

Introduction

Recent research has been devoting increasing attention to the history of the German-Jewish press. There is a growing recognition that since its inception this press has played an important role in Jewish history. From the Haskalah onward Jewish papers and journals encouraged multi-faceted and complex debates both within the Jewish communities and in the broad public about Jewish matters in the political, social and cultural spheres. These journals demonstrate for today's reader the aims and aspirations, the historical consciousness and the visions of a future for German Jewry and for German-speaking Jews in other countries during the Enlightenment, the 19th century and the Wilhelmine and Weimar eras until the time of National Socialism and the forced end of this press in November 1938.

While the authors writing in the few early German-Jewish periodicals of the 18th and early 19th century aimed at spreading the ideas and concepts of the Enlightenment among their co-religionists and proving at the same time to the non-Jewish majority that Jews were willing to integrate socially and culturally, the growing number of newspapers and journals of the later decades, when the traditional Jewish way of life had been abandoned, undertook the task of creating a new Jewish self-understanding and defining a distinct Jewish position within the Christian majority.

The construction and reflection of the different forms of Jewish identity and self-awareness specific to the respective period remain the central themes also in the German-Jewish press of more recent times. Defense against Jew-hatred in its various forms became an issue in the Jewish press well before racial Anti-Semitism reared its head at the end of the 19th century and particularly during the Weimar period. After tentative beginnings at the end of the 19th century the Zionist press became increasingly important, a development that reached its peak after 1933.

The Jewish press was never a "Ghetto-press." Just like the Jews, particularly since the beginning of the Jewish Enlightenment, formed a segment of society at large that was at times almost indistinguishable from the rest, their dedicated periodicals were always part of the general press, even before the establishment of the German-language journal *Sulamith* in 1806. In addition to the German language there were manifold personal and conceptual ties that embedded the Jewish press in the wider context of journalism. This extended even to non-Jewish readers continuing to purchase Jewish periodicals at the time of their forced Ghettoization by the National Socialists.

What are the perspectives and the structural connections in terms of which the relationship between the Jewish press and Jewish history can be analyzed? The same approaches and interpretations that are used in carrying out research on the general press are valid here, too. Let us highlight three methods that were used as guiding principles for the articles in this volume. First, historical periodicals are important sources of modern historiography. Journals, papers and other periodicals in the

German-speaking world that in the period between the Enlightenment and National Socialism addressed a primarily Jewish public, were produced by Jewish journalists and editors and dealt with Jewish topics give us today detailed insights into the lives of German and Austrian Jews as well as into the lives of Jews in other parts of the Habsburg Empire – such as Czernowitz (today: Černivci, Ukraine), Prague etc. For many events the contemporary press is the most important, if not the only, source. In this connection Moshe Zimmermann singles out the “view from within” as the special quality of these media for the historian: as opposed to historical documents of non-Jewish origin, they reflect the minority’s view of the majority and of its own precarious position between integration and exceptionalism within this majority. They allow researchers to see and understand the active participation of the Jews in the debates of their times like no other source. In this role they are rivaled only by personal letters and autobiographies, which are, however, of less general interest. In each case we are well advised to bear in mind the possibilities as well as the limitations of this particular genre.

Secondly, periodicals themselves exerted considerable influence on the history of German speaking Jewry. Since the Berlin Haskalah, whose beginnings coincided with Moses Mendelssohn’s publication of his *Kohelet Mussar* in around 1755, representatives of different streams of Judaism in the German speaking parts of Europe and in Europe in general used the press to shape Judaism’s state at the time and its future development as well the way it was perceived by the non-Jewish public. An obvious research topic in this context would be how this influence made itself felt, by whom and by what means it was exerted and what positive or negative effects can be attributed to it.

Periodicals, thirdly, reflect and create contemporary interpretations of the past. Scholarly as well as popular views of history in general and of Jewish history in particular and their interrelationship in a specific period were significantly affected by the descriptions and interpretations of the German-Jewish press. Of particular interest in this context are serialized fiction of the kind first published in the *Allgemeine Zeitung des Judentums* in 1837, historical essays, treatises and book reviews.

These three dimensions of the relationship between the German-Jewish and European-Jewish press and history are the guiding principles behind the articles in both volumes of “The German-Jewish Press and Jewish History.”

A few remarks on the contents and context of the papers included in this volume, which present questions and results of current research in Europe, the US and Israel, may be helpful at this point. The concept of “Jewish history in the German-speaking world” includes social, political and cultural aspects. Rather than to a history that existed apart from mainstream society it refers to one that is very much an integral part of general history, just as the Jewish press is part of the general press. It is for this reason and also to enable transnational comparison that some articles go beyond the Jewish periodicals published in the German speaking world, which in any case was not a geographically stable entity, at times even to places of publication and historical situations outside of Europe. Furthermore, a wide variety of periodicals is discussed. Most essays deal with papers and journals, but other types of periodicals like

calendars, almanacs and yearbooks are also considered. In addition to analyses of the press itself, its documentary value, its contents, conditions of publication, readerships, tendencies, effects, etc. there are articles dealing with journalists from Germany and other European countries, some of whom are better known than others.

This short outline of key issues and topics of the history of German-Jewish print media will show that in view of its importance for the history as well as for the historiography of German Jewry it is high time to go for an overall view, i.e. a history of these media from the Haskala to National Socialism. From experience we know that this can only be achieved in an adequate manner if there is a bibliographic/biographical handbook that can serve as a basis. Both projects are desiderata in forthcoming scholarly work on this subject. The forty articles in these two volumes of "The German-Jewish Press and Jewish History" may be seen as first building blocks towards the necessary overall view as they cover the complete period of the existence of a German-Jewish press, from the Enlightenment to the "Kristallnacht." They include the special case of the *Jüdisches Nachrichtenblatt*, which was published until 1943, the tentative post-war beginnings with the DP-camp journals and papers and encompass also the recent past. The articles are building blocks also in terms of content and the methods and concepts they employ. Each of them – with differences in emphasis and form – presents the object under investigation in its historical context, thus demonstrating the connection between the medium and its contemporary background, a 'conditio sine qua non' for any research on the history of the press.

The first volume has four thematically defined chapters, within which articles are arranged chronologically. The first chapter deals with the central question of the portrayal and construction of Jewish identity in and by the press. Five articles investigate how various forms of self-perception are related to questions of nationality and choice of language. Irene Zwiep traces the influence of the Berlin Jewish Enlightenment and the "Wissenschaft des Judentums", which had been conceptualized in Berlin after 1800, on the development of the Jewish press of the Netherlands in the 19th century. The transnational perspective as a typical feature of the Jewish press is also investigated in Christine G. Krüger's article. It shows that this transnational viewpoint was also upheld in times of adverse historical conditions like the Franco-Prussian War of 1870/71. Addressing the question of language, Susanne Marten-Finnis investigates how this issue was discussed in relation to national concepts in the Czernowitz Jewish press between the two World Wars. At the time Jews were faced with an "anachronistic" cultural and educational situation, which was characterized by rising pressures to accept Romanian language and culture as well as by the growing influence of Zionism before the backdrop of the failed Habsburg state. Marion Brandt follows the writer and journalist Erich Ruschkewitz, an interesting representative of the Danzig (Gdansk, Poland) press after 1918 on his way from the social criticism of the city's German press with a detour through Polish publications to the journal of the local Jewish community, which he edited during its last phase from the summer of 1939. Comparing a number of German and Hebrew papers and journals published in

Palestine, Malgorzata Maksymiak-Fugmann analyzes the heated discussion in pre-State Israel about Hebrew as the compulsory language of culture with its connections to the East-West dichotomy of early Zionism.

The second topic of this volume is the role of the press in developing perceptions of Jewish history and a historical consciousness of Jews between the Haskalah and National Socialism. Louise Hecht compares historical biographies of the Hebrew *Ha-Me'assef* (Königsberg and Berlin 1783/84-1797; 1808/09-1811), the German *Jüdisch-Deutsche Monatsschrift* written in Hebrew script (Prague 1802) and the German *Sulamith* (Leipzig and Dessau 1806-1848) with general, i.e. not specifically Jewish concepts of biographical writing. Carsten Schapkow shows that the interpretation of the "Golden Age" of Spanish Jewry before its expulsion in 1492 by the German-Jewish press during the age of Enlightenment reflects genuine masculine aims. Martina Steer deals with the historicization of Moses Mendelssohn, a beacon of modern German Jewry, in the German-Jewish press before 1929 and demonstrates how Mendelssohn was interpreted and used differently by different factions at different times. Michael Nagel's analysis of the historical novel published in serialized form, which ranges from the *Allgemeine Zeitung des Judentums* (1837) to the Danzig *Jüdisches Gemeindeblatt* (1939), illustrates how this genre was used to reflect the respective predicament of its readers. This connection proves to be particularly close in the case of Danzig where local Jewry was forced to organize its collective emigration – i.e. expulsion – at the end of 1938. That in addition to fiction and biography scholarly books on Jewish history were influential as well for the perception of history by a broader public is documented by Irene Aue's analysis of reviews of Weimar era works of history.

The ways Eastern and Western European Jews took notice of each other during World War I and the Weimar period, be it in daily life or intellectually, were mediated to a large extent by the contemporary Jewish press. Different positions, perceptions from within and without, attempts of mutual understanding and of cultural transfer between East and West are discussed in the third part of this volume. Tobias Grill presents a detailed analysis in terms of development, objectives, staff situation and reception of an orthodox Yiddish daily published in Warsaw from February 1917. Edited by two well-known German rabbis in close accord with the German military administration, its aim was to be a modernizing influence on ultra-orthodox Polish Jews. The Polish-Jewish journalist Wilhelm Feldman, portrayed by Iwona Kotelnicka, moved in the opposite geographical direction. After editing Jewish social democratic papers in Poland he started the *Polnische Blätter* in Berlin in 1915, which advocated Polish-German reconciliation and understanding for the special situation of Polish Jewry. Eleonore Lappin presents the anti-Polish Viennese publication *Jüdisches Archiv*, which also appeared during World War I. It juxtaposed the suffering of Galician Jews with the merits of Jewish soldiers of the Imperial and Royal Army in order to claim Jewish minority rights in the East and fight anti-Semitism in Vienna. Karol Sauerland draws a line connecting Hermann Cohen's

struggle against Zionism and Jewish nationalism on the one hand and his demand for the assimilation of Polish Jews into German culture on the other. In the context of these two causes the well-known philosopher used the press between 1914 and 1916 also as a forum for debate with such partners as the young Martin Buber. Klaus Hödl sees a weakening of the East-West dichotomy as a result of the historicization of traditional Western Judaism in literature, ethnography and art, for instance in the works of Moritz Daniel Oppenheim, a development which started in the middle of the 19th century. He comes to the conclusion that around 1900 the projection of the Western tradition on contemporary Eastern Jewry caused a positive reevaluation of the Eastern other by Western Jews. This ideal rapprochement seems, however, to have had little lasting practical results in light of the difficult situation of exiled Eastern Jews in Weimar Germany waiting for a possibility to emigrate. Anne-Christin Saß shows Eastern immigrants' initially exclusive and later more open attitude towards their Western-assimilated German-Jewish environment as articulated in the Berlin Yiddish and German journals of their association.

The question of modern Jewish identity, which has already been discussed in this volume in connection with language and nationality, is also an issue in the debates on the ambiguous and frequently shifting concept of a "genuinely Jewish" culture. The fourth part of this volume presents different versions of this phenomenon in connection with the "Jewish Renaissance" of the Weimar period in the contemporary German-Jewish press.

First discussions about the aims and content of a genuinely Jewish culture in the Jewish press arose in the 1840s. It was by no means fortuitous that these were initiated by Jewish teachers bent on modernization. The discussions in the Jewish teachers' press presented by Andreas Brämer preceded the later cultural debates. The Jewish educational system, which at that time underwent a process of modernization and professionalization developed and promulgated the body of knowledge necessary for the creation of concepts of Jewish culture. David A. Brenner presents a sophisticated analysis of a satirical portrayal of the Zionist aim of Jewish statehood in the light of current colonialism in the Wilhelmine period by focusing on the serial "Briefe aus Neu-Neuland" (Letters from New-Newland) – satirizing Theodor Herzl's recently published programmatic utopian novel "Altneuland" – in the *Schlemiel*, one of the few satirical German-Jewish periodicals, in 1903. Arndt Kremer addresses the national-linguistic concept of cultural Zionism: he demonstrates that relevant articles in the *Jüdische Rundschau* show a close affinity to Herder's concept of culture being determined by language as propagated by the "Deutsche Bewegung." This shows that it was not only the assimilated majority of German Jewry but also the "Jewish Renaissance" that was influenced by this "German" concept of culture. In the following article Rudolf Oswald deals with the concept of an independent "Jewish Renaissance" in sports, an important aspect of popular culture. He shows that the Zionist sports press of the Weimar period not only participated in general discussions about the professional vs. the amateur status of athletes but also echoed the general conservative press's arguments under the influence of

Spengler's cultural pessimism. M. Celka Straughn presents art as part of the Weimar "Jewish Renaissance." She analyses reviews of exhibitions in the Jewish press between 1901 (*Ost und West*) and the end of the Weimar period, looking into Zionist papers as well as into assimilated ones. The Jewish press also published a hitherto unparalleled amount of advertising, as was also the case in print media in general. In the texts and pictures of these advertisements Gideon Reuveni sees the emergence of a new Jewish consumer culture that combines specifically Jewish traits, for instance religious ones, with general bourgeois, modern features.

Esther Jonas-Märtin introduces the journalist Kadye Molodovsky, who grew up in an enlightened Polish-Jewish environment and emigrated to the US in 1935. In her literary and journalistic works as well as in her literary criticism, written primarily in Yiddish, she struggled for a genuinely Jewish culture within the context of modern life.

Most of the articles in the two volumes of "The German-Jewish Press and Jewish History" are based on papers presented at the conference with the same title, which brought 42 academics from eleven countries to Bremen University in June 2005. The conference's concept and program had been developed by the Richard Koebner Center for German History, Hebrew University Jerusalem (Moshe Zimmermann), the Institut für Jüdische Geschichte Österreichs [Institute for Jewish History of Austria], St. Pölten (Eleonore Lappin) and the Deutsche Presseforschung [Institute for German Press Research] at the University of Bremen (Michael Nagel) in cooperation with the Gesellschaft für Deutsche Presseforschung [Society for German Press Research] Bremen (Kurt Nemitz).

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The Editors