss, Carol Kahn 12, 148, 159, 165 f., 169 f., 259
- Strauss, Herbert A. 7, 23, 156, 169, 228, 299, 305, 365
- Strauss, Leo 88, 97, 133
- Strauss, Ludwig 415, 422 f.
- Strenge, Barbara 232
- Struck, Hermann 154
- Sturmann, Manfred 415
- Suchy, Barbara 12, 222, 231, 282, 312
- Susman, Margarete 151, 266



- Szajkowski, Zosa 358  
 Szobar, Patricia 13  
 Szondi, Peter 431
- Taubes, Israel 124  
 Täubler, Eugen 18 f., 21–25, 45–47, 52,  
 85, 92 f., 179 ff., 197, 296, 317, 319 f.,  
 352, 360 f.  
 Tal, Uriel 124, 129, 156, 195, 305  
 Taussig, Ernst 415  
 Taussig, Nadia 415  
 Teweles, Heinrich 425  
 Thieberger, Friedrich 53, 61  
 Thieme, Karl 189, 251  
 Tietz, Georg 266  
 Toch, Michael 315 f.  
 Toller, Ernst 421  
 Toury, Jacob 105, 113, 124, 191, 195,  
 221, 299, 305, 325  
 Tramer, Hans 12, 33, 39, 53, 61, 64, 73,  
 75, 101, 103 ff., 108 f., 111–118, 121 f.,  
 129, 178, 202, 213, 216 f., 243, 256 f.,  
 259, 265, 285, 287, 293 f., 299, 321,  
 324, 355, 388 f., 392, 398, 400, 409,  
 411, 413–431, 433  
 Treitschke, Heinrich von 191  
 Treue, Wilhelm 207  
 Trilling, Lionel 371  
 Twain, Mark 349
- Ucko, Siegfried 53  
 Unna, Moshe 61, 130  
 Updike, John 151
- Varnhagen, Rahel 95, 291  
 Vierhaus, Rudolf 192, 215, 225, 229,  
 231  
 Volkov, Shulamit 130, 133, 155, 222,  
 315 f., 346, 365
- Walk, Joseph 36, 122, 129 ff., 132, 431  
 Warburg, Aby 295  
 Warburg, Max 410  
 Wassermann, Henry 130  
 Wassermann, Jakob 423  
 Wassermann, Siegmund 88  
 Weber, Alfred 320
- Weichmann, Herbert 224  
 Weil, Gotthold 53, 75  
 Weinryb, Bernard D. 52, 321  
 Weizsäcker, Richard von 146, 252  
 Weltsch, Felix 416, 424, 426–431  
 Weltsch, Robert 28, 39 f., 42, 53 f.,  
 62 ff., 66 ff., 71, 74–81, 83 f., 87 f., 90,  
 93, 95 ff., 100, 111, 116, 123, 174 ff.,  
 178–183, 185, 187 ff., 192, 194 f., 202,  
 205–208, 210 f., 213, 215, 223, 227,  
 237 ff., 241, 250 f., 253, 257, 283–292,  
 294 f., 297–301, 306, 308, 323, 356,  
 358–364, 376–379, 384–389, 391 f.,  
 395 ff., 399 ff., 404 f., 407, 410 f., 414,  
 418, 424, 426, 430  
 Westermann, William Linn 47  
 Wiener, Alfred 52, 75 f., 82, 84, 100,  
 174, 178, 383, 387  
 Wiener, Max 21, 47–50, 108, 296,  
 319 f.  
 Wiener, Oskar 425  
 Wiener, P.B. 251  
 Wiese, Christian 11, 13  
 Wilhelm, Kurt 75 f., 176, 192  
 Winfrey, Oprah 279  
 Winz, Leo 353 f.  
 Wischnitzer, Rahel 53  
 Wistrich, Robert 130  
 Wolfenstein, Alfred 423  
 Wolfsberg, Oskar (Yeshayahu Aviad)  
 39, 61, 130  
 Wolfskehl, Karl 417, 419 ff., 424, 429 ff.  
 Wollheim, Norbert 395  
 Wormann, Curt 39, 61 f., 73 ff., 80, 107,  
 109, 116, 252  
 Woyda, Bruno 397  
 Wulf, Joseph 385, 389  
 Wurzweiler, Gustav 91, 142
- Yerushalmi, Yosef 16, 148 f., 168, 330
- Zimmermann, Moshe 130, 315 f.  
 Zlocisti, Theodor 415  
 Zunz, Leopold v, viii, 102, 151, 296  
 Zweig, Arnold 318, 409 f., 415 ff.,  
 422 f.  
 Zweig, Stefan 291, 421