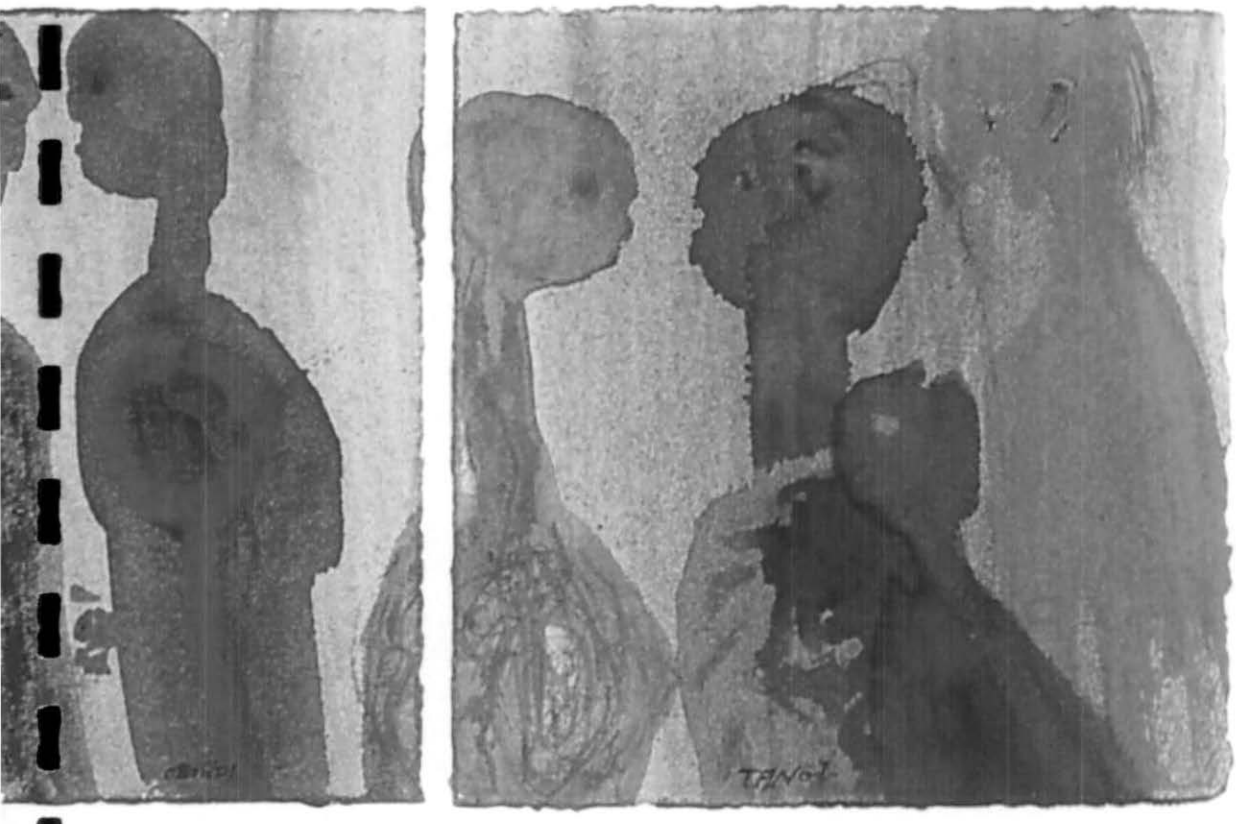
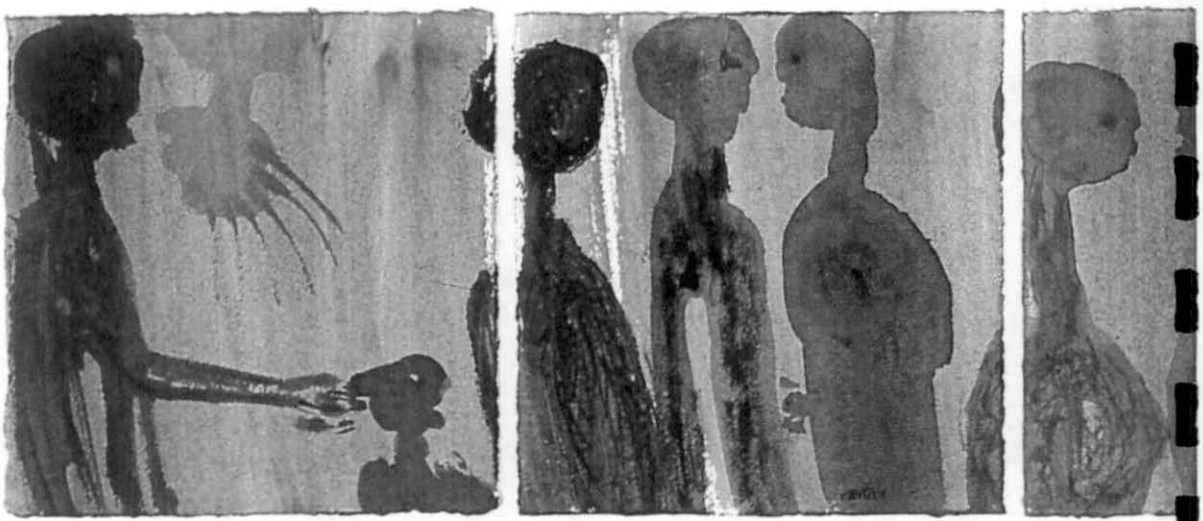
Jewish Cultures European Judaïsm



European Association for Jewish Culture

A publication of The Alliance Israélite Universelle

Jewish Cultures & European Judaïsm



Jewish Cultures & European Judaïsm

Different faces of the European Judaïsm
A Selection of Texts

European Association for Jewish Culture

A publication of The Alliance Israélite Universelle

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Man Should Be at the Center of Europe

An Interview with M. Ricardo Franco Levi

Cahiers de l'Alliance (CA): Mr. Director, can you explain the role that your group plays?

Ricardo Levi (RL): Our role is essentially to determine the political options of the European Commission, and especially those of its president, in political, social, and economic areas. Today, we are especially concerned with the discussion about enlarging the European Union; the first phase of which is supposed to end in 2003-2004. There is another area that I am personally very attached to, which is the dialogue with religions, Churches, and humanisms. I am very involved in this, all the more so since it is an area that is specific to our group.

CA: A propos, what do you think of the French decision not to include the word 'religion' in the introduction to the document defining the bases for building Europe?

RL: This is a very French reaction, in that it is loyal to the old secular tradition. Nonetheless, he Charter of Fundamental Rights is quite clear that the religious legacy is the basis of European culture. I therefore believe that we should not be so literal. It is clear that religious elements are a basic part of national and European identity.

CA: You have a very privileged perspective on everything that concerns Europe. Do you have the feeling that a true European Culture is in the process of being created?

RL. This is a difficult question. We are in the process of building a more integrated European Union since we believe that the challenges of the 21st century, with globalization and the splintering of nationalism can no longer be the sole domain of national States. There are some challenges that only a united Europe can

take on. By contrast, when we speak about culture and identity, it is clear that Europe cannot be compared to the United States. Europe is proud of its different national identities because they make it great, they are its richness. Nonetheless, we cannot deny that there is also a European identity in the broad sense of the term. We often speak about the Judeo-Christian basis of this European culture that includes permanent, common elements. The respect for human rights, for example, runs through European history, although this does not mean that this history was not also fraught with many occasions on which these rights were not respected. I believe that our challenge today is to preserve national identities while at the same time maintaining and strengthening a European identity that has always existed.

CA: Do you think that the European institutions, and especially the European Commission, should play an active role in this area?

RL: We have to be clear. Cultural responsibilities are very broadly national. In this respect, European institutions do not have much power, but we believe that despite everything, and I also share this feeling, our work and our projects must always take this cultural element into account. Many practical undertakings such as the ERASMUS program have been very successful in enabling tens of thousands of young Europeans to study in a foreign country. So cultural activities are also part of the continent's economic wealth.

CA: What role can Jewish culture have in this setting?

RL: I don't think we are exaggerating when we say that Jews were the first Europeans historically speaking. They succeeded in their host countries to define a Jewish culture linked to their context, particularly in Spain, France, and Germany, but over the course of centuries, they were also led cross borders, either freely or because they were forced. Jewish culture was, therefore, always being enriched by a symbiosis from country to country. So we can really say that Jews are the first Europeans, but not only because they were among the first to settle in Europe. Indeed, Jews settled in Europe at the time of the Roman Empire.

CA: Are you speaking about a purely historical role, looking to the past?

RL: I don't think so. Europe is currently involved in the important project of enlarging. We can talk about a true reunification of Europe, especially after the fall of the Berlin Wall, after the Cold War, and above all, after the division between totalitarian and democratic European countries. This reunification is above all the integration of Central Europe and the Balkans, all of these countries Jewish culture was really significant. Yet the very condition that these countries must meet in order to integrate into the large European family is to respect human rights. Indeed, before even being considered as a candidate, these nations must respect a

legislative framework for human rights. The most important of the different parameters — economic, political, social — that we evaluate is respect for human rights and for minorities.

In this respect, history has a special place and the experience of the Jewish people in Europe is obviously at the forefront.

CA: You have been monitoring these changes for many years. Are you optimistic in the short or middle-term about the place of the European Union in the concert of nations. culturally and politically?

RL: If we are talking about the short term, the answer is necessarily less obvious. European integration is an ongoing process. But from an historical point of view, having managed in fewer than 50 years to create a single currency among 12 countries that have warred with one another for centuries is extraordinary and very rapid.

If you are asking me whether Europe will be able to play the same role internationally as the role played in the world today by the US, for example especially concerning their investment in the Middle-Eastern conflict, which is an issue that particularly concerns us, or any other world problem, I do not believe that it is reasonable to imagine that this could happen quickly. But once again, this is a progressive process and we are on the right path.

CA: Who are you, Ricardo Levi?

RL: I am an Italian Jew, trained as a journalist. In Italy, among other activities, I was close to the Contemporary Jewish Documentation Center, in Milan. In addition, I had the luck of working with Mr. Prodi when he became Italy's Prime Minister, and I followed him to Brussels in order to be part of the European undertaking. I hope that my current responsibilities will enable me to contribute to the construction of Europe, in trying to always bear in mind that man should have an absolutely central position.

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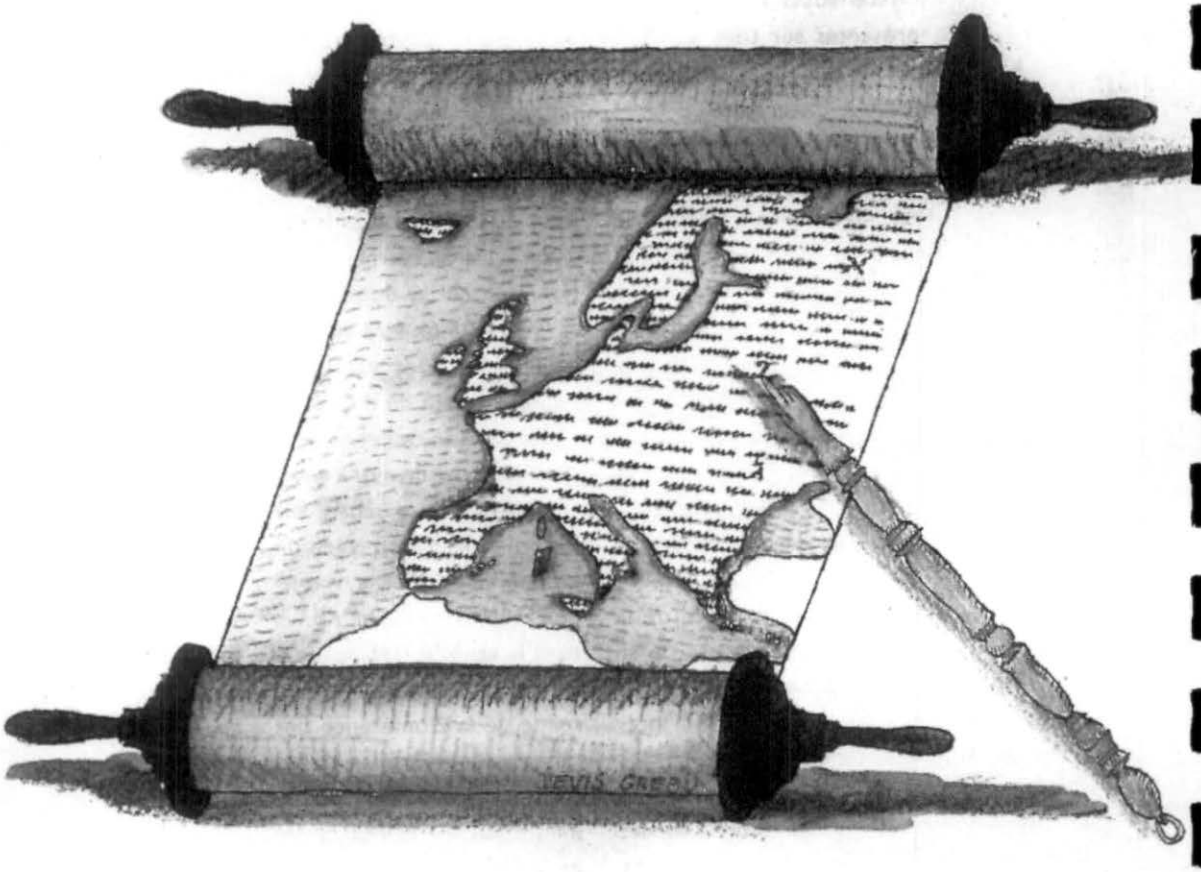
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The AIU and the New Jewish European World

Diana Pinto

What role will the AIU have in the new constellation of European Jewry that is taking shape at the beginning of this century? How will this venerable institution adjust to a continent which, since the fall of the Berlin Wall, resembles something like a new frontier and a objective for powerful American Jewish institutions and players inside and outside of Israel, and at the same time create its own new Jewish life?

These issues affect me profoundly. Above all, they touch me because I have the honor of sitting on the Central Committee of the Alliance. But they also touch me as an Italian Jewish woman who was trained in the United States, who has long lived in France, and has always thought of herself as being European. And as an historian who works on the new Jewish presence in Europe, I am also affected by this issue. With respect to the AIU, I therefore find myself at a crossroads of inner life and external experience. Perhaps it is for all of these reasons that I have chosen to play the devil's advocate, to better prepare 'my' own august house for our future challenges.

Everything that I am about to discuss has the same starting point. The new Jewish European galaxy that we are watching take shape has little in common with the world that emerged after the Holocaust. That world had its national and cultural hierarchies based on the age of local Jewish traditions, on the civilizing role of the country from which the Jewish community in question had spread, and the undeniable importance of demography. All of these things set the French Jewish community and the AIU, as its oldest non-religious institution, well ahead of all the other European Jewish communities and institutions.

Today's Jewish European world is increasingly global, pragmatic and above all anglophone in its relationships with other Jewish communities. Most of its Jews are 'new' in terms of their behavior. This is either because they or their parents were

immigrants, or because the memory of the Holocaust and their loyalty to Israel have created something of a rift with some earlier patriotism, or because the fall of Communism has freed up new Jewish identities. This new Jewish world has many new active players in it, American and Israeli Jews. Our Jewish European house is therefore in the process of being built and renewal takes precedence over tradition, flexibility over longstanding habits, the dynamism of a minority over the prestige of well-established organizations. Without becoming virtual, the Jewish European world has taken on a time-space weightlessness in less than a decade that makes it, paradoxically, one of the most dynamic and optimistic of the Jewish world. The AIU must therefore define itself in this new context, with new players, new challenges, and traditional strengths that henceforth have new meaning and importance.

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A Changing Jewish European Context

The Jewish European landscape has changed in three fundamental ways. First, the large traditional tradition communities have become relatively less important. Second, highly symbolically charged Jewish communities are growing. Third and last, small Jewish communities are becoming dynamic.

1. The historical importance of Jewish communities is no longer a necessary point of reference for understanding their importance in the new economy of worldwide Judaism. We can no longer live strictly on our past grandeur. The Franco-British stock-in-trade that dominated post-war Jewish life in Europe (in the West, obviously, as the East had no freedom of expression) is gone. Like the UK, France no longer sets the agenda in a polyphonic Jewish Europe, among other reasons because every Jewish community, whether small or marginal, now has its own entry ticket and advantages in a globalized Judaism. The fact that France is the largest Jewish community in Europe, outside of Ukraine and Russia whose Jewish institutions are still in embryonic, does not mean that it is still the leader. With respect to what and to whom? With respect to Israel, numbers don't mean strength outside, as French foreign policy's apparent disregard for its very large and very visible French community show. Numbers can also create internal obstacles and tensions that make a national community less flexible and visible on the world Jewish map.

2. Since the Fall of the Berlin wall, new and very symbolically charged communities have stepped out from the shadows of history. Their populations,

institutions, and financial foundations may not be very substantial — such as in the Jewish community in Poland —, or they might be larger, as in Budapest, for example, which is virtually the only Hungarian Jewish community — or they may have recently grown thanks to the influx of Russian Jews, as in Germany, and in a different context, in the communities of the ex-USSR. The differences are not what matter. All of these communities are highly symbolic. They have become the high places for making political and cultural demands, the stakes of worldwide Jewish memory, they offer new spaces for building Jewish universities and for renewing Jewish life. These are all major concerns of world Judaism in search of its European roots, and for Israel as it seeks a broader international opening. Far from being museum pieces, these communities are full-fledged participants in world Jewry, a little like the smaller countries in the European Union whose weight is considerable with respect to their populations. Moreover, as Jewish goods that were confiscated by the Nazis and nationalized under Communist regimes are slowly restituted, these communities are no longer poor relatives at the mercy of the charity of world Judaism.

3. Western Jewish communities such as those in Sweden, Italy, Holland and Spain, that were previously peripheral or very small, with populations of fewer than 40,000, have now become visible and have acquired a new internal and external dynamism. Their leaders are very present in the international Jewish organizations, national debates, and in ties with Israel. But above all, it is within these countries' Jewish communities themselves that Jewish intellectual and cultural life is experiencing a vigorous renewal. This new consciousness is no longer based exclusively on Israel as an ersatz identity, but is rediscovering its own complementary roots.

New Players

The world of European Jews is evolving in a national and international context that is undergoing profound changes. New players are coming onto the scene at every level.

International Jewish Participation.

These players come most often from powerful American organizations, such as the World Jewish Congress, and relayed partly by the European Jewish Congress, and at a more diplomatic and intellectual level, the American Jewish Committee. They now have a very real place in the political and historical debates that are tak-

ing place in different countries in Europe. At another level, the Joint plays a pivotal role not only in consolidating the communities of the ex-Soviet block, but above all in organizing new European Jewish organizations such as the European Council of Jewish Communities. Similarly, many American Jewish foundations, such as the Lauder Foundation for example, play a central role in Jewish education and in the preservation of the Jewish heritage in Eastern Europe. Tensions notwithstanding, these are now an integral part of the European Jewish agora.

The New Israelis

Since the creation of the State of Israel, Israeli diplomats and representatives of the Jewish Agency have always had very close ties with the Jewish communities of Europe, even when their objective was to bring new blood to Israel through *alya*. The new Israeli presence is different today. This bridge (not a drawbridge) between Israel and a Diaspora that no longer considers itself to be living in exile, is composed of young Israelis who leave Israel in the service of the government, and as representatives of civil society with its foundations, cultural institutions, and research institutions. They differ from such traditional representatives of the Jewish State as rabbis, Hebrew teachers, or community activists. The new Israelis are university professors, journalists, artists and businessmen who live in Israel and Europe and who understand the interest that European Jews hold for Israel and for themselves.

Europe and the Consequences of the Holocaust

European nations are no longer the apparently neutral, strict guardians that they once were. The European map of the 1990s of national repentance for the Holocaust has had very concrete consequences for the Jewish world. Foundations have been built to preserve Jewish history, and organizations have been created to strengthen Jewish cultural life: museums, colloquia, encounters, scholarships, and internships. New social, cultural and political interlocutors in the cities, regions and state governments of every government now work to facilitate the expression of Jewish life which no longer exists in autarky. This is true everywhere in Europe, regardless of the status of the country during World War II. The memory of the Holocaust now encompasses the victors, the defeated, and the neutral countries in the same manner.

European Organizations

New institutional European actors are also becoming receptive to Jewish life, thanks in part to the fact that they are solicited by the Jewish organizations seeking funds for European projects. The different divisions of the European Union in Brussels and of the Council of Europe in Strasbourg are thus becoming important partners and actors in Jewish European life, institutionally and individually. This

symbiosis is less a consequence of the memory of the Holocaust than a prefiguration of or overture to culturally and religiously plural Europe with multiple memories that meet beyond national borders.

Current Trends

The European Jewish world has thus become a major issue for world Judaism. All Jewish actors meet as they once did at the fairs of Champagne or along the caravan routes. The results are multiple, often varied, and give rise to new forms of Jewish life.

A New, Globalized Jewish Elite

Rabbis, Jewish community leaders, secondary and university Jewish education experts are moving and meeting together more than ever before. This new elite circulates in a world that is increasingly homogenous, where the labels 'American Jew', or 'European Jew' or 'Israeli' are losing their national and cultural specificity. These different communities have increasingly similar concerns, all the more so since the possible solutions are often articulated in common frameworks (c.f. the Le'atid seminars for future Jewish community leaders in Europe). In addition, a Jewish studies and culture elite has been created, and meet frequently in Europe and in Israel, with bridges towards the United States.

Regional European Centers

The Jewish European world will doubtless be organized around regional centers. Stockholm is becoming the Scandinavian pole that will also include the Jewish communities of the Baltic countries. A Germanic pole, perhaps in Berlin, will bring together the Jews of Germany, Austria, and German Switzerland. France and Great Britain obviously constitute their own poles. And we can imagine a center in Madrid, which will also be used as a bridge for Jews in Latin America, many of whom are anxious to immigrate to Europe. Hungary is becoming a pole for Central and Eastern European Jews and for Jews from the Balkans, including refugees from ex-Yugoslavia. In addition, Budapest has become the preferred site for intra-European meetings, not only because of its central location, but also because Eastern Europeans need no visa to go there, and prices are low compared with the West. For this reason, the London JPR has its meetings in Budapest: an example of the new Jewish pragmatism. Moscow, of course, is already a pole for Jews who are still in the ex-USSR, with 'annexes' in Berlin.

Light Jewish Culture

Europe is about to become a privileged place for a new virtual, positive globalized Jewish culture. The Paideia Institution that was just created in Stockholm to provide a Jewish education to young Europeans is striking proof of this. Created by a dynamic American woman, a Jewish education expert from Israel, this institution is largely financed by the Swedish government. The academic staff come from the Hartman Institute of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, and from the new 'itinerant' Jewish élites. Students will come from all over Europe to receive a Jewish education free of any national tradition. A new Jewish center has just been born, in less than two years, in a geographically peripheral city whose national Jewish community was created essentially at the end of the 19th century and today counts only 20,000 people — the institutional opposite of the Alliance. It is too early to say whether the Jewish culture that is transmitted in this manner will resemble a standardized Mac Moshe or whether it will be able to radiate a substantial content. This new culture will, in all cases, be convivial and dynamic, and will provide an extraterritorial adventure with a virtual past to young Jews of the new century.

The Challenges

Will the AIU be able to maintain its position in a Europe whose Jewish communities are being redefined? Will its traditions and experience hinder or help it? Will it become the French Sephardic or Mediterranean center of an expanding Jewish galaxy with incomparable advantages in this age of cultural tourism? Paris and its splendors? Or the advantages of its own history and rootedness in a long French tradition, at the crossroads of universal values and Jewish specificity? Does the AIU still have a 'signature' after the Jewish worlds that it set out to 'civilize' and to educate in North Africa, the Balkans and the Ottoman Empire have disappeared. Especially after the double rupture of the Holocaust and of 1967, and the loss of the serene confidence in Eternal France on which its identity is based? We must not forget that in today's globalized Judaism, with centers in Israel and America, that Germany, the great friend of Israel with its diverse Jewish community, might appear more useful and symbolically promising than the French Jewish community. For while the latter is certainly better established and bigger, it is based in France which is considered to be fundamentally hostile to Israel.

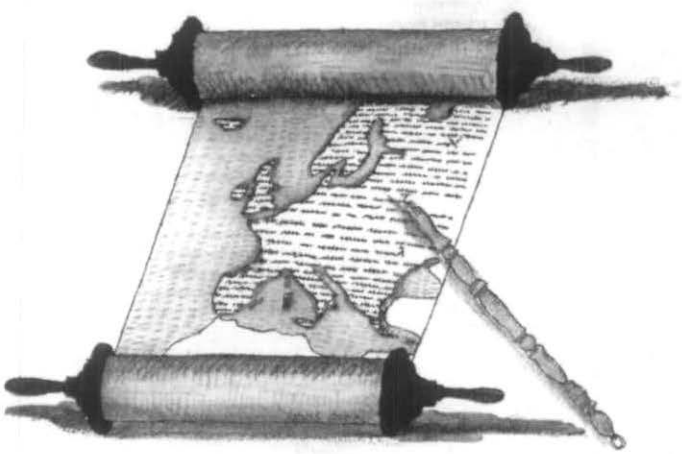
AIU Strengths

These are advantages implying that European Jews will want to both create a vibrant Jewish life and culture and play a pivotal role in their respective countries to strengthen the universal values that are always vulnerable, even in Israel. The AIU has five important strengths.

1. A cultural and intellectual tradition dating from the Crémieux Agreement to Emmanuel Lévinas, and including many enlightened rabbis who can conjugate the Talmud and a humanistic approach. This tradition needs to be recalled, and above all freed of the opprobrium cast upon the «Israelite» world after the Holocaust. This work has already begun at the College of Jewish Studies, under the brilliant direction of Shmuel Trigano.
2. A reflection on the Jew in the City, which is to say on citizenship and membership in a world that is not only Jewish. This message goes well beyond the specifically French notion of the secular, and touches upon the major issues of our pluralistic democracies.
3. The recently acquired slow and, we hope, profound reconciliation with a traumatic national past, that is particularly traumatic for Jews.
4. Learning how to mix very different Jewish worlds — from the old Israelites of the Ostjuden to the Sepharads, to the left, secular Jews, to liberal and orthodox Jews.
5. Finally, the most controversial issue: the reactualization of the René Cassin legacy and the reinsertion of the Jewish world into universal human rights that has too long been monopolized by UN vagaries. This should be revisited with a Jewish rereading that would rediscover its practical universality:

With this historical baggage, the AIU can play a role in European Judaism where many Jewish communities, and not only those in the East, are facing the same political and historical issues that remain current. Above all, the AIU can play a role with respect to Israel, which must be made less isolated from within and from without in this respect. Why couldn't the AIU schools in Israel transmit these five messages? And couldn't a future ENIO incarnate these messages at a European level? Above all, couldn't there be more of a dialogue on them between Israel and European Jews? Some will say that American Judaism incarnates these values infinitely better than its French equivalent. This is true, but in such an historically exceptional way, and within a 'risk-free' national context since the American

Jewish community did not have to fight against its own government in order to defend Israel or its own priorities. In France, where this history is more conflictual and tense, provides examples for all the other Jewish worlds, including in Israel, that are in the eye of the storm. Mightn't we imagine, in this context, a future Paris-Berlin-Jerusalem triangle within the Jewish European world that is taking shape, where London would be a friendly albeit rather exceptional presence? The AIU must rediscover the conviction of its initial values if it wants to set its mark on the renewal of European Judaism, the mirror and the hinterland of an Israeli Judaism. It will otherwise risk becoming only a vague reference or, at best, a pleasant cultural and tourist rest stop in the general education of *Homo Hebraicus* of the 21st century, with its superficial Jewish culture and militancy that touches on an autistic Judeo-centrism.



Sephardic Maritime Routes and Experiences

Evelyne Oliel-Grausz

In December 1754, Ester Levy Flores, a young widow from Amsterdam, left for Surinam, moved both by her respect for Mosaic law and by her concern for her own freedom. Her husband, Joseph Arias Carvalho, had disappeared and the couple was childless. She was therefore obliged to marry her brother-in-law, or to free him from this obligatory Leviratic marriage by 'unshoeing' through the ritual *halitza*. The brother-in-law in question, Jehosuah Menahem Arias, lived in Dutch Guyana, or Surinam, and belonged to the Holy Beraha Vesalom Community, at the heart of a vast ensemble of largely Jewish plantations known as the Jodensavannah. Because there was no rabbi, for the moment, in Suriname the rabbis and the *parnassim* of Amsterdam appointed Jacob Henriques de Barios, another passenger on the same ship, to be responsible for ensuring the *halitza* ceremony and to be a member of the rabbinical tribunal, or *bet din*, overseeing it. After the long voyage, the young woman arrived in the Jewish savanna to be told that Jehosuah Arias had left the colony clandestinely, and his whereabouts were unknown. Thanks to the copious correspondence between the two communities, we can follow the vicissitudes of this transatlantic *halitza*. An inquest was organized to find the missing brother-in-law. The Surinam community was irritated by the decision of the Dutch authorities to name an expert, and tensions arose between the two. After a year and a half of difficulties and various episodes about which known only that they occurred but about which we have no details, Ester Levy Flores 'unshoed' her brother-in-law and was then free to marry someone else.[1]

This episode has more than anecdotal value; it lets us understand certain characteristics of the history of the Sephardic communities and their relationship with the sea. It is a story deeply marked by mobility, which is inevitably translated in the Sephardic space by a sea journey, embodied here by the trips of the two principal protagonists. Another story could have been told by way of introduction. It would have been about a Sephardic trader sailing the seas in search of merchandise. This familiar figure, however, avoided so to suggest how generally and under how many different circumstances Sephardic Jews traveled by sea. The vignette gives us a sec-

ond indication concerning the role of family ties in setting mobility into motion. This was, above all, a diaspora of families, not only distant kin but of siblings and immediate family. Finally, these groups were separated by an ocean but the communities maintained close official relationships, in this case based on authority or the obligation to intervene, dictated by a respect for the Law. The intervention by Amsterdam that so irritated the parnassim of Surinam in this case was otherwise constantly solicited by this community and others.

One example chosen for its pusillanimity will illustrate this transatlantic intimacy. In 1755, Jacob Jeudah Leao de Curaçao complained to the Amsterdam parnassim that his son had not been authorized to replace him for the Yom Kippur reading of the Haftorah.[2] This plaint arose in a context of conflict between Curaçoan factions, and paradoxically sheds light on how recourse to Amsterdam as a proximate authority was solicited for small and important disagreements, thereby erasing the time-space represented by the immense expanse of ocean. The ocean occupies a singular position in Sephardic history and geography, by simultaneously separating and bringing together the poles of this diaspora. For despite the difficulty of communication between such distant points during the modern era, there was continuity rather than rupture. The ocean, the territory of the void, was an endlessly traversed space that did not signify absence.

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A Maritime Diaspora

The title chosen for this essay on the relationship between Sephardic Jews and the ocean borders on being redundant and even on being pleonastic since the only history of modern Sephardic Jews is a maritime history.[3] The ocean occupies an essential position in terms of both events and the long term. Indeed, the founding episode of the history of the New Christians of Portugal, the forced, collective, and notorious baptism of Portuguese Jews following the simulacrum of an expulsion proclaimed by Dom Manuel under pressure from Spain, took place in the port of Lisbon. Other important moments in the history of the Sephardic diaspora occurred within a naval or maritime context, such as the 1669 Expulsion of the Jews from the Spanish possession of Oran. The embarkation of the Oran's entire Jewish community of 466 people, including women, children, and old people, was celebrated to the ringing of church bells, the shooting of canons, and actions of forgiveness. Hoping to put in at Leghorn, the expelled Jews were put off in Villefranche de Nice, a possession of the Duke of Savoy.4

After being expelled from Spain, the Mediterranean was the first space in which the Sephardic diaspora began to constitute itself, and it remained so for several generations. The exiled and emigrant Jews sailed towards the Ottoman Empire, North Africa, and Italy. At the end of the 16th century, this migratory route shifted to the north and west of Europe, although Jewish emigration continued unabated to Italy, which was at the temporal and spatial crossroads of diasporas of the Levant and the West. Towards the end of the 16th century, complex political, religious, and economic circumstances led to authorizing the return to Western Europe of Jews who had been largely expelled from Europe at the end of the Middle Ages and during the wars of religion. The communities established by small groups of Portuguese and Spanish Jews in Leghorn, Amsterdam, Hamburg, and in Southwest French, where official equivocation about their definition continued for more than a century, was the beginning of the resettlement of Jews in Western Europe. Various initiatives, motivated by economic and spiritual considerations, combining millenary Jewish and Christian plans and the attraction of a new access route to the Caribbean just after the fall of Dutch Brazil, led to the officious 'readmission' of Jews to Cromwell's England. The western expansion of Sephardic communities continued and increased during the second half of the 17th century, in the English Antilles — (Jamaica, Barbados), the Dutch Antilles (Curaçao), and on the North American continent in New York, and Surinam. This widening of Sephardic horizons towards the westernmost extremity of the New World was consonant with and accompanied the Atlantic expansion of European powers.

During the Enlightenment, the Sephardic diaspora was above all a diaspora of ports stretching between the Old and the New Worlds, with a complex, articulated, layered structure of family ties, business partnerships, and inter-community relationships. Individual destinies and family sagas constituted so many microcosms of this collective history. Next to the innumerable famous or unknown Judeo-Portuguese names, we can place a list of maritime localities that sum up their biography. In 1728, young Benjamin da Costa, before becoming an eminent Portuguese notable and shareholder of the Bank of England, sent a request to King George II in which he traced his family history, from the arrival of his parents Abraham Mendes da Costa and Judith Mendes Salazar in Bayonne during the final years of the 17th century, to their journey to Holland in about 1700 where they died in 1724, and his own settling in London.[5] Concerning the rabbis, the biography of Abraham Gabay Isidro describes numerous sea crossings and travels, until his death. Born on the Iberian Peninsula at the end of the 17th century, Isidro fled whereas the Holy Office imprisoned his wife and many of his relatives. Circumcised in London in 1721, he went to Amsterdam where he studied in the rabbinical seminar Ets Haim under Hakham Abendana de Britto. Less than three years after having returned to regular Judaism, he was able to preach in the large

synagogue of Amsterdam. He became a rabbi of the Portuguese congregation of Surinam and of Barbados, then moved to London where he died in 1755. His widow Sarah settled in her hometown of Bayonne, and had his *Sefer Yad Avraham* printed in Amsterdam in 1763 with 613 commandments in the form of a long liturgical poem.[6] To illustrate the diaspora of siblings, we can cite the last will and testament of David Bernal, written in Curaçao in 1716 who leaves his goods to his sister Anna, married in Bayonne, his brothers Manuel and Isaac in Amsterdam, his brother Juan in London, and his brother-in-law, Francisco Nunes de Bernal Miranda da Bahia, in Brazil.[7]

These complex relations often led to the interrelationships between business and kinship that characterize the Judeo-Portuguese diaspora as well as other religious, trading minorities such as the Huguenots and the Luccas. The modern trader was above all a seller of space and routes, which meant that he had to be able to count on trustworthy agents along the trade routes. In establishing secure information networks that structured the trade, the family was the most reliable natural support. The creation of veritable pan-diasporic family enterprises could either use members of a family that were already dispersed or send relatives to settle in the cardinal trading points. For example, the Franco firm, which dominated the London diamond trade during the first decades of the 18th century, illustrates the combination of these two strategies. The patriarch Mose Franco Albuquerque lived in Leghorn at the end of the 17th century and was actively engaged in coral trade and workmanship. In very short order, relying on expertise and the emigration of one part of the family this time, he created a framework that ensured the rapid rise of the London house. One of Mose's three sons remained in Leghorn, another settled in London, and the third left for Fort Saint George (Madras), the British counter that replaced Goa in producing uncut stones. Coral was exported to India where it was much prized, and diamonds were sent to London to be sold, usually after having been cut and polished in Amsterdam.[8] Without enumerating further examples, we can easily see how configurations of commercial and family ties effectively activated Sephardic mobility, which necessarily used the open seas.

The spiritual and geographic development of Antonio Ribeiro provides a contrast in terms of the link between maritime peregrinations and Sephardic identity. This young, New Christian Portuguese doctor was initiated into the Hebraic law in early adulthood and left for London to join his uncle, Diogo Nunes Ribeira, who had returned to regular Judaism with his entire family two years earlier. Upon his arrival, he was circumcised and adopted Jewish customs. Overcome by doubts, however, he rejected first the rabbinate and then Judaism in its entirety and the discomforts of northern mores. The former New Christian become a new Jew, to pertinent concept forged by Yosef Kaplan, and returned to Christianity without returning to Portugal, cursing his decision to submit himself to the Covenant of Abraham, since it meant that he could not go home. He left London and first went

briefly to his parents' home in Bordeaux before taking up a life of exile, offering his services and medical know-how in several important continental European courts, including that of Catherine the Great of Russia. After breaking ties with his Portuguese family and religion, he veered away from maritime geography and plunged inland into continental Europe.[9]

The Ocean, the New Christians, and the Escape Routes

The New Christians who wanted to leave Portugal or Spain could do so either by travelling by land over the Pyrenees, or by sea. In the autobiographical descriptions of this escape, the embarkation often represents the acme of the family saga, and the ocean represents the prelude of freedom. In the beautifully written pages that describe how they made their escape, generally flat because she takes her data from inquisitorial sources, Michèle Escamilla-Colin describes the various subterfuges used, including false letters, pending debts, false rumors of departure for a false destination.[10] Late in life, around the turn of the 19th century, the daughter of Dr. Samuel Ribeiro Nunes Ziprah Nunes, gave her grandson Mordecai Manuel Noah an elegant account of the family escape in the 1720s. Although doubtless embellished by time, the tale was nonetheless eloquent on the necessary dissimulation of all details concerning these departures.

Doctor (Samuel Ribeiro Nunes) owned a large, elegant mansion on the banks of the Tagus. Given his large fortune, he was used to frequenting the best-known families of Lisbon. One beautiful summer day, he organized a dinner, and one of his guests was the captain of a British brigantine, anchored on the river not far from his home. While the guests were enjoying themselves on the lawn, the captain invited the doctor's family and some friends to join him aboard his ship. They brought some of the meal that had been prepared for the party. While they were on board appreciating the captain's hospitality, the captain gave the order to lift anchor and, with a favorable wind, the brigantine rapidly left the Tagus's waters and quickly arrived on the open sea, landing in England. The doctor and the captain had organized everything ahead of time; the captain had agreed to a thousand *moidores* and had used this subterfuge to elude surveillance. The ladies had hidden their diamonds and jewels beneath their dresses; the doctor had changed all of his holdings into gold and distributed them among the men of the family who hid them in their heavy leather belts. He left behind his china, furnishings, domestics and his retinue, all of which was seized by the Inquisition and confiscated by the State.[11]

The advances in navigation and trade, emphasized by Ribeiro Sanches, meant that long-used sea routes[12] gained considerably in importance as of the 17th century, especially from the port of Lisbon. "As soon as he is able to leave the kingdom, the (New Christian) does so, as quickly as possible. The easiest crossing is the route for Holland, England, and France where he arrives knowing nothing of the language of these countries, and knowing only Portuguese or Spanish Jews, among whom he rediscovers relatives and friends."[13]

Michèle Escamilla mentions a case worthy of being recounted because it enriches our geography of the escape routes of a Mediterranean channel that appear vital still at the turn of the 17th-18th centuries. A Genoan boat had left Lisbon in the spring of 1699 en route for Leghorn, with approximately 50 Portuguese aboard. It made a fateful halt in Cadiz where the commissioner, alerted to the boat's arrival, had already forewarned the inquisitors of the Seville tribunal. What's interesting in this tale for the historian, among others, is that the passengers included Manuel Fernandez Pereira alias Gaspar Lopez Dias, and Domingo de Acosta Villareal alias Domingo Lopes. These two New Christian brothers were born in Portugal, had settled and married in Leghorn and Naples respectively, and had organized the convoy from Italy, with all of its obvious dangers for two baptized Jews. The fact that the second brother was the lieutenant on the intercepted ship suggests that this may have been more than an occasional route.[14]

The most coveted and maybe the most frequented sea route, however, was the one from Lisbon to London. This was primarily because the 1703 treaty of Methuen exempted English vessels from inquisitorial visits. The steamship access that assured the regular traffic between Lisbon and Falmouth became a synonym for safety and a veritable crossing industry was organized with Jewish and Neo-Christian networks in Lisbon and London that we barely remark the current state of our scholarship. The linchpin of the industry was the ship captain, such as he appears in the lovely tale told by Ziprah Nunes. Diplomatic and inquisitorial sources provide the most reliable elements albeit in dribs and drabs. In 1726, a Dutch captain informed the Lisbon Inquisition that, thanks to the help of a London merchant named Pedro Lami, Doctor Diogo Nunes Ribeira was making his way clandestinely towards the England of the New Christians.[15] Between February and June 1731, the British Consul makes several mentions in his correspondence of the traffic in false Admiralty passports used by the New Christians to flee Portugal, revealing a complicity in Cork and Lisbon.[16]

Captains holding such power made the fugitives pay dearly for their passage, and the Inquisition tried until the bitter end to rip away their coveted passengers. In a letter to the Duke of Newcastle dated April 11, 1727, Cottrell, the chargé d'affaires in Lisbon, recounts the chaos following the news of the escape of Gaspar Lopes, a tobacco farmer and Crown debtor, and the siege in front Captain Bowler's vessel, the Argyle.

His Majesty the King of Portugal was filled with fury and resentment at the idea that some of his subjects had taken refuge on board an English vessel. The tribunal had been able to monitor the fugitives far enough to be sure that they had embarked on a boat rocking on the Tagus. We had hoped that a general embargo would affect the boats, and the Inquisition demanded that all those involved in similar affairs be severely punished. For two entire nights, police officers patrolled the riverbanks in search of the escapees, under order to bring them as a trophy to the Inquisition.[17]

This route grew to such proportions and became so visible that it created serious diplomatic tensions between the two countries. Portugal protested officially, first on the occasion of a spectacular escape by Jose da Costa Villareal and his family from the Holy Office prisons; da Costa had managed to bring a large quantity of precious metals with him on the same steamship, in July.[18] The official protests were repeated during the following years. In January 1727, James Dormer, the extraordinary envoy to Portugal, was ordered not to help Jews to escape. Lord Tirawley, the extraordinary envoy to Portugal between 1728 and 1741 whose letters made no secret of his distaste for these "obscure and ambiguous gentlemen," was so zealous in his task that he was called to order by the Duke of Newcastle in 1732 for having notified all English shipmasters of the interdiction against taking passengers without a laissez-passer from the Secretary of State. Trying to justify himself, he emphasized the limits of his action, asserting that the captains would continue to take refugees aboard «each time that they were offered a purse full of gold, which has always been and will continue to be the principal motivation of those who accept to participate in these operations.[19] Again in 1746, Abraham Castres, another extraordinary envoy to Lisbon, informed the Duke of Newcastle that a "whole Jewish family" (the name leaves no doubt about the reality of crypto-judaism) had fled onboard the steamship Hanover, despite the reiterated assurance by the English authorities to try and put an end to these practices. King John was extremely unhappy. "The Inquisition have been much out of humor ever since," and he expected an official protest from the extraordinary envoy to England, Sebastiao Jose de Carvalho e Melo (the future Marquis of Pombal).[20]

The figure of the New Christian as a clandestine passenger on His Majesty's vessels become so familiar during the second half of the 18th century that it served as a cover for a fleeing judge in 1774. Several letters deal with this fugitive who passed himself off as a Jew trying to escape the Inquisition. According to the English diplomat in office at the time, being Jewish was no longer a valid excuse "as the Jews are publicly tolerated under the protection of an Express Law in their favor." He was doubtless referring to the abolition of distinctions between New and Old Christians of the same year and did not hesitate to use the term Jew to refer to the new Christians.[21]

The route for England was so convenient that it was used for many destinations. We have already given examples of those who, like the Raba and the Furtado, went from Lisbon to Bayonne and Bordeaux in 1753 and 1756 respectively, making only a brief stopover in London. Julio Caro Baroja recounts that during the reign of Charles II, a certain Moses Henriquez, born in Aragon, left for London and ultimately went to Morocco.[22]

Bernard Nahon, in examining the case of the Raba, speculates about the New Christians' choices of a final destination in relationship to their wealth. He and suggests a hierarchy crowned by London, followed by Bordeaux and Bayonne. We can also imagine a similar hierarchy of escape routes, with the Lisbon-London sea passage reserved for the wealthiest, and the more dangerous route over the Pyrenees for the less wealthy.[23] The various accounts of the cupidity of sea captains lend credence to this view of things, but it needs to some nuance. The wealthy certainly took the sea route but it was not reserved exclusively for them. When Captain Bowler was blamed for the flight of Gaspar Lopes, he claimed that he had been harassed to accept some poor souls aboard his ship and that because they were Jewish, they were pursued by the Inquisition. When the ship was ready to get under way, he had ordered them to leave the decks, just as he had ordered the friends who had come to give them what they would need during the voyage. He only allowed a few women and children to remain aboard, out of charity.[24] Much more significant than this anecdote, however, are the London national accounts of the Portuguese congregation and the exponential growth of its charitable expenses in 1720 and 1730, that show that previous agreements determined that captains were paid for the passage of Jews when the ship arrived in London. The registers of the Shaar Hashamayim London community show that upon his arrival on 28 veadar 5486 (31 march 1726) Captain Robert Bowler received 57 pounds 20 "for the passage of 8 *pessoas* from Lisboa."[25] The accounting reflects the importance of the phenomenon: in 1728, a new budgetary line was created in the books of the Portuguese congregation of London for freight costs settled by ship captains for the clandestine transportation of impecunious New Christians. In 1728 alone, the Shaar Hashamayim community paid for the escape of 114 people, mostly from Portugal.[26] The fugitives traveled in a group — four groups were mentioned for this year, including about 20 people, or more — using a plot that seemed familial insofar as we can judge from the paucity of documentation. Doubtless because of the urgency of the situation, the community used and paid for the services of nine different captains that year. Over the years, however, the names of Captain Lyons, Glass, Diamond, Bennet, and Beale appeared regularly, and give us an indication of the creation of a veritable flight network.[27]

The Port of Bordeaux: A Typology of Jewish Passengers

A series of passport registers issued by the Admiralty of Guyana for passengers embarking at the port of Bordeaux, and covering virtually the entire18th century are an exceptional set of documents (which have been exhaustively analyzed elsewhere).[28] There is nothing like them in other Sephardic establishments, for they make it possible to imagine the daily activities of one of the circuits used by Spanish and Portuguese Jews, from a single vantage point. We can therefore begin to understand immigrants and travelers during practically an entire century. From approximately 33,000 certificates of identity and Catholicity, passenger submissions and passports, we can identify more than 1000 Jewish passengers, largely from or born in Spain and Portugal. Without describing the birthplaces of these passengers in any detail, or the composition of these groups, we can establish a typology of migrant Jewish travelers from this unique source. In addition to the very common figure of traders travelling to London, Amsterdam, and the French islands in America that we have already described as comprising an important contingent of Jewish travelers, there was also the young trader. Raphael Azevedo, for example, left for Amsterdam in 1766 "to learn its language and trade." Iberian immigrants fleeing Spain and Portugal constitute another less distinct 'group' but one that overlaps with the previous group. They arrived over the Pyrenean border and the haven of Bayonne, or by sea, and went to other Sephardic destinations such as London or Holland, of their free will or because of a vigorous policy inciting their departure to help the Nation's finances. The numbers of these travelers grew considerably in the 1720s and 1730s, years during which Portuguese tribunals were intensely active, and the Spanish Holy Office was spectacularly energetic once again. We can distinguish one category of poor wanderers that intersects partially with the lot of Iberian immigrants whose passage was paid for by a complex system of financial collaboration among the communities. These travelers wandered between the poles of Sephardic geography and from one charitable institution to another, with no regard for distance, like the indigents of the Old Regime in France who wandered from parish to parish. This sketch should also include scholars and itinerant rabbis whose importance has no relationship to their number, and who were most often mandated by the communities of the Holy Land or of the Mediterranean to collect emergency funds. The beautiful ensemble in the passport registers, of Hebrew monograms typical of rabbinic signatures, bear undeniable graphic witness to these rabbis. We do not give justice here to the wealth

whose collection is particularly rich in this kind of document. Azevedo was a successful merchant in colonial trade after the War of America.[48] Portuguese Jews also demonstrated an encyclopedic or scientific interest in the world of navigation. For example, in 1753, Jacob Rodrigues Pereire, known especially for his pioneering work in teaching deaf mutes, participated in a competition opened by the Academy of Sciences «on the best way to increase the effect of winds on ships.» This was an obvious opportunity for him to demonstrate his talents as a mathematician, but the undertaking attracted attention because it was so different from the rest of his work. David Franco-Mendes, the author of a handwritten chronicle of the Portuguese community of Amsterdam since its creation, also wrote an unpublished work whose lengthy title describes its contents: *Marine dictionary containing the art of navigation and naval architecture explained by all the definitions and phrases that concern the difference spaces of ships, parts of the vessel, the detail of maneuvers and the functions of navy officers and sailing officers. In the French, Dutch, Portuguese, and Spanish languages, by David Franco Mendes, translator authorized by the Noble Magistrate of this city of Amsterdam in 1780.*[49] The polysemism of these indices should not go unnoticed, of course: it is difficult to conclude that this maritime inclination was strictly Iberian, to sort out the influences of Dutch or Bordeaux seafaring cultures, and the specifically Enlightenment interest for the techniques and voyages of discovery. Perhaps more eloquent is the place of maritime affairs in the questions put to the students in the Ets Haim rabbinic seminar in Amsterdam, which cannot with any certainty be considered as true or invented situations designed for the sake of the exercise. For example, a marriage between a Cohen and a captive woman whom he ransomed during one of his trips; or the right of a wife whose husband had given the right to organize the marriage of her daughters alone while he was away on a long sea journey. Or, aboard ship, the licit nature of certain food during the first nine days of the month of Av, during which meat is forbidden.[50]

This intimacy of Sephardic Jews with the sea, imposed by the historical and geographic conditions of expansion of the Sephardic diaspora, created a web of familial, economic, and community ties that domesticated and reduced the obstacles of navigable distances. This history is incarnated by many figures of captains, ship owners, sailors, and passengers. The result of necessity, and an integral part of the history of Sephardic Jews, this delectation for the sea is also in some measure part of the Spanish cultural legacy. On this point, the investigation remains to be carried out.

NOTES

1. The episode is related in a series of letters between the Judeo-Portuguese communities of Amsterdam and Surinam. Amsterdam municipal archives (GAA), PA 334 93, Copiador de cartas 1750-1757, folio 227-229, 11 July 1755, folio 262-262, folio 305, 14 May 1756, folio 323-324, 7 September 1756m PA 334 66, folio 858-859.
2. GAA PA 334 93, folio 280-281, letter dated 10 December 1755 addressed to the *parnassim* of the Talmud Torah community of Amsterdam.
3. Gérard Hanoh, "Les Sépharades: pour une histoire globale," *Les Temps Modernes*, No. 394 bis, May 1979, p. 44. "La dimension du voyage," in Shmuel Trigano (editor), *La Société juive à travers l'histoire*, vol. 4, *Le Peuple-monde*, Paris, Fayard, 1993, pages 343-356.
4. Jean Frédéric Schaub, *Les Juifs du roi d'Espagne*, Paris, Hachette Litératures, 1999, pp. 178-179.
5. Richard D. Barnett, "Diplomatic Aspect of the Sephardic Influx from Portugal in the Early Eighteenth Century," TJHSE, XXV, 1973-1975, pp. 216-217.
6. Zvi Loker, *Jews in the Caribbean*, Jerusalem, Misgav Yerushalayim, 1991, pp. 82-83.
7. Isaac and Suzanne Emmanuel, *History of the Jews of the Netherlands Antilles*, Cincinnati, American Jewish Archives, 1970, p. 70.
8. Gedalia Yogev, *Diamonds and Coral: Anglo-Dutch Jews and Eighteenth-Century Trade*, New York, Leicester University Press, 1978, pp. 145-146; Renzo Toaff, La Nazione Ebrea a Livorno e a Pisa 1591-1700, Florence, Olschki, 1990, pp. 413-414.
9. Yosef Kaplan, *Les Nouveaux Juifs d'Amsterdam. Essais sur l'histoire sociale et intellectuelle du judaïsme séfarade au XVIIe siècle*, Paris, Chandeigne, 1999; Maximiano Lemos, *Ribeiro Sanches: A sua vida e a sua obra*, Porto, Eduardo Tavares Martins, 1911; Richard D. Barnett, "Dr Samuel Nunes Ribeiro and the Settlement of Georgia", *Migration and Settlement*, London, 1971, pp. 74-77.
10. Michèle Escamilla-Colin, *Crimes et châtiments dans l'Espagne inquisitoriale*, Paris, Berg International, 1992, pp. 347-348.
11. Richard D. Barnett, "Dr Samuel Nunes Ribeiro and the Settlement of Georgia", art. cit., p. 64; see also Richard D. Barnett, "Zipra Nunes's Story," in B.W. Korn (ed.), *A Bicentennial Festschrift for Jacob Rader Marcus*, New York, Ktav, 1976, pp. 47-61.
12. See for example, the trial of a Lisbon fisherman who acknowledged having allowed two groups of New Christians onto his modest boat at night in 1549 to help them escape: Isaias R. Pereira, "Fuga de Cristaos Novos embarcos de pescadores do Tejo", *Historia e Sociedade*, 1981, 8-9, pp. 117-118.
13. Philopater [Antonio Nunes Ribeiro Sanches], *Origem da denominação de Christão-velho, e Christão novo em Portugal*, p. 13 (translated from the Portuguese by the author).
14. Michèle Escamilla-Colin, op. cit., pp. 365-369.
15. Richard D Barnett, "Dr Samuel Nunes Ribeiro and the Settlement of Georgia... ," art. cit., p. 77.
16. Academia das Ciências de Lisboa, *Descriptive List of the State Papers Portugal 1661-1780 in the Public Record Office London*, Published by the Academia das Ciências de Lisboa on the Occasion of its Bicentenary, 1779-1979, with the collaboration of the British Academy and the P. R.O., Lisbon, 1979-1983, vol. II, SP 89 on the dates cited.
17. Quoted by Richard D. Barnett, in "Diplomatic Aspects of the Sephardic Influx from Portugal in the Early Eighteenth Century...", art. cit., p. 215.
18. The striking episode is narrated in the English and Dutch gazettes, an excerpt of which is given by Richard Barnett (ibid., p. 213). "Fifteen Jews who were shut up with their families in the prisons of the Inquisition in Portugal managed to flee with the Inquisitor who was guarding them. They arrived here recently, bringing 600,000 pounds Sterling in lingots, Moydores, etc. with them."
19. Academia das Ciências de Lisboa, Descriptive List of the State Papers Portugal 1661-1780 in the Public Record Office London., *op. cit.*, vol. II, SP/89 37 folio 204, 21 August 1732, folio 207 26, September 1732.
20. *Ibid.*, vol. II, SP 89/44 folio 223, April 18, 1746.
21. *Ibid.* vol. III, SP 89/76 folio 110, May 2 1774.
22. Julio Caro Baroja, *Los Judios en la Espana Moderna y Contemporanea, Madrid*, Ediciones ISTMO, 1986 (3rd edition, vol. III, pp. 29-30.
23. Gerard Nahon, "Un Portugais se penche sur son passé: la note didactique de Benjamin Raba (1821)", in Charles Touati and Geradrd Nahon (editors), Hommage à Georges Vajda. Etudes d'histoire et de pensée juives, Leuven, Peeters, 1980, p. 525, no. 109.
24. Cited by Richard D. Barnett, "Diplomatic Aspect of the Sephardic Influx from Portugal in the Early Eighteenth Century...", op. cit. p. 214.
25. Archives of the Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue, London, MS 805, folio 28. The same register contains many similar cases.
26. Most of the ships come from Lisbon, from Cadiz for one and from Spain for a small number. In one case, a ship in Bayonne took up the relay in 1707.
27. The standard rate seemed to be two pounds sterling per person. A deliberation during the spring of 1727, in the middle of the years of

the greatest flows, revealed how much certain captains and some dishonest passengers benefited from this situation. The Mahamad was informed that some people coming from Spain and Portugal arranged with the ship captains to pay the *sedaca* [the chest of the poor] for the freight that they had already paid once, and to share the money among them, or to register in the *sedaca* whereas they could live independently, asking those who knew of these practices to denounce them. (Spain and Portugal Arch. Syn., Ms 104, *Minutes of the Mahamad* 5484-5511, folio 31b, spring 1727).

28. Departmental Archives of the Gironde, 6B 45 to 6B 58,1713-1787, with some slight hiatus. The only famous document in this series, exhibited under glass, is the passport given to Lafayette when he embarked for America in 1778. Jean-Pierre Poussou and Lucile Bourrachot used this source to categorize and to shed light on the mobility of certain regional or professional groups such as Basque or Comminge passengers. See, for example Jean-Pierre Poussou, Lucile Bourrachot,"Les départs de passagers commingeois par le port de Bordeaux au XVIIIe siècle", *Revue de Comminges*, 1970, pp.119-134. For a thorough analysis of this source and its contribution to our knowledge of the phenomena of mobility and migration, see our work on migration, (in press), *Relations et réseaux intercommunautaires dans la diaspora séfarade d'Occident au XVIIIe siècle*, thèse de l'Université Paris I Sorbonne, 2000, pp.105-137.
29. Leviticus: 19,16; Jeremiah 15, 2 ; Babylonian Talmud, Baba Batra 8b: "The ransom of captives is a major precept"; Maïmonides, Yad hahazaqa, matanot 'Anyim, 8,18; Shulkhan Arukh, Yore De'a, 252, 9. For an analysis of these references in the rabbinic literature, see Eliezer Bashan, *Captivity and Ransom in Mediterranean Jewish Society* 1391-1830, Bar Ilan, Bar Ilan University Press [in Hebrew], 1980. See also, "La cause des Juifs. Le rachat des captifs dans la société juive *l'histoire, op. cit* méditerranéenne du XIVe au XIXe siècle", in Shmuel Trigano (editor.), *La Société juive à travers.*, pp. 463-472.
30. GAA, PA 334 25, folio 36-37.
31. See the list of contributions from the Portuguese nation of London because of the ransom of captives between 1676 and 1728, established by Richard Barnett, "The Correspondence of the Mahamad of the Spanish and Portuguese Congregation of London during the 17th and 18th Centuries", Transactions of the Jewish Historical Society of England, XX, 1964, pp. 41-43.
32. Archives of the Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue, MS 104, Minutes of the Mahamad, folio 221, 17 December 1741, letter to Joseph and Rephael Franco, folio 222, 18 February 1741.
33. Richard D. Barnett, "The Correspondence of the Mahamad...", art. cit., p. 42
34. Wim Klooster, "Contraband Trade by Curaçao's Jews with Countries of Idolatry, 1660-1800", *Studia Rosenthaliana*, 31, 1997, pp. 58-73: in the 1780s, more than six ships a week went between the island and the continent, trading textiles, manufactured goods, and slaves for cocao, mules and other products destined for the Caribbean, North America, and Europe.
35. On the diplomatic activity of the communities undertaken to free prisoners, see our thesis cited above, pp. 432-440; see also Isaac and Suzanne Emmanuel, *History of the Jews of the Netherlands Antilles*, op. cit., vol. 1, pp. 222-226 and Gérard Nahon, "Les rapports des communautés judéo-portugaises de France avec celles d'Amsterdam aux XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles," in *Métropoles et périphéries séfarades d'Occident. Kairouan*, Amsterdam, Bayonne, Bordeaux, Jerusalem, Paris, Cerf, 1993, pp. 146-147, 165-167; Zvi Loker, *Jews in the Caribbeans*, op. cit., pp. 72-73.
36. GAA, PA 334 94, Copiador de cartas, 1764-1773, folio 20-21, 20 October 1764, letter to the parnassim of Mikve Israel in Curaçao.
37. Ibid, folio 72-73.
38. See the letters concerning the interventions on behalf of Joseph Henriques, held in Saint-Sebastien in 1734, edited by Gérard Nahon, "Les rapports des communautés judéo-portugaises de France avec celles d'Amsterdam.,» art. cit., pp. 165-167. Hoping to use all possible options, the parnassim suggested to their peers in Bayonne that they use their contacts with the Company of Caracas.
39. GAA PA 334 93, Copiador de cartas, 1750-1757, folio 16, 22 February 1751, letter to the Bayonne *parnassim*.
40. Ibid, folio 27-29, 28 April 1751, letter to the Curaçao *parnassim*; folio 56-58, Letters of 14 August 1751 to the Bayonne *parnassim*, to the prisoners and to Baron van Wassenaar; folio 69-70, 8 November 1751, letters to Bayonne and Saint Sebastien.
41. Ibid, folio 101-3, 21 July 1752, to Curaçao; folio 111, 12 September 1752, letter to Surinam, addressed to the mother of the young Bueno de Mesquita; folio 122, December 1752, letter to Bayonne.
42. Ibid, folio 167-169, 20 September 1753, letter to Curaçao; folio 170-172, 24 September 1753, letters to Bayonne, Saint Sebastien, Madrid; folio 175, November 1, 1753, letter to Bayonne.
43. Ibid, folio 196-198, 19 July 1754, letter to Curaçao.
44. B. and L. Bennassar, *Les Chrétiens d'Allah..., op. cit.*, p. 209. On the ransom of Christian cap-

tives, see also Wipertus H. Rudt de Collenberg, *Esclavage et rançons des chrétiens en Méditerranée (1570-1600)*, Paris, Le Léopard d'or, 1987; Jean Carpentier and François Lebrun, (eds), *Histoire de la Méditerranée*, Paris, Seuil, 1998, pp. 248-253.

45. I.and S. Emmanuel, *History of the Jews of the Netherlands Antilles*, op. cit., pp. 681-745. See for example the tomb of Captain Mosseh Henriquez Cotiño (1762), cemetery of Curaçao (Isaac S. Emmanuel, *Precious Stones of Curaçao. Curaçoen Jewry, 1656-1957*, New York, 1957. A detail of this tomb is reproduced in the introduction to this file, p.3.
46. This relationship is reproduced in Portuguese and in English translation in J. Meijer, *Pioneers of Pauroma*. Contribution to the Earliest History of the Jewish Colonization of America, Paramaribo, 1954, which was graciously given by M. Arbell.
47. See the French translation of three of these stories,*Histoires tragico-maritimes*, translated by. Georges Le Gentil, Paris, Chandeigne, 1992; the anthology of João Palma-Ferreira, *Naufragios, Viagens, Fantasias e Batalhas*, Lisbon, Imprensa Nacional, 1980.
48. Gironde Departmental Archives, 3E 24136, no.13, inventory after death, 9 September 1809.
49. L. Fuks and R.G. Fuks-Mansfeld, Hebrew and Judaic Manuscripts in Amsterdam Public Collections, II, Catalogue of the Manuscripts of Ets Haim-Livraria Montezinos, Sephardic Community of Amsterdam, Leyde, E.J. Brill, 1975, p. 244, no. 446.
50. Menko Max Hirsch, Frucht vom Baum des Lebens. Ozer peroth Ez Chajim. *Die Sammlung der Rechtsgutachten Peri Ez Chajim des Rabbinerseminars Ets Haim Zu Amsterdam, Berlin-Anvers, Souscription, Soncino Gesellschaft der Freunde des jüdischen Buches*, 1936, p. 17 (1732), p. 73 (1746), p. 115 (1757).

The Jews of Hungary: beyond Assimilation

Victor Karady

Franco-Hungarian political scientist Pierre Kende stirred a lively debate in the intellectual press in Hungary[1] last year with his articles describing a new relationship between Jews and Hungarians after the 1989 transition to a democratic government. He claimed that Holocaust survivors[2] are no longer distinguishable from the rest of post-communist society, because they no longer have any specific social functions in Hungarian society. In the preceding pre-Socialist regime, by contrast, Jews held a disproportionately large share of cultural and economic responsibilities and benefits of Hungary's post-feudal or bourgeois modernization, and could be identified by their specific anthropological and religious attributes. Linguistic and cultural assimilation tended to blur these distinctions during the *ancien regime* as did the progressive secularization of large sectors of Judaism (and of other parts of urban society), and and the 'national' — and even nationalist in the Hungarian sense of the term — redefinition of Jewish identity that heightened Jews' political loyalty to the nation state. This nascent symbiosis continued to evolve under the Socialist regime, and according to Pierre Kende, changed radically. The fact that most survivors stayed in Hungary after the persecutions — for which the Hungarian administration, the military police and certain other sectors of the population, particularly in cities, were largely responsible[3] — can already be interpreted as a willingness to start again and to accept the 'community of destiny' and its new circumstances. Despite very old anti-Semitic tales making Communism a Jewish power,[4] Communism proved to be an 'adventure' or 'undertaking' common to Jews and non-Jews alike, which helped to complete the assimilation that had previously begun under new conditions. Kende's reading of contemporary history concludes with the observation that henceforth "the country has achieved European modernity." Even the anti-Semitism that characterizes many societies in crisis or undergoing violent change found few takers in Hungary after 1945. The distinctive singularities and differences of Judaism and its specific historical role in Hungarian society are more and more things of the past.[5]

Pierre Kende's observation and his generally valid arguments serve as an introduction to an analysis of the situation of Hungarian Jews since 1989. I nonetheless believe that, although social differences between Jews and non-Jews in certain spheres concerning self-definition and the social definition of Judaism have slowly disappeared, certain distinctions still remain and are, in fact, even tending to increase, thanks to the post-Communist transition. To give the broadest picture, it is useful to first recall the particular relationship of Jews to Communism in Hungary, which also distinguishes them from the Jews in most other Soviet block countries. Next, I will consider the socio-historical data of the current situation of the Jews and how their contemporaries view their insertion into contemporary society. Finally, I will describe the problems of self-definition and the new tendency of dissimulating Jewish identity.

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Judaism and Communism in Hungary

Whereas we can agree with Pierre Kende's conclusion about the division of responsibilities under Communism, we must not lose sight of the fact that Jews and non-Jews necessarily had very different views of the regime that was put into place after the victory of the Red Army. The diversity of experiences begins with the collapse of the *ancien regime*. Hungarian Jews could only be relieved by this collapse, and they henceforth professed their unerring gratitude to the conquerors who were in fact their liberators. By contrast, the rest of Hungarian society and even those who had not collaborated with the Nazis or their conservative predecessors, experienced this as a new occupation. In the space of a few years (starting in 1947-48), the living conditions of the majority changed more brutally and more irremediably than they had with the German victory, if we ignore the particularities of war. Contrary to other countries occupied by the Third Reich where Jews and most of the population experienced their subjection to and liberation from Nazi oppression in the same way, Holocaust survivors and the majority of non-Jewish Hungarians reacted differently to the arrival of Soviet troops, which was ritually commemorated during Communist holidays. Regardless of their future relationship with the system that was established after 1947, Jewish survivors tended to the very end to look upon the regime favorably as a 'lesser evil' compared to the Nazis. A certain 'sentimental Communism' rather blind to the realities of Stalinism, persevered among most of those concerned. In Jewish memory, this liberation remained a miraculous redemption that could, retrospectively or prospectively absolve the new regime of many of its errors or crimes.[6]

Yet Holocaust survivors also deeply shared the generally negative assessment of Communism, and specifically bore the weight of certain aspects of its social costs. Jews, like other religious groups, were the victims of anticlerical campaigns, but even moreso of campaigns against all vestiges of 'cosmopolitan' or 'bourgeois' mentality — often code names for being Jewish. Given their position in Hungarian capitalism, Jews were the principal victims of the bourgeois expropriation program that culminated towards 1951in the virtually total nationalization of private enterprises and property, even small businesses. For the same reason, a disproportionate number of Jews was immediately demoted by the Stalinist regime, sent to forced paramilitary labor (rather than normal service), expelled from their 'bourgeois' apartments in the capital, kept under house surveillance in insalubrious villages, and given no access to higher education because of their social origins (an X

on ID cards gave Jews the humiliating status of class enemy). It goes without saying that anti-Zionist campaigns targeted Jewish leaders who were also the preferred targets as of 1949 of the regime's purges against bourgeois infiltrators and in favor of the rank and file. Moreover, many Jews were eliminated, demoted, and subjected to repression after 1956: indeed, even after 1968, a fraction of the sons of Jewish leaders were subjected to the same treatment.

On the other hand, the advent of Communism obviously brought with it many tangible advantages that could, in the long term, instill a certain loyalty among a clientele with a great potential for social mobility. Holocaust survivors whose prior socio-economic status was restored considered this change to be an asset of the Soviet regime. For many Jews, and particularly young Jews who had only known the darker side of the ancien regime, Communism gave many other new opportunities for professional mobility that seemed entirely miraculous because they had essentially been unavailable to Jews during the *ancien regime*. Ambitious Jews sought positions in the new administration for a range of reasons: to avenge earlier professional frustration, to seek security with respect to the repressive state apparatus, to seek reparations, to settle scores with personnel that had compromised themselves with the Nazi regime.[7] These reasons all converged with the serious deficit of trustworthy leaders in the early phases of Hungary's popular democracy. As recognized anti-fascists, Jews therefore had free access to the public administration and soon became an ostentatious presence in the press, in politics, in the repressive judicial system, and among the powerful *nomenklatura*. Indeed, until 1956, the Stalinist dictatorship was directed by a quadriga of *dejudaised* Jews.

Paths diverged, of course, especially after 1956. Many Jewish leaders were disappointed by their idols of the past and turned against Stalinism to prepare the revolution of 1956. This represented a battle of the popular front where many politically active Hungarians, Jews and non-Jews shared common values of national independence and social democracy. Many young Jews, therefore, were on the barricades in October. They were also highly over-represented among the intellectuals imprisoned by the Kádár regime, which had eliminated most of the other still loyal Jews from their visible positions in the administration as part of its policy of soft Aryanization. Nonetheless, many Jews kept their high-level positions, especially in foreign trade, or converted to scientific research or to the universities. Most therefore still enjoyed careers that had been unavailable to them during in the *ancien regime*.

In the long term, the Communist regime also gave rise to a new set of problems for Jewish identity. The conflicts, connections, and maneuvers of the years just fol-

lowing 1945 between different loyalties — orthodox, nationalist Zionism, Magyar assimilationism, atheist, liberal humanism, membership in the Communist universality, etc.,— were reduced to simple, imposed choices of identity under Communist dictatorship. One could be essentially for or against the Communist dictatorship, opt for the new style of forced assimilation, or for one of the avatars of isolation or introspection, *tertia non datur*. Terror had made Zionism illegal, and relegated other dissimilationist options to marginal positions that were barely (and not always) tolerated. In all cases, the public taboo against the Jewish reality concerned everyone. Absolute under Stalinism, the taboo was progressively attenuated during the Kàdàr decades. Initially, the general rule was to negate the specificity of the Holocaust. Schoolbooks barely mentioned the Jews, except to recall that the Nazis persecuted 'people on the left, and pacifist and antifascist masses.» Under Kádár, in the years immediately following 1956 and in the 1980s and with certain ups and downs (after the Six-day war, for example) Jewish literary and artistic exhibits enjoyed some freedom. Zionism continued to be forbidden but small flows of Alyah were tolerated and as of 1980, the exchanges between Israel and Western Judaism began to normalize.

For the regime's leaders, however, and for concerned members of national dissidence (led by intellectuals with Jewish roots), Jewish identity so deeply determined individual identity that it had to be repressed. Dissimulation was such that children were raised without any knowledge of their family history, and the often tragic history of , say, grandparents who had died during the Holocaust or who were forever affected by it was systematically repressed.[8] The party also imposed a similar 'assimilation' as the logical extension of the universal Communist dogma. However, we must not forget that the real success of assimilation lay in its double liberation from the shackles of traditional Judaism and from the pressure of the social context.

Hungary's singular position within the Soviet bloc was also some part of the reason for successful assimilation. Not that Hungarian Stalinism lagged behind in terms of dogmatism or pitilessness, but the Kádár dictatorship turned out to be far softer and more economically effective than the others. But Hungary was also the only Communist regime in Eastern Europe where the reserves of popular anti-Semitism were virtually never seriously exploited politically. Neither the anti-Zionist campaigns of the 1950s, nor the periodic antibourgeois purges, nor the anti-Semitic stench of the 1949 Rajk trial, nor the soft Aryanization of post-1956 can be compared to the veritable state anti-Semitism that prevailed almost everywhere in the URSS and its satellites. In this, Kàdàrism was neutral in all circumstances, and practiced a certain self-restraint even in its forced anti-Israeli policy after 1967. Public demonstrations of anti-Semitism were forbidden.[9] All Jews

therefore valued the security guaranteed by the 'real Socialism', although they did not for the most part (especially after 1956) embrace the other political options of the regime.

Democratic Risks: The Definition and Social Situation of Judaism since 1989

On October 23, 1989, a multi-party parliamentary government in Hungary was declared on the anniversary of the 1956 revolution, by a president of the Communist republic in agreement with the opposition with which he had just negotiated a peaceful transition. The head of government since 1994 had begun his brilliant career in Kádár's militia, which had been created with the help of the occupying Soviet troops in 1956. He still pays regular tribute, however, to its victims, although he played an active role in his youth in the repression. The head of state spent five years in the prisons of that same regime.

Hungarian Jews were not spared the paradoxes of the democratic transition. Freedom of the press and of opinion certainly emancipated them from the communist taboo. Relationships could henceforth develop with Israel and the Judeo-Hungarian diaspora. Moreover, Jews could enjoy historically unparalleled freedom to define their relationship to their own past and to make their choices about their identity. The choices ranged between the extremes of assimilating into the ambient society or breaking entirely with it by becoming a Zionist or adopting the status of a national minority.[10] But this new freedom also allowed for the free expression of anti-Semitic passions. Small groups on the extreme right quickly began to voice barely veiled anti-Semitic slogans and goals. The first freely-elected government, formed by a coalition of national conservatives, decided for a short time to include well-known anti-Semites in their government, and even to allow the public use of the term "Jewish parties" to refer to the liberal center-left adversaries.[11] Their 'Socialist' opponents were similarly accused; the descendents of the powerful reformist wing of the old single party were considered by the conservative public to be a Judeo-Bolshevik power. Doubtless the violence was only verbal and the conservative government endlessly proclaimed its good faith and made many overtures towards the Jewish community.[12] But at the same time, it favored a return to the historical sources of national conservatism by claiming to be the heir of the government of Admiral Horthy.[13] Many Jews grew increasingly uncomfortable with these deviations, that had not existed during the period of real Socialism

in Hungary, and which recalled the gray days of the inter-war period with its various forms of state anti-Semitism.

The days of the conservative government were limited. The right-wing coalition had been crushed during the 1994 elections, and it termed the new parliamentary majority, comprised of former enemies become allies (the 'Socialist' descendants of the 'Communist reformers' and the liberal SzDSz, arising from the former anti-Communist dissidents) an amalgamation of 'Jewish parties'. Since them, despite the risks of governmental management and of a highly indebted economy (a foreign debt of $20 billion, accumulated during the Kádár government), the center-left coalition flourished with highs and lows, and seems in any case destined to win the elections, planned for 1998. As Pierre Kende has already pointed out, everything seems to confirm that the dominant public opinion in post-Communist Hungary was barely tempted by the historically reactionary nostalgia, and particularly by anti-Semitism.

Does this mean, as Pierre Kende suggests, that the assimilation and integration of Jews, on the one hand, and the modernization of the society as a whole, on the other, have entirely eliminated the objective differences between Jews and non-Jews? I would like to make several remarks to lend some nuance to this assertion. First of all, Hungarian Jews have always included a relative abundance of educated intellectuals, qualified civil servants and public and private sector leaders. There is no remarkable Jewish presence among the new entrepreneurial bourgeoisie, oftentimes the heirs of the higher-level administrators of the Socialist economy (the red barons). However, there are many Jewish university professors and researchers in mathematics, physics, social sciences, history, in literature, the press, and the media, as is often publicly criticized ('there are too many Jews in television'), and occasionally held up as an example for foreigners, to illustrate the reigning liberalism.

This fact has a long history the modern middle class in Hungary and is part of the traditional over-education of Jews. It appears in various forms in the narcissistic self-image of local Judaism also, especially in the cult of the famous Jewish creators, or their memory. Even today, this 'Jewish intelligentsia' speaks more foreign languages and has more contact with its western peers than its non-Jewish colleagues. Certain familial diasporas still extend over several continents and occasionally go as far back as the first expansion of middle class Jews in Hungary, beginning with the numerus clausus of 1920. Yet these exchanges with other countries, touristic or intellectual, constitute a sort of particularly overvalued cultural capital in Hungarian society, as in all Eastern European countries. With the virtually complete destruction of provincial Judaism during the Holocaust, and

Communist social mobility, the surviving Jews in Hungary have experienced a veritable translation towards the heights of professional stratification. More even than in the past, the words of a 19th century Hungarian author apply today to these Jews, «they are not a race, they are an elite.» Yet, these elite positions held by Jews seem to distinguish them less than ever before from their co-citizens. Part of the explanation is the demographic weakening of Hungarian Jews after the Holocaust, the drop in birth rates that had already been very serious in the inter-war period, and the successive waves of emigration (1945-49, 1956 and afterwards). In addition, despite appearances, large sectors of the non-Jewish population have enjoyed greater social mobility than Jews overall, appearances notwithstanding, whose numbers have diminished. This evolution was linked primarily to two factors. The considerable investment in education that the Communist regime had initially agreed to had made access to higher education much more common, and had therefore equalized, at least in part, the meritocratic opportunities for success and social promotion of Jews and non-Jews. In addition, the capital of political trustworthiness that had benefited Jews in their rise to leadership positions tended to become less effective and even counter-productive during the pragmatic phase of Hungarian Communism, beginning in 1954 and especially after 1956. Henceforth, candidates for sensitive political positions were selected less from among the ranks of the known enemies of the *ancien regime*, like the Jews, than, from among the ranks of nationalized leaders from which 'foreigners', meaning Jews, were eliminated. The capital of political reliability had lost its effectiveness.[14] This change had two essential consequences. In its final phase, their were very few Jews in the Kádár government, whence their relatively low numbers among the new entrepreneurs who were able to benefit from their previous 'Socialist contacts' and the privatizations. During the transition, Jews were in the minority everywhere. They only maintained high-ranking positions in a few areas, especially in the intellectual professions. With rare exception, which are no longer, for the most part, even because of Hungarians,[15] this was no longer enough to ensure public visibility comparable to that of the Stalinist *nomenklatura*, or even to the industrial and commercial bourgeoisie of the *ancien regime*.

Hungarian Jews no longer stand out— far less in any case, than they did in the past — by virtue of their lifestyles or neighborhoods. It is true that virtually all Hungarian Jews live in Budapest, in the same neighborhoods in the center of old Pest as they lived in during the 19th century. The 5th and 6th sectors are still considered the fiefdoms of the liberal and intellectual professions. Yet as of the inter-war years and especially during the Socialist era, some Jews, generally the most financially well-off, moved to the green hills of Buda (the 1st and 2nd districts of the capital). The still popular 7th district, including the 1944 ghetto, and the 8th are home to the poor members of the remaining orthodoxy. But this relative concen-

tration no longer has the same effects as it did in the past. Jews comprise only a small and not very visible minority in these 'Jewish' neighborhoods except perhaps in the areas around the synagogue during Jewish holidays.

After two centuries of acculturation, and especially after five decades of Communism with its leveling of material culture and consumption, its strong tendency or imposition of secularization, its universalistic discourse limiting the space granted to religious or ethnic particularities to a congruent portion, the Jews of Hungary retain at best only vestiges of their ancestors' culture. The orthodox Jews who used to live largely in non-urban areas in the provinces were killed during the Holocaust, as were most of the reformed Jews and traditionalists still in the majority in Budapest.[16] The distinctive impact of religious identity is all the less significant in that more than one-third of those who are generally defined as Jews are in fact converts or descendents of converts, if they still have any religious affiliation whatsoever. Even independently of the secularization that was increasingly imposed, there were many reasons for the disappearance of most religious Jews in Hungary. There were significant waves of baptism as of 1938 under German occupation, which continued during the early years after the Liberation;[17] the ravages of the Holocaust especially among religious communities; and the *alya* which was proportionately important among Jews who had remained faithful to their religion.

What remains of the 'objective' cultural difference of the past? The vestiges are now less apparent in Jewish practices than in behavior, including physical appearance, affective over-investment or expression of kinship relations, certain health and eating habits — there is always far less alcoholism in Jewish families, for example — linguistic tics (expressions, sayings, jokes, exemplary stories) that can create a certain complicity based on mutual recognition, but that non-Jews recognize today as well. To the outsider, the social integration of Jews in Hungary may resemble that of Western Europe but from the inside, dissimilationist tendencies have been on the rise since the beginning of the Communist period.

Towards a New Dissimilation?

We must describe how the Jews of Hungary experienced the change in their situation and the public discourse concerning them as of the beginning of the transition. For despite the sporadic but real irruption of an anti-Semitic extremism,

things took a very favorable turn. Relations with Israel were normalized at all levels. Official interest was benevolent if not more than benevolent in the Jewish community and its representatives as well as in other organized churches. Dealing with questions concerning Jews always served to demonstrate the country's progress in becoming a Western democracy symbolically. The democratic Parliament took several symbolically important measures, such as the law commemorating Nazi persecutions, and materially important measures such as the substantial if not complete indemnity for losses and injustices,[18] of Holocaust victims, 50 years later. The messages of the Christian and especially of the Catholic churches were very late in coming compared to their Western counterparts since the *aggiornamento* of the Vatican II, were modernized in keeping with ecumenical principles.[19] There is a real process of historiographic and literary revision underway, which is culminating in a reconsideration of the role of Jews in Hungary's past. The daily press commemorates Jewish holidays and ceremonies, and legal and diplomatic measures concerning Jews. The determined neutrality of the Communist taboo[20] has been replaced: Judaism now enjoys a sort of 'positive public distinction.'

Jews have reacted to the change in two different ways. One the one hand, a rather negative reaction tied to the persistent fear of singling out Jews per se, even if the attention was based on a friendly partnership among religious communities or groups with different backgrounds. The very favorable shift in public opinion concerning the situation of the *ancien regime*) resembled a frankly philosemitic reversal that could also suggest the threat of discrimination.[21] Some Jews feared for their safety, which had been guaranteed until then by the Communist taboo. Even today, certain officials of Jewish communities believe 'the less we are spoken about, the better.' For similar reasons, large part of the Jewish public refuses any surveys, even the most neutral, that include identifying those claiming to be Jews.[22]

On the other hand, the reaction to the broader than ever public and private space in which Jews can show their identity is positive, although it does not always mean that Jews are entirely free of apprehension concerning their Jewish identity.[23] To illustrate this change, we need only cite an anthropological observation concerning how families descended from Jewish-Christian marriage consider themselves. Until recently, the rule was that the non-Jewish or Christian part of the family took priority over the Jewish part. The Jewish background of one of the partners tended to be either entirely erased from family memory after an 'omission' or denegation, or considered to be more or less shameful, like some handicap to be overcome. Today, however, when the descendants of mixed couples discover their Jewish relatives, they are increasingly interested in them and even occasionally embrace this part of their identity, which often becomes the interesting part of

their family and therefore increasingly dominant and incorporated into the family history. The degree of denial that all of these families had more or less experienced has led to reactions of identification with Judaism that are all the more strongly emotional for many. The incommensurable tragedy of the Holocaust that affected all of these families, rather than making these discoveries offensive, guarantees that they are more and more often consciously and firmly claimed.

Whether this new Jewish identity is a 'rediscovery,' or an 'updating,' or based on real family continuity, the construction is generally reflexive, given the continuous weakening of religious and cultural traditions over at least the last half-century. The new models of Jewish identity in Hungary are based on a sense of 'common threats' or of real danger, that are, like everywhere else since the Holocaust, one of the basic elements of Jewish identity.

Nonetheless, many new and different kinds of behavior make it possible to identify with and affirm one's ties to Judaism in new ways. The Joint has once again begun to organize visits to Israel, support needy Jewish families especially by providing kosher meals to the elderly, and preparing the very occasional *alyot*, etc. With the freedom of movement of people and ideas, new currents of Western Jewish thinking can easily penetrate Hungary. The Lubovitch hasidim are well established in Budapest along with other conservative and reform movements. It is not surprising to see many signs of a return to religious practices among cultivated members of the middle class intellectuals who grew up under secular Communism or liberalism. It goes without saying that for the latter, this new interest in religion often hides a second-degree religiosity that is mainly a ritualized expression of belonging. Schools, reviews and other Jewish cultural activities have a similar function. All of this confirms that after two centuries of generalized assimilation, we are now witnessing the collapse of this historical consensus, through extended dissimiliationist behavior that can even include clear or provocative attempts to completely divest oneself of all Hungarian identity.[24]

We can identify several sources or reasons for these dissimilationist tendencies. The first is simply the process of westernization that makes it possible to opt for separatist ideologies of identity that are in vogue in the west. This liberty in any case authorizes frankly dissimilationist reactions to anti-Semitic attitudes and more public displays of anti-Semitism in general, which while they are certainly in the minority are not negligible. The Jewish communities are cemented together in their reflexive identity by a shared sense of danger, which demonstrated a reinforced sense of 'us.' Indeed, anti-Semitism is alive and well in the streets, including among students, although many people are indifferent to or disdainful of these prejudices.[25]

Nonetheless, what is new about this issue is that Hungarian Jews continue to have strong cultural, political, and sentimental ties to their ambient society. The new vogue of dissimilation is part of a context that favors an assimilationaist symbiosis. Until now, Hungary has never known a sustained, tolerant, or even objectively philosemitic parliamentary democracy. The other Hungary — modern, liberal, welcoming to Jews, abhoring the fascist past — is part of today's political reality. National acculturation is no longer a program; it has long been accomplished. But the ongoing attraction of cultural magyarism, which affected practically all Jewish milieux within and beyond ethnic Hungarian boundaries (including the *hasidim*, which is unique in the annals of Jewish orthodoxy[26]) constantly recalls a history in which Jews and Hungarians at least since the Revolution and the War of Independence of 1848-9 shared a common sensibility, especially regarding xenophobia and anti-Semitism. In fact, Hungary appears to be the only Eastern and Central European country whose classical literature is virtually untinged by anti-Jewish sentiment. And literature weighs far more heavily in the post-feudal societies of Eastern Europe than it does in the West on dominant political ideologies. The fact that the most sensitive Hungarian Jews are basically uncritical about the major authors in the pantheon of national letters doubtless contributes to their feeling of security and strengthens their embrace of the cultural values of *magyarism*. The most famous authors, including the best-known poets of their respective generations, Petofi in 1848-9, Ady, before 1918, Attila Jozsef in the inter-war period, were known for their determined commitment to Jews and to a Judeo-Hungarian symbiosis.

Multiculturalism and Jewish Identity

To conclude, we will summarize the implications of the new situation created by the democratic transition. First, the abolition of most of the constraints that had always weighed on Jewish identity decisively reduced their alienation. Although anti-Semitism persists, it is more normal and common today than it was in the past to be a Jew who is proud to be Jewish in Hungary. As the delegitimation of different models of dissimiliation (Zionism and other forms of Jewish nationalism) since the post-feudal era wanes, this is the first time that all forms of contemporary Jewish identity are possible. Whence an unprecedented situation for Hungarian Jews seen in the flowering of such initiatives as study groups, lecture series, new journals, research, and occasionally negative manifestations such as the denial of the importance of the ties among Hungarian Jews.[27]

Second, the basic components of Jewish identity are being progressively transformed. The relationship with Israel has changed considerably since the transition, and has become a primarily symbolic support for the Jewish State, and also, on occasion, for the secular left, as is the case for their peers in the West, of a negative opinion. A similar change can be seen in the relationship with religion. In this situation of beyond assimilation, certain moments of religiosity become acceptable and even required of the majority of those concerned. While there is no general return to practicing Judaism, the synagogues are now full on the high holy days, much more than they were during the Communist era. Interest in religion is growing, as expressed by occasional visits to synagogues or participation in Talmudic study groups, or lectures on biblical popularization. The disdain for outdated or archaic religion practiced and praise of atheistic universality under the previous region in favor is a thing of the past. In this renewed interest for Israel and for the Jewish religion, we should not underestimate the desire for a break with the rigid and largely obligatory dogmatism imposed by the Communist regimes.

Third, as of 1989, Jewish intellectual élites have once again begun to occupy positions comparable to the past, in the more or less moderate left to more or less conservative liberal government. Of course, this change most often occurred under the aegis of national integration rather than dissimilation. There is a double novelty in the situation. On the one hand, Jewish politicians no longer feel obliged to hide their identities. On the other hand, none of the ideological or political parties to which they belong are primarily Jewish, even if their adversaries are occasionally tempted to discredit them, without much success, as being Jewish parties. What is important here is that Jews can live their options as traditional choices, and can even occasionally adopt concretely and directly the legacy of their many ancestors who, since the 19th century, were involved in every liberal and left-wing government, from anti-feudal to anti-fascist.

Finally, the democratic transition made it possible for Jews to come to a more flexible collective definition of self, and to escape the antinomy between Judaism and all other contemporary alternatives of identity. It is true that during the liberal period prior to 1918 one could be a Hungarian of the Jewish faith, combining a dual religious and national attachment. However, the cost of this double identity was to minimize the Jewish part, which became a faith at most, and to maximize the Magyar part. Double or multiple ties are beginning to be tolerated in the West. In a highly secular society, proclaiming oneself to be Jewish while maintaining Christian ties, as many descendants of mixed marriages do, is no longer shocking, given that at least one-third of Hungarian Jews are no longer formally Jews by religion. There are still no Jewish Catholic prelates (there are more than we might think) who would be proud to claim their Jewishness like the archbishop of Paris. However, a multicultural revolution is on the horizon and it is compatible with the desire of many Jews to be fully and completely Jewish.

NOTES

1. Cf. "Zsidó Magyarorszàg" (Jewish Hungary), in *Kritika*, Budapest, February 1997. See also his previous study: "A szidó-magyar különbözöségekröl" (Differences between Jews and Hungarians), in *Miért nincs rend Középeurópàban?* (Why is there no order in Central Europe?), Budapest, Osiris-Századvég, 1994, pp.160-178.
2. Approximately half of the some 200 000 survivors (of the 400 000 living in the rump State created by the Trianon Treaty before the war) have emigrated since 1945. Hungary nonetheless remains the only post-Communist country, outside the successor states of the USSR to have a demographically significant Jewish population of about 80,000-100,000, or nearly 1% of the overall society. Budapest has the only conservative (traditionalist) rabbinical school in all of Eastern and Central Europe. Currently, three high-schools offer different forms of Jewish education, more than before the Holocaust, and a weekly Jewish newspaper and two cultural and political periodicals are widely read, even beyond Jewish circles. A recently opened Jewish Community House in downtown Budapest, is an important cultural center that programs shows, lectures, exhibits, public debates, etc.
3. On the Holocaust in Hungary, see Randolph L. Braham's monumental, classical *The Politics of Genocide. The Holocaust in Hungary*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1981, 2 vol.; and his *The Hungarian Jewish Catastrophe, A Selected and Annotated Bibliography*, New York, Institute for Holocaust Studies of the City University of New York, 1984.
4. For a reasoned critique of this hasty amalgamation of Communism and Judaism, see the work of the important political scientist, Istvàn Bibo, in his classical essay, "The Jewish Question in Hungary after 1944" (1948), in *Misère des petits Etats d'Europe de l'Est*, Paris, L'Harmattan, 1986, pp.213-392.
5. Unfortunately, there is no general study in a western language on the recent social history, since 1945 of the Jews of Hungary. The excellent account of historical relations between Jews and Hungarians by François Fejtö (*Hongrois et Juifs, histoire millénaire d'un couple singulier*, 1000-1997, Paris, Balland, 1997) devotes an important chapter (pp.339-396). See also, Victor Karady, "Some Social Aspects of Jewish Assimilation in Socialist Hungary, 1945-1956", in R.L. Braham (ed.), *The Tragedy of Hungarian Jewry*, New York, Institute for Holocaust Studies of the City University of New York, 1986, pp.73-131. See also, on different socio-historical questions dealing with this subject, the special issue of the *Actes de la Recherche en Sciences Sociales* on anti-Semitism, no. 56, 1985. My work in French includes many published articles, particularly in the *Actes de la Recherche en Sciences Sociales;* see "Les Juifs et la violence stalinienne", ARSS, 120, December 1997, pp.3-31.
6. The true anecdote concerns a Hebrew teacher who was incarcerated for Zionist activities for three years without a trial at the beginning of the 1950s, and who declared, when Soviet troops entered Budapest to stop the October 1956 revolution, that the Red Army was coming to save the Jews of Budapest for the second time.
7. István Bibo *op. cit.,* pp.292 sq. describes in great detail these patterns focussed on the search for justice and for the historical injustices that generated prejudices and misunderstandings between Jews and non-Jews.
8. See the remarkable excerpts from interviews with members of the generations born after 1945, the only first-hand documents from the other Europe: Ferenc Erös, András Kovács, Katalin Lévai, "Comment j'en suis arrivé à apprendre que j'étais juif", ARSS, no. 56, 1985, pp .63-68.
9. It is remarkable in this context that the days of October 1956 only produced isolated anti-Jewish actions that were almost exclusively outside the capital and in rural areas with very few revolutionary actions and very few Jews. The only public displays of anti-Semitism, which were purely symbolic, occurred in football fields during the Kádár regime. See my study, with Miklos Hadas, "Football et antisémitisme en Hongrie", *ARSS*, no. 103, 1994, pp.90-101.
10. Hungarian legislation has virtually never known or recognized a national or ethnic minority status, except during the 1941 census. Only religious groups and linguistic communities (defined by the first tongue spoken or by the mother tongue) were differentiated in the civil statistics. Since the 1895 law called "reception" and until its abolition en 1942, under pressure from the extreme right, Jews were officially considered to be Hungarian, of the Israelite or Mosaic confession, when they claimed to be of the Magyar language. With the exception of the Zionists who were in the minority before 1945, most Jewish movements radically refused that Jews be considered an ethnic or national minority.
11. These were above all two new opposition parties. The Association of Free Democrats (SzDSz) and the Association of young democrats (FIDESZ).
12. This first government majority since the democratic transition was finally broken. One

of the issues of its splintering was the relationship with Jews. An initial small group separated to create an independent party with an overtly anti-Semitic stance, under the leadership of the writer, István Csurka, and it won 2% of the votes in the 1994 elections. Another split took place later, dividing Hungarian Democratic Forum (party of the late Jozsef Antall, first head of a democratic government) a small liberal, minority party, also reputedly moderately anti-Semitic. Given their diminishing popularity after four years in power, none of these parties was sure to have more than the 5% of voters required for them to be represented in the next National Assembly. Political anti-Semitism exists therefore in Hungary, but it is essentially extra-parliamentary, which does not necessarily mean that it is not dangerous.

13. The minister of Foreign Affairs of this government, despite an earlier agreement excluding the intervention of any politician, didn't hesitate to speak at the 1994 international conference commemorating the 50th anniversary of the Holocaust in Hungary. He sought to defend the Horthy government, and asked that it not be forgotten that this regime "gave a million refugees" safety, alluding to the fact that the government of Admiral Horthy had refused the German version of the final solution, until Hungary's unopposed and later legalized occupation by his Hitlerian ally. The audience, fascinated by this denial of historical justice, protested vigorously and stopped the ministerial rhetoric by heavy applause. We were especially impressed by this attempt to give the government credit for not having voluntarily handed over its own citizens to these notorious assassins, all the moreso since it is known that this was very temporary protection. Provincial Jews and even those from the suburbs of Budapest were imprisoned in deportation trains of the national guard and handed over to their assassins by order of a government presided over by Horthy, between May and early July 1944.
14. György Aczél, responsible for cultural policy, was the only Jew to have an important position in the high kàdàrist hierarchy.
15. Some Jewish-Hungarian foreign investors and philanthropists still play a large role in modernizing the country, especially for cultural infrastructure. George Soros has created a private university/(American) law school and for a philanthropic and cultural foundation that supports revues, high-quality publications, foreign exchanges with universities. This role goes beyond what the Hungarian government does, which tends to undo its financial obligations in support of cultural productions, that the Communist regime used to do. The remarkable work of the Soros institutions is often attacked in overtly anti-Semitic terms.
16. On the geographic distribution and social stratification of the three branches of Hungarian Judaism during the *ancien régime*, see my essay on problematizing statistics: "Religious Divisions, Socio-Economic Stratification and the Modernization of Hungarian Jewry after the Emancipation", in Michael K. Silber (ed.), *Jews in The Hungarian Economy, 1760-1945*, Jerusalem, The Magnes Press, 1992, pp.161-183.
17. For an empirical evaluation of Jewish conversions, see the data quoted in my studies, "Patterns of Apostasy Among Surviving Jewry in Post-1945 Hungary", *History Department Yearbook*, 1993, Budapest, Central European University, 1994, pp.225-263 "Les conversions des Juifs à Budapest après 1945", *ARSS*, no. 56, 1985, pp.58-62.
18. Arguing lack of means, Hungary has not paid a complete indemnity in the form of returning the goods and property of victims of expropriations under the fascist and Communist regimes, as occurred in the Czech Republic, for example. (see the article by Catherine Horel).
19. Even in 1992 in one of the rare provincial cities where there was an organized Jewish community, the person responsible for the synagogue told me in an interview that all the Christian communities and parishes except the Church of Rome (Calvinists, Lutherans, Greek and Catholic orthodox) regularly accepted the invitation to participate in commemorations of the Holocaust.
20. We shouldn't forget that the major guardians of this taboo were none other than the cadre of Jewish communists.
21. While giving a lecture on my research concerning the relative inequalities in education by religion in the 19th century, a woman in the audience declared outright than any statistical opposition between Jews and non-Jews was anti-Semitic.
22. The director of the orthodox Jewish school of Budapest, financed by an American foundation, created an outcry among the parents of his students when he required enrolling students to provide some form of identification from the rabbinate. This was considered to be a form of inquisition, of authoritarian enrolment, of Jewish lists like those used by the Nazis, etc., to discredit a measure designed to have Jewish children benefit from the important grants received by this school. The school was openly traditionalist in its religious orientation.
23. It is still the rule that Jewish newspapers and revues are sent sealed and bear no indication of the contents so that the recipients cannot be identified. The State rabbinical school, created in 1877, has survived many historical vicissitudes, but is still not identified. There is

no plaque hanging in the entrance or on the arch of the building where it is house, for reasons of safety. There are some exceptions to this age-old custom of forced collective dissimulation. The recently created Bálint Jewish Community Center is an important foyer for cultural activities, and no longer hides its identity.

24. A small, organized group goes as far as reclaiming the status of a national minority Jews, which seems inconceivable for most of them.

25. The last representative investigations of anti-Semitism, carried out by the sociologist András Kovács in 1993 et 1995, make it possible to estimate a hard core of 8 % among students and among the population as a whole, 17-18 % of non-extremist anti-Semites; 32 % claiming to have stereotypical prejudices against Jews; 43 % and 29 % respectively of those refusing anti-Semitism. In the entire population, especially relatively uneducated residents of rural areas, 14 % are unaware of the problem or do not answer. See András Kovács (in Hungarian): *The Difference is Among us: Anti-Semitism and the Young Elite*, Budapest, Cserépfalvi, 1997. We might add that these figures probably do not differ much from those in France. If the configuration of political options is different, the 15 % of National Front voters and the right-wing of the conservative parties that are more or less openly xenophobic coincide with the 25 % of anti-Semites identified in the Hungarian study. We can however observe that no party which publicly adopts a xenophobic platform is represented in the Parliament of Budapest.

26. Different Hassidic groups in Williamsburg, Antwerp, and in Mea Shearim in Jerusalem, especially those of the Szatmàr dynasty, still speak an archaic Hungarian inherited from their ancestors.

27. An extreme and never-before seen case, the denegation of habitual magyarism occurred in 1993 when the politically inexperienced former Grand rabbi of Hungary said in an interview that Hungarian culture was reduced to virtually nothing without the Jewish contribution. This clumsy, at best, declaration, created a public outcry among conservative nationalists, including some who wanted to sue for national outrage, and among Jews. The remarks had to be withdrawn, and the Grand rabbi had to resign and leave the country. This incident can however be interpreted as an expression, pushed to the absurd, of a dissimilationist reversal authorizing, and later penalizing remarks (penalized afterwards) implying a radical rupture with any obligatory religious assimilation.

INSTRUMENTA MUSICA,
quorum in Scriptura mentio.

Jewish Music, Hybrid Music

Hervé Roten

At a time when certain inflexible currents of Judaism favor adopting a 'pure' religious practice free of all external influences, the music of different Jewish communities is intriguing for its diversity, variety, and — let's pronounce the word — its hybridization. While Jewish law clearly defines the criteria for being a Jew, no law and no one would dare attempt to define how Jewish music is Jewish or what determines its specifically Jewish nature. This is not a new issue, of course. Since A. Z. Idelsohn's early 20th century musicological research[1] and even today, the same age-old question is raised of defining exactly what the term 'Jewish music' covers. Curt Sachs' definition of music played by Jews, for Jews, and as Jews[2] is far from satisfying since it is limited to a functional, ethnic context that is often outdated today. When a group of neo-klezmer[3] musicians give a concert in a hall before a cosmopolitan audience, how are the public and the context Jewish? And yet, everyone assimilates this that this to Jewish music.

The generic term, Jewish music in fact covers extremely different forms of music. There is no single Jewish music, but a plethora of kinds of Jewish music, each of the many forms of Jewish music is the product of a specific cultural history and context. We therefore propose going back in time and space to examine the main processes of change and of hybridization that explain the forms of contemporary Jewish music.

Ancient Hebraic Music: Sumerian, Babylonian, Assyrian, and Egyptian Roots

Interest in Jewish music is relatively recent. In the early 16th century, Christian humanists were interested in the system of biblical accents (*teamim*) that they tried to transcribe musically.[4] But it was only really as of the 19th century that a certain number of European cantors began to write down their *hazanut* practices.[5] Music at the time was generally considered to be the cultural emanation of a peoples' genius. In a somewhat simplistic and often erroneous way, French composers were reputed for the clarity of their melodic composition, Germans for their counterpoint, and Italians for their inimitable melodic verve. And the Jews? Their music ostensibly went back to the most ancient times and held the secrets of primitive music that was said to preserve the purity of its biblical origins. The earliest musicological research shook that myth. Original music no longer existed; it had given way to polymorphic music that was unsettling to say the least.

But what was this ancient Hebrew music? Given that images in the Mosaic religion were forbidden and that no musical notation existed, this issue remains particularly and disturbingly unclear. Luckily, there is a great deal of written accounts of musical practices. The Bible, the Mishnah, the Talmud, the Qumran scrolls and even Flavius Josephus provide considerable information about the musical practices of ancient Israel. They refer, in particular, to the lyre-like string instruments, including the *kinor,* the *nevel* and the *nevel asor* (probably a small *nevel*); wind instruments like the *shofar* (ram or goat horn), the *hatsotserah* (trumpet of precious metal, generally silver) and the *halil* (probably a double-tubed reed), and percussion instruments, including cymbals (*tsiltsalim* and *metsiltayim*), tamborine (*tof*), and bells (*paamonim*).[6] The Bible often mentions singing that is either secular (water or labor songs, rallying songs, war songs, songs of victory, songs for popular holidays) or sacred (Canticles of Moses, *Exodus*, XV, 1-21, and of Deborah, *Judges* V). Nonetheless, during the nomadic period, music played only a minor role in religious practices: it was generally spontaneous, and often limited to accompanying processions or ceremonies. It was only when royalty was created (towards 1025 B.C.) that the first orchestra was created by King David, and the first Jerusalem Temple was built by his son Solomon that religious services became ritualized and music accompanied them.

Symbolically speaking, it's interesting that music goes entirely unmentioned in the description of the transmission of written and oral laws on Mount Sinai — the founding act of Judaism par excellence. Even more curious, the Biblical text describing the divine enunciation of the Ten Commandments indicates that the Hebrew people gathered at the foot of the sacred mountain «saw (rather than heard) voices» of the Creator (*Exodus* XX, 18). This story, which seals the fate of the Hebrews, also shows that in the Jewish tradition, music was not divine.

It is very likely that music during the Biblical period was rooted in Sumerian, Babylonian, and Assyrian music. At the time of Joseph and during their time in Egypt, the Hebrews added to the original musical legacy with Egyptian music. During the Babylonian exile (586-538 BC), Jewish musicians probably joined orchestras in the courts of the Assyrian and Babylonian kings, as was the custom of the times. During the last three centuries before the Christian era, the music of the kingdom of Judah was heavily influenced by Greek civilization. The many Greek names for instruments in the Book of Daniel (III, 5) and Ben Sira's descriptions (2nd century B.C.) of secular musical practices inspired by Greek customs (festivals, theatrical creation, musical competition) point to this influence.

During the same period, the expansion of the synagogue encouraged the creation of a resolutely functional musical esthetic. Music at the synagogue was essentially vocal and served as an expressive, mnemotechnical setting for Biblical cantilations, psalms, and other common prayers recited during the service. When the Romans put an end to the national existence of Judah in the second century A.D., Hebraic music no longer resembled what it had been during biblical times. It had profoundly changed, but there is no way to reproduce this music in any tangible way since no musical notation dates from this period.[7]

Arabic Metrics in Religious Poetry

Dispersion and exile are key events in Jewish history. Like founding myths, the Hebrew or Judean was weakened during the exile, and a new Jewish identity was created. The sons of Moses were reorganized in communities and organized their life by ritualizing it. The synagogue and the services that took place within it were at the center of their life. The emotional and federating power of music united men in prayer. Jewish loyalty to their creator was affirmed by the unchanging repetition of the same liturgical texts.

We might recall that at its beginning, services in the synagogue comprised mainly basic prayers — the Shema, the Halel, the Tefilah (or Amidah) — and the recitation of psalms to which Torah readings on Mondays, Thursdays, and Saturdays were added. Until the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 A.D., different prayer rituals coexisted in the service. Under Gamaliel II, (before 132 A.D.) a new united ritual, *Avodah she-balev* ('religion of the heart') was adopted and spread to all synagogues, and was applied, basically unchanged, until the end of the Talmudic period.

The *piyutim* that were born towards the 5th century A.D. partly in order to vary what had become a rather rigid liturgical ceremony. Initially, the *piyut* was a form of religious poetry designed to replace the required prayers, especially during shabbat and holiday ceremonies. This change was probably connected to Justinian I's restriction of teaching and of prayers (Decree 553). Although it was severely criticized, particularly by members of the great Babylonian Academies, religious poetry enjoyed popular success and spread to all Jewish communities. Over the centuries, certain *piyutim* were integrated into prayers, according to the decision of each community.

The blossoming of religious poetry had a considerable impact musically speaking. Creating new texts led to using a new type of music. Initially, the *piyutim* were sung in a psalmodic style or in a free rhythm that depended on the placement of accents in the phrase. As of the 10th century, however, influenced by Arabic poetry, Dunash ben Labrat (c. 920-980?) introduced into his work the notion of metrics — a proportional relationship among the different time values. This striking innovation denoted the influence of Arab civilization on the sephardic Jewish communities. Linguistically, Hebrew did not distinguish between long and short syllables, and imposing a metrical framework amounted to imposing a declamation that did not exist naturally in the Hebrew language. But this in no way prevented Dunash ben Labrat's initiative from being very successful and being quickly imitated by many of his colleagues.

Adopting Arabic metrics frequently led to using a strophic form of poetry. Each couplet was usually sung to a more or less identical melody, which made it much easier to memorize the text. Music was no longer a simple vehicle for the text but to the contrary, the text had to bend itself to the music which had already been determined.[8]

The use of different melodic reinforced this semantic reversal. It was very common in Jewish music to borrow 'timbres;' a popular, well-known tune was simply stuck onto new words. Many *piyutim* therefore bore the name of a pre-existent

melody to which they were sung. Beyond the tunes borrowed from the traditional Jewish repertory, we also find mention of Spanish, Provencal, Italian and German timbres. The public particularly appreciated this, but it sparked many controversies among the rabbis. Nonetheless, even today, Hebrew hymnody continues to borrow music, which is one of the greatest sources of hybridization of Jewish music.

Jewish Minstrels and Troubadours Transcend Religious Boundaries and Differences

At a completely different level, Jewish minstrels, troubadours and trouveres also helped to introduce many foreign tunes into Jewish music. When they traveled through Europe and sang before a mixed public of Jews and non-Jews, minstrels sang poetic songs resembling those sung by their non-Jewish counterparts. When they gave a performance for a Jewish audience, they added some subjects taken from the Bible or from the Midrash and sang them in the vernacular. A 1382 notebook of a Jewish minstrel found in the Cairo Genizah contains the notations of secular and sacred songs with German words written in Hebrew letters.

We shouldn't underestimate the impact of traveling musicians on the evolution of European musical life. These minstrels contributed to a borderless musical Europe that transcended religious differences. They linked different isolated Jewish communities and their contexts and were the bearers of an international instrumental tradition. When they accompanied dances at weddings or other occasions, or when they designed the musical program for these festivities, they unconsciously transferred a large part of their repertory to Jewish neighborhoods. These engaging secular dance tunes quickly caught the public ear and those of the *paytanim* and they quite naturally soon entered the repertory of songs sung in the synagogue. Independently of the esthetic ideal favored by musical experts strong on musical theory, the majority of the faithful imposed its taste for simple, popular music.

Interest in age-old secular culture seemed particularly intense in Spain, Italy, and in Southern France. As of 1230-1230, the Jews of Andalusia and of southern Christian Europe included musical training into their children's education. At approximately the same time, several musical treatises written in Arabic were translated into Hebrew. In Provence, Jews studied the musical practices of their

period, witness the Hebrew translation of student notes from the music school of Jean Vaillant, a musician living in Paris in the early 15th century. However, because of the growing numbers of persecutions, and especially because of the 1492 expulsion of Jews from Spain, Jewish communities turned inwards, and mystical currents emerged in which music played a central role.

From Safed to Prague: The Musical Practice of Mystical Brotherhoods

In Safed, in the Galilee, Isaac Luria (1534-1572) created a mystical movement whose success helped to propagate many hymns in Hebrew or Aramean based especially on popular Turkish, Arabic, Spanish, Provencal and German songs. For Luria, the beauty of a song or of the human voice mattered little compared to the singer's devotion. A believer could whatever melody he chose so long as he invested it with 'spiritual intention'; what counted was *kavanah*. Artistic and esthetic considerations were relatively unimportant in this doctrine, which was adopted and expanded in the 18th century by the hasidic movement.

Israel Najar (1555-1628) must be especially mentioned among the cantor-poets of the School of Safed. His *Zemirot Yisrael diwan*, or collection of poetry, (Safed, 1587, Venice, 1599, etc.) became so popular among middle-eastern communities that it was much imitated. Israel Najara's poems were sung primarily to well-known popular songs, especially in Turkish and Arabic. One of his major innovations was to organize his canticles like an Arabic *diwan*, which is to say, according to modes, that he identified at the beginning of the text. His hymns were published in a *diwan* of 12 modes, each mode representing a particular mood or ethos, in accordance with to the middle-eastern tradition. This use of middle-eastern modes (*maqamat*) was initially limited to Hebrew hymnody, but soon moved to middle-eastern services, and even occasionally spread to biblical *cantilation* (in Aleppo).

Many mystical brotherhoods were also born in Europe. In Prague, the *mezamerei Barukh she-amar* (the singers of the *Barukh she-amar* prayer) played instrumental music in the synagogue on Friday afternoon. Living in Prague between 1719-24, Abraham Levi of Amsterdam observed that 'the cantors also use organs, cymbals, harpsichords, and stringed instruments each Friday to welcome the shabbat; they not only sang Lekhan dodi with these instruments, but they also contin-

ued for hours playing and singing a mixture of lovely melodies.' These practices were also very common in the synagogues of Frankfort, Nikolsburg, and many other cities.

Assimilating Western Musical Language

In Northern Italy, the open-mindedness of the Renaissance encouraged an enlightened public of Jewish music-lovers to become interested in learned music. Learning musical was an important part of the education of young Italian Jews just as it had been in Spain before the Expulsion. Schools of music and dance existed in Venice as of the first half of the 15th century. Sixteenth century literary accounts bear witness to a true passion among Florentine and Pisan high Jewish society for playing music.[9] In the 16th century and until the early 17th century, the court of Gonzago of Mantua welcomed many Jewish musicians, including Salomon Rossi (1586-1628?), who wrote several books of madrigals and who published, in Venice in 1622-23, *Hashirim asher liShelomo*, a large collection of Hebrew liturgical compositions, including 33 choirs of from 3-8 voices, for synagogue services. As Israel Adler observes, 'these works are written in a style that is characteristic of the period, and it would be useless to search for any vestige of traditional synagogue styles in them. They are interesting because they are the first attempt that has left any tangible evidence of the synagogue's assimilation of erudite western music.'[10]

This appropriation of western musical language grew slowly during the 18th century. The increasingly pronounced taste among the faithful for secular music led certain *hazanim* such as Salomon Lipschitz[11] to favor adopting western savant music instead of the traditional Jewish song that seemed outmoded. Aaron Beer (1739-1821), another *hazan* well-known for his many compositions, used to regularly introduce new prayer tunes at the synagogue in order to discourage the faithful from joining him for, as he liked to say «it is a scourge for the *hazanim* when the faithful start to sing with them.' His melodies, like those of most of his contemporaries are often pale imitations of 18th century instrumental style.

In 1790-1791, the noble ideas of the French Revolution led to the complete recognition of French Jews. After the Napoleonic conquests, this emancipation movement spread to Western and Central Europe and encouraged the integration of Jews into their society and the adoption of Western savant music as the basis of a reformed

religion. As of the beginning 19th century, the consistorial authorities promoted a reorganization of the Israelite religion. Regional consistories recruited professional cantors and choir leaders who in turn organized choirs of men and children. The old melodies were kept, but certain prayers or parts of prayers were arranged and harmonized for four voices; the highest voice sang the traditional melody. Tunes were also borrowed from well-known composers such as Haydn and Beethoven, and the prayers were more or less well stuck onto them. Original tunes were composed for pre-existing liturgical texts or a text written for the occasion.

The Organ in Reformed Synagogues

In order to heighten the splendor of the service, the consistory synagogues occasionally used instrument ensembles or an organ to reinforce the chorus voices. Although traditional Jewish canons restricted the use of instruments during the service, the use of the organ was officially accepted by the Grand Rabbi of France, Salomon Ullman in 1856. This late recognition only validated a situation that had already taken root. As of 1810, in fact, an organ accompanied shabbat and holiday prayers in the reformed synagogue of Seesen in Germany. This use of the organ resulted from Israel Jacobson's (1768-1828) decision to create a chorus of young boys singing chorales in German, accompanied by an organ. Jacobson was the director of the Consistory of Westphalia between 1808 and 1813, and his initiative was adopted in Kassel, Berlin (1815) and later in Hamburg (1818). The reform movement, which was based on the desire to eliminate everything from the Jewish service that might shock Christians, slowly took root in many German synagogues. In these new kinds of temples, devoted music masters composed Lutheran-style hymns and adopted Protestant choral melodies in order to establish a new liturgical music.

The German reform movement sought to establish an 'ordered service' (*geordneter gottesdienst*) and was more effective in large cities than outside of them. But it was in the air. During this period, the Jewish community was very attracted to western culture and its music. In the minds of the reformers, the synagogue needed to have the artistic singing that it was lacking. The *hazan*'s singing therefore became less impetuously improvisational and sought to respect the rules of measure and harmony. The improvisation of the assistants (*meshorerim*) who stood next to the *hazan* was replaced by a harmonized choral accompaniment. And the

congregation itself had to forego its noisy spontaneity. The most characteristic aspects of traditional singing in the synagogue — modal, very melismatic, with no regular measure — were often rejected.

Hasidic Mystical Nigunim

During this period, nearly one half of the Jewish population of Eastern Europe joined the hasidic movement that had been created in Podolie by Israel ben Eliezer Baal Shem Tov (1700-1760). Inspired by the cabalism of Safed, this mystical movement favored access to the divine through joyful (*simhah*) and enthusiastic (*hitlavut*) prayer. In addition to this doctrine, there was the notion of *devekut* (attachment), indicating a state of complete commitment to God in every act of daily life. The hasid therefore serves his creator even when he eats or drinks, so long as he does so in a spirit of holiness.

The Baal Shem Tov and his followers considered music and dance as means to elevate the soul above worldly impurities. During shabbat meals, they sang *zemirot* (domestic canticles) and freely invented new melodies. Just after the Baal Shem Tov's death, the creation and singing of *nigunim* (melodies, tunes) became an essential pillar of hasidic mysticism. In the hasidic conception, the *nigun* transcends language, and is able to express the ineffable. According to one hasidic proverb, 'silence is worth more than words, but song is worth more than silence.' The *nigun* therefore express the full range of human emotions, it can be sung as a meditation or an exaltation, with sadness or joy, and as it is sung, the body torso and arms swing. Clapping of the hands can also be added. These bodily gestures together with the hasid's total involvement in the melody, and can lead him into a true state of trance.

Most *nigunim* are sung without words. The text has little importance, and is generally added to the melody after the fact, or is often just a single word or brief onomatopoeias such as 'doy doy doy' or 'ya ba bam.' The essence of the *nigun* is in the *kavanah* (intention) that comes from the singer's heart. The melody and text matter little. This philosophy explains in part the many borrowed melodies — Russian, Ukrainian, Polish, Hungarian, Romanian, and Turkish of this repertory. There are also Napoleonic marching tunes that bear witness to the tremendous hopes of the Jews awakened by the arrival of the French troops in Poland.

The Specificity and Universality of Jewish Music

In the 20th century, Jewish music has a less composite face, to say the least. In Western Europe and in the United States, the highly policed religious service incorporates polyphonic and monodic savant music and traditional tunes (biblical cantilations, psalms). In Eastern Europe, the art of the Ashkenav *hazanut,* raised to its zenith by such exceptional cantors as Gershon Sirota (1874-1943), Mordekhai Herschman (1888-1940), and Yosele Rosenblatt (1880-1933), flourished in a fireworks of such spectacular vocal effects such that the text became a mere accessory. Hasidim who were carried away by their mystical fervor also abundantly borrowed from a great range of different kinds of music. The music of Jews living in Islamic lands resembled middle-eastern singing (the use of specific modes (*maqamat*) ornamentation, occasional micro-intervals).

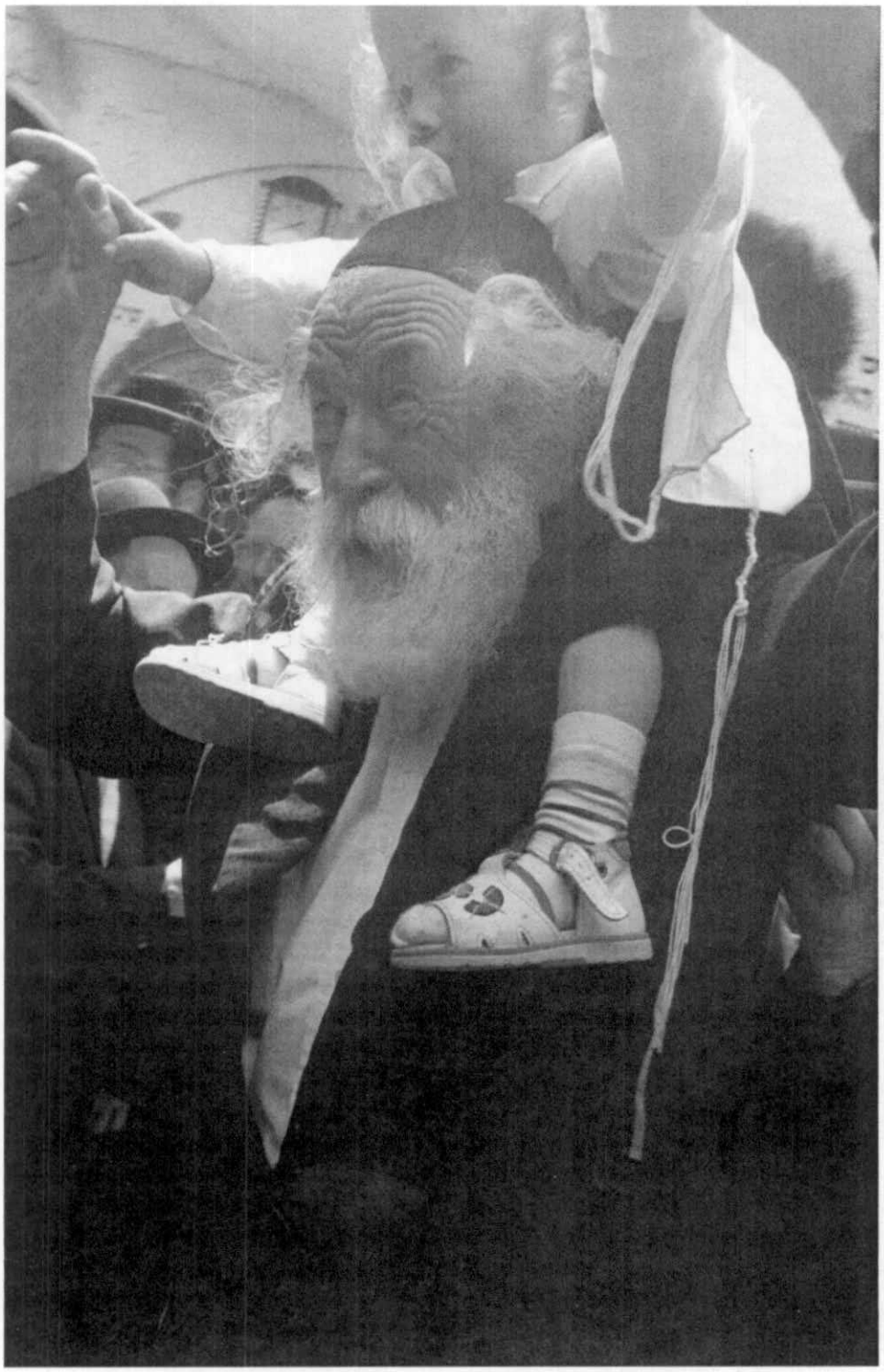
Given this range of artistic expression, the informed observer can rightfully raise the question of the specificity of Jewish music, and more than ever before. The use of foreign melodies and recourse to ambient musical language have led to a process of inevitable acculturation that occasionally leads to a complete loss of identity. And yet today, musical phenomena such as the resurgence of middle-eastern singing or the klezmer renaissance point to the profound desire among the young, for whom music is part of cultural identity, to reacculturate. We can also observe that today's klezmer music goes beyond a Jewish context. Many excellent klezmer groups include non-Jewish musicians. And it is here, perhaps, that we find the key to Jewish music. It has a multicultural dimension. The Judeo-Spanish romances, for example, are the last vestiges of a language and civilization that disappeared more than five centuries ago. Today, yiddish is often studied by German speakers, in particular, who consider it to be a part of their own past. In this same way, Jewish music allows us to observe the different musical strata of humanity.

In the end, couldn't we define the different forms of Jewish music by this propensity to the universal? A universal that Jews integrate but adapt to their universe. It is striking to observe how borrowed musical material often undergoes a generally unconscious process of becoming Jewish. Over time, subtle melodic-rhythmic changes end up giving the melody a patina that does not detract from older musical structures. A few years ago, while making a study of traditional Judeo-Portuguese musical traditions in the Jewish communities of Southwest France, I was surprised to discover how much the *piyutim* had often adopted pre-

viously existing melodic material. In fact, many of their tunes had used the melodic contours of different, much older traditional formulas[12] The musicologist Judith Frigyesi has pointed out that this symbiosis is common in the history of Jewish music. 'In a traditionalist community, what is borrowed from the non-Jewish surroundings is quickly assimilated, and the new compositions also respect the musical tradition.'[13] This surprising capacity of absorbing parts of an exogenous language is probably one of the major keys to Jewish culture.

NOTES

1. See in particular, Abraham Zvi Idelsohn, *Jewish Music in Its Historical Development*, first edition, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1929, reedition: New-York, Schoken Books, 1967, 535 p. and Hebräisch orientalischer Melodienschatz, Leipzig, F. Hofmeister, Jerusalem, Berlin, Vienne, B. Harz Verlag, 1914-1932, 10 vol., republished by New York, Ktav Publishing House, 1973, 4 vol.
2. Definition given by Curt Sachs to the World Congress of Jewish Music (Sorbonne, 1957). See B. Bayer, Encyclopaedia Judaïca, vol 12, p. 555.
3. Neo-klezmer: a movement to revive the art of itinerant Jewish musicians of Eastern Europe. The klezmer repertory is essentially composed of songs, dances and virtuoso instrumentals that are more or less improvised.
4. See especially the manuscripts of Johannes Reuchlin (*De accentibus et orthographia linguae hebraicae*, Haguenau, 1518), of J. Böschenstein (Munich Cod. hebr. 401) and Sebastian Münster (*Institutiones grammaticae in hebream linguam*, Basel, 1524).
5. We can mention in particular the collections of Aaron Beer (1739-1821) in Berlin, Israël Lovy (1773-1832) in Paris, Maier Kohn (1802-1875) in Munich, Salomon Sulzer in Vienna (as of 1826), Hirsch Weintraub in Koenigsberg (1838), Louis Lewandowski in Berlin (1840) and Samuel Naumbourg in Paris (1845).
6. See Bathja Bayer, 'Music' , *Encyclopaedia Judaïca*, Jerusalem, Keter Publishing House, 1972, vol. 12, pp. 560-565.
7. The system of biblical accents (*teamim*), is not musical notation strictly speaking but rather something to help the memory, and was only created between the 6th and 9th centuries A.D. For more information, see Hervé Roten, Musiques liturgiques juives: parcours et escales, Cité de la Musique/Actes Sud, coll. 'Musiques du monde', 1998, pp. 32-34.
8. Until the 10th century, there was no Hebrew language equivalent for very term music!
9. See Israël Adler, *La Pratique musicale savante dans quelques communautés juives en Europe aux XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles*, Paris–La Haye, Mouton and Co, 1966, vol. 1, p. 44.
10. Ibid., 'Musique juive', Encyclopédie de la musique (tome II), Paris, Fasquelle, 1959, p. 650.
11. See Teudat Shelomo, Offenbach 1718, no. 30.
12. Only modern 19th century tunes, respectful of the laws of tonal harmony, borrowed a different melodic form. They were far from unanimously appreciated, and were considered unrepresentative of the Portuguese service.
13. Judith L. Frigyesi, 'Invention individuelle et tradition collective dans la musique juive de Hongrie', *Orbis Musicae*, 8, 1982-83, University of Tel Aviv, p.74.



1945-2000: Conditions for a Renaissance

Jacques Gutwirth

After developing remarkably, especially between 1750 and 1875, the *hasidic* movement declined starting in the 19th century. There were several reasons for the loss of influence in Eastern Europe: many Jews joined the working class, they migrated to large cities, Socialist ideas and Zionism spread, and, finally, Jews emigrated massively, mainly to the United States.[1] During the cataclysm of the Holocaust, the large majority of *hasidim* were assassinated under conditions that have been well documented. In 1945, there were nonetheless some survivors in the camps and among the Polish Jews who had spent the war years in the Soviet Union, Romania, or Hungary. Moreover, a few *hasidic* communities remained in Palestine and in the United States.

The Hasidim in Antwerp: Noteworthy Demographic Growth

During the immediate post-war years, survivors emigrated massively, mainly to the United States and then later to Israel as well. However, following its liberation in the fall of 1944, the large port of Antwerp[2] became home to intense Jewish life.[3] In the first years of the post-war period, the city became a much-appreciated layover; many Hasidim remained for some time and some remained permanently. Many Jews worked especially in Antwerp's diamond industry and trade, where numerous *hasidim* earned a living, and created several communities of followers of pre-war 'dynasties' of rebbes, particularly the Belzer, the Satmarer, the Guerer, the Vizhniter and Bobover.

Between 1945 and 2000, the *hasidim* increased in numbers remarkably in Antwerp. The Belz community, which included 70 families or 418 people in the early 1960s, of which two-thirds were younger than 20 years old,[4] today number 250 families, despite a split and the departure of approximately 30 families. An estimated 5000-6000 *hasidim* live in Antwerp today, nearly one-quarter or even one-third of the city's Jewish population of approximately 15,000-20,000.[5]

The hasidic communities in Antwerp and elsewhere share basic principles of hasidism but have specific customs (*minhogim*), including for example the lengthy shabbat services among the Belzer. The different movements also have slightly different ways of dressing. To take a single example, on holidays, married men from Belzer, the Satmarer and the Vizhnitzer families wear a *shtayml*, or flat fur hat, whereas the Guerer wear a high fur cap, or *spodik*. The communities of Antwerp were created by families from different geographical areas. The Satmarer originated largely from Transylvania, the Guerer from central Poland, and the Belzer from Galicia and Western Hungary. Certainly the large majority of the hasidim in Antwerp today were born in Antwerp after the war, but American and Israel hasidic communities have similar demographic traits.

Many of Antwerp's central streets exude a distinctiveness because of the businesses — butcher and fish shops, kosher restaurants — run by the hasidim and because of the heavy circulation of Jews. Indeed, the Antwerp hasidim constitute the nucleus of a distinctive Jewish existence.

Brooklyn's Williamsburg, Borough Park, and Crown Heights

The hasidim of Antwerp are only a minority in the hasidic world whereas in New York, by contrast, the hasidim number at least 100,000 if not 150,000. Few lived in the United States before the Second World War; rebbes counseled against settling in a country where the vast majority of immigrants had abandoned their strict religious observance. After the Holocaust, however, the rebbes and their followers no longer hesitated to move to New York, particularly to three neighborhoods in Brooklyn: Williamsburg, Borough Park, and Crown Heights.

The Hasidic neighborhoods of Williamsburg cover 50 blocks of often run-down houses. The main streets are lined with many stores selling kosher food, religious objects, and traditional Hasidic clothing. The faithful live mainly the adjacent streets in which there are also large and small halls of worship, schools, and talmudic academies.

After the war, Williamsburg attracted Hasidim mainly from Hungary and Romania. The Satmarers came originally from Satu-Mare (Satmar) in Romanian Transylvania, and are by far the largest of these communities. For the last 50 years, the Satmar hasidim, who number at least 30,000, have formed an ultra-traditionalist movement that avoids all possible comprise with secular culture and knowledge. And yet this relatively recent movement was born in Satu-Mare only in the 1920s, around Rabbi Joel Teitelbaum (1886-1979) who became the Satmarer rebbe.[6] Liberated from Bergen-Belsen in 1944, he came to the United Sates in 1947 and soon created a community that initially included only a few dozen members. Many recent immigrants soon joined the community and under his influence, several hasidic institutions were quickly built. By the 1960s, the community had built several synagogues, schools, and even its own *kashrut* system in which the slaughter and processing of cattle was strictly supervised.

The Satmarer rebbe and his followers are violently anti-Zionist. Joel Teitelbaum considered that God ordered the Exile and Dispersion of the Jews, which should therefore continue until the final Redemption and the coming of the Messiah. The extreme traditionalism of the Satmarer and their very anti-Israeli ideology marginalized them with respect to other orthodox Jewish or non-religious groups. However, they are in no way isolated from many hasidic groups which often share their ideas, like most of the hasidim in Williamsburg.

Moreover, their refusal of secular education and their social withdrawal relegate them to few oftentimes not very lucrative professions including running religious schools, being ritual slaughterers, etc., artisans, small shop-owners, bus or truck drivers, mechanics, and diamond cutters. Moreover, they have an average of 7-9 children per family. Many Satmarers therefore live poorly and receive public welfare. Some succeed quite well, however, in the IT industry, in real estate, construction and the diamond industry.[7] Because of a dearth of housing, and also to avoid the widespread secular influences in New York, the Satmarer started buying lots in the 1970s in Monroe, a small town 60 miles from Manhattan where many orthodox and hasidic Jews already lived. They created their own neighborhood in Kyrias Joel and were granted municipal autonomy in 1976. Today, 8000 people live in Kyrias Joel, but many of the men in particular still commute daily to their jobs in New York.

The Satmarer rebbe died childless in 1979. One month after his death, the 13 members of the Council of Elders chose his nephew, Moyshe Teitelbaum, to succeed him. A minority of his followers, however, including the widow of the preceding rebbe, did not want to accept this choice, which has since generated many conflicts. Nonetheless, Satmar Hasidism remains influential in Williamsburg and within the entire hasidic movement, including in Israel, particularly in Mea Shearim.

Within a half-century, Borough Park has also become a hasidic bastion. Today, 85% of the Jewish population, or 60,000 people are hasidim.[8] This neighborhood is far more middle-class and plush than Williamsburg. In its lively center on 13th Avenue, the hasidim own religious bookstores, travel agencies, pizzerias (kosher, of course), silver stores, etc. Borough Park includes some 300 halls of worship, and several dozen Jewish schools. The Bobover hasidim are the largest and most influential community. The dynasty of Bobov rebbes had settled in Bobov in Galicia. Before the war, approximately 10,000 followers of the movement lived in Poland. One Friday in the summer of 1942, the Nazis massacred 12,000 Jews in Bobov, including the Bobover rebbe, Benzion Halberstam. Shlomo Halberstam, one of his sons, escaped the carnage, and migrated to the United States in 1946. He had lost his wife and two children, but remarried, had six children, and surrounded himself with Holocaust survivors, particularly from Poland. Today, there are approximately 25,000 Bobover in the United States. The rebbe[9] encouraged his followers to take up lucrative professions and to create businesses; many are active in the New York diamond industry and trade. About 2000 families or at least 10,000 of his followers live near their charismatic leader either in Borough Park itself or in Flatbush, a nearby neighborhood where many Hasidim live today because there is not enough affordable housing in Borough Park. Borough Park is a neighborhood

for the Bobov middle classes and hasidim; these traditionalists are also for the most part very involved in dynamic economic sectors and are sociologically representative of the entire Jewish population.

Crown Heights, located between Williamsburg to the north and Borough Park to the south of Brooklyn, is the third neighborhood with a large hasidic population. The headquarters of the Hasidic Lubavitch dynasty is located at 770 Eastern Parkway, a wide avenue where the synagogue, the offices, the movement's talmudic academic are located in vast buildings. This is also the center of the international activities of the Lubavitch movement, which has created some 200 missionary outposts — the Habad houses — in the United States and in many other countries. Lubavitch men wear beards and dress in black like other hasidim, but unlike them they wear modern hats, which is eminently symbolic. Moreover, neither the members of the community nor the rebbe wear a *shtrayml* or *spodic* (which the prior rebbe wore.)

About 20,000 hasidim live in Crown Heights where they settled there in large numbers after World War II. In the 1960s, however, the hasidim became a minority among a largely black population. The relationship between the two minority groups was often tumultuous, and there were occasional serious incidents, such as pedestrians being run down, assaults, etc. Many hasidim left but the immensely prestigious Lubavitch rebbe, Menahem Mendel Schneersohn (1902-1994) proclaimed, 'We will remain here.' And to demonstrate his determination, the movement renovated and expanded the *bes-medresh*, the house of study and prayer and center of its activities. Today, most of the hasidim in Crown Heights are Lubavitchers.[10]

The dynasty, which goes back to the 18th century, began in the small city of Ljubawitschi in the Russian province of Smolensk. The Lubavitch founder, Schneour Zalman de Lyady (1745-1812) forged a message, particularly in his 1814 *Tanya*, blending Kabalistic mysticism and a rationalist approach synthesized in the acronym, Habad, from *Hokhma, Bina, dat* (wisdom, discernment, knowledge). But let us turn to our own period. The dynasty's sixth rebbe, Joseph Isaac Schneersohn (1880-1950), fled Europe in 1940 and founded a small community in New York. Upon his death, he was succeeded by his son-in-law Menahem Mendel Schneersohn who had studied chemistry and engineering 'at the Sorbonne' according to his followers and had lived in France between 1932-1941. The secular itinerary of this dynamic individual was an unusual one for a hasidic master, and it certainly influenced his relationship with modernity, which is most likely key to one of his most important ideas. This rebbe and the entire Lubavitch movement have taken upon themselves the innovative task at the center of the contemporary

hasidic movement to call all Jews to a religious awakening. To do so, the Lubavitch use many other means in addition the Habad houses including parking vans or other vehicles at strategic sites, for example next to the 42nd Street New York Public Library, where they invited passers-by who were supposedly Jewish, to observe this or that religious ritual, and especially to wear phylacteries. The movement also uses a very sophisticated web site.

This missionary spirit, especially starting with the hippie counter-culture of the mid-1960s in which many young Jews had participated, contributed to a return of these «souls lost to Judaism and to Jewish identity, to the usual norms of the middle classes from which most of them came, even though not all of them have become Hasidim.» What's more, the Federations of American Jewish organizations in many cities that support charitable and Jewish activities, at least theoretically support Lubavitch missionary activities by granting subsidies to various of its institutions.[11] The Lubavitch movement, like the great majority of hasidic dynasties, was initially anti-Zionist. Today however, however, the rebbe and his followers support annexing the territories taken in the 1967 war in Israel. There is an ostensibly religious basis to this position, since the rebbe considers that Judea-Samaria is part of the Holy Land that God granted his elected people. The political right in Israel appreciates the deeply political ramifications of this attitude. Indeed, after an intervention by the rebbe, the right returned to power in 1990 under Itzhak Shamir. Two deputies from the religious right who were supposed to be part of the Left coalition government ultimately refused to support the Left after the rebbe opined against it, precisely because of the thorny question of the occupied territories.[12]

During the 1980s, the rebbe revived the rather virtual messianism that has coursed through Jewish religiosity for thousands of years. The Lubavitch movement began an intense campaign proclaiming the Messiah's imminent arrival. An advertising campaign proclaimed 'We want the Messiah now, we don't want to wait!' Increasing numbers of followers, including the rebbe's close collaborators, began to believe and to spread the word that Schneersohn himself was the Messiah. The intense personality cult of the rebbe who dominated the movement certainly encouraged this campaign, which however, provoked strong criticism from the other orthodox and hasidic movements.[13] After Schneersohn's death in 1994, the movement's leaders became more discrete on this subject. The Lubavitch movement, which has yet to name a successor to Menehem Mendel Schneersohn, is, from many points of view, a major and relatively modernist part of the hasidic movement within which it is, however, only a minority despite its resounding impact.[14] Its modernity does not prevent it, however, from being just as ultra-orthodox as the other hasidic movements.

Jerusalem and Bnei Brak's Fear of God

The hasidic movement has grown considerably the creation of Israel in 1948. Eastern European hasidic leaders were extremely hostile to Zionism at the end of the 19th century just as the Satmarer are today. The rebbes who had survived the Holocaust, including those from Belz, Vizhnitz, and Gur, nonetheless moved first to Palestine and later to the State of Israel. An estimated 15,000 hasidim live in many Israeli cities today.[15] Jerusalem and Bnei Brak, however, are the two urban centers of the movement.

Particularly after 1948, Jerusalem attracted the newly immigrated hasidim. After all, ultra-orthodox and hasidic Jews, the *haredim*, or those God-Fearing as is said in Israel, had created small communities since well before Israeli independence. The old neighborhood of Mea Shearim had thus become a meeting place for the Satmar followers who found close allies among the Netourei Karta, or Guardians of the City, who were as traditionalist and anti-Zionist as the Satmarer rebbe. Twenty thousand *haredim* live in Mea Shearim in a very distinctive atmosphere, with the *shtiblekh*, halls of worship set in old homes, the talmudic academies, ritual baths, etc. And yet many hasidim have also settled elsewhere in the city. The Belzer have for decades lived in the market area of Mahaneh Yehuda and in the 1980s they also created the outlying settlement of Kyriat Balz. The fifth Belz rebbe in the dynasty, Issachar Dov Rokeah, was born in Israel in 1948. This apparently strong personality contributes to the dynamism of this movement that is well-established in Israeli economic and political life. Although they are not Zionists, the Belzers do participate actively in the country's political affairs. In 1988, the rebbe allied himself with the non-Hasidic orthodox rabbi Eliezer Menahem Schach, an important religious authority of the Ashkenazim *haredim*, in order to create a new religious party, Deguel ha-Torah. The party's priority is to defend the spiritual and material interests of the *haredim*: contributions for educational institutions and housing subsidies. The rebbe also appears to be a dove on the question of the occupied territories.[16] Belz also includes communities in Bnei Brak, in Tel Aviv, and in other cities, including New York, Montreal, and Antwerp of course.

Gur hasidism was born in the 19th century, had become a powerful Polish movement before 1940, and had approximately 100,000 followers between the two wars. Today, Gur is very present in Jerusalem, the dynasty's headquarters, and

elsewhere, particularly in Bnei Brak. In 1912, the rebbe and other of the movement's leaders were among the founders and major supporters of the orthodox *Agoudat Israel* party. The Israeli version of this party is very active politically, and the current Guerer rebbe and his followers are very influential. In 1940, the third rebbe, Abraham Mordehai Alter (1866-1948) fled Poland for Palestine where he developed a network of schools and other institutions. There are 11 Guer Talmudic academies in Israel today.[17] The Guer hasidic movement has the largest number of followers in Israel today.[18] In 1948, Israel Meir Levin, the son-in-law and lieutenant of the Gur rebbe, signed the Israeli Declaration of Independence on behalf of the Agoudat Israel party along with the representatives of the religious and non-religious Zionist parties. Like the Belzer, therefore, the Guerers were realistic about the Hebrew State. Yet unlike them, they side with the hawks on the question of the occupied territories.

While it is impossible to enumerate all the different hasidic groups and establishments in Israel, Bnei Brak deserves special mention. It was created in 1924 and became the headquarters for innumerable synagogues, halls of worship, talmudic schools and academics, including many that were hasidic. In 1948, Bnei Brak had a population of barely 9300 people compared with its current population of 140,000 inhabitants, most of whom are *haredim*. Bnei Brak is, in particular, the citadel of the Vizhnitz Hasidim, a dynasty born during the latter half of the 19th century in Vyzcnycja, today located in Ukraine, but a small city of the Austro-Hungarian empire at the time. Hayim Meir Hager (1888-1972) survived the Holocaust and migrated to Palestine in 1947. In 1950, his followers acquired a vast parcel of land in Bnei Brak that became the Vizhnitz neighborhood, whose various streets are named for the dynasty's important figures. The current rebbe, Moshe Yehoshua Hager, today lives in Vizhnitz along with many of his followers, and belongs to the Agoudat Israel Council of Elders. Political figures of the major parties, in search of political alliances do not hesitate to visit him in his home. Vizhnitz includes other communities elsewhere in Israel; with Belz and Gur, it is one of the important Israeli Hasidic movements.

A Hard Core of Judaism

For the last fifty years, therefore, the hasidic movement has undergone a renaissance that is as remarkable as it was unforeseeable. After the end of the war, Holocaust survivors rapidly created extremely vital communities. Many survivors had lived through hell and had lost most of their families. To overcome the traumas, they took refuge in the welcome *shtibl*, or hasidic oratory. Intense religious life and lively sociability most certainly offered a propitious context for psychic repair; many of the followers who quickly married and remarried created new families and followed the biblical injunction to grow and multiply, quite literally. Hasidic families usually have five or six children if not more. And since child mortality rates dropped quickly after World War II, all the requisite elements for demographic expansion existed in these hasidic communities.

Despite its traditionalism and basic conservatism, the hasidic movement does not appear to be a relic of the past that is unable to adapt to the modern world. Hasidim often travel — mainly between the major hasidic cities that I have mentioned — by plane, and most of them use cars and telephones. Of course they disapprove, at least in part, of the major media, especially TV, and in January 2000, several Hasidic leaders including the Belzer and Vizhniter rebbe (but neither the Guerer nor Lubavitch rabbis) condemned the use of Internet except for professional purposes. Moreover, there is a spiritual renewal of hasidism with the publication of the major texts whose influence extends beyond the framework of any specific movement.[19] The only important innovation since 1945 is the proselytism of the Lubavitch who have managed to draw considerable numbers of Jews, occasionally quite removed from Judaism, to their version of hasidism.[20]

These revivalist activities have certainly born fruit[21] where they have been practiced, but most hasidic communities do not practice them, and they have not been a factor in their expansion. Instead, communities have developed through their demographic dynamism, and because they have been basically able to maintain their younger generations within, which was certainly not the case between the end of the 19th century and 1940. Those who praise the movement explain this spectacular success in terms of spiritual reasons, or through the warm sense of community among the hasidim. However, we must not forget the favorable political, social and economic context. Whereas their standard of living was often low and they experience State anti-Semitism and various discriminatory practices in

their countries of origin, hasidim now live in democratic societies tolerant of their lifestyles. They can create and manage their institutions virtually as they choose, and in Israel and elsewhere they very often receive State or municipal aid. Moreover, in the United States, Holocaust survivors received massive aid in the immediate post-war period, and the hasidim benefited from this. Later, some, such as the Lubavitch, also obtained subsidies from Jewish philanthropic institutions for their educational activities. In addition, many American Jews, occasionally not religious themselves but nonetheless aware of the role of the hasidim in terms of Jewish identity, made oftentimes large contributions to various community activities, particularly to the least isolationist of the communities such as the Belz, Bobov and above all, to the Lubavitch.[22]

Before the creation of the State of Israel on June 19, 1947, a letter of status-quo signed by Ben Gurion, the leader of the Jewish Agency at the time, that granted religious Jews a special status. Most of the young hasidim living in a country in a constant state of alert were exempted from military service because they were talmudic students, as were all young hasidic women. Moreover, for the last 50 years of independence, the religious parties have participated hasidim in virtually all Israel governments on the Right and the Left, which has enabled the *haridim*, including the hasidim, to impose many of their demands for subsidies, civil service jobs, housing, and social services, etc.

Insufficient formal education and very high birth rates in many families doubtless lead to poverty, especially in Mea Shearim, but also in Bnei Brak and Williamsburg. Despite this, however, even the children of the poorest hasidim can go to their own schools and talmudic academies, and receive health care thanks to official subsidies, and to the often considerable wealth of some other Hasidic communities. These communities have very solid traditions of patronage and charity. Intense religious life, frequent in-marrying, an immediately identifiable appearance, the use of Hebrew and Yiddish in the main, professions as religious civil servants, small shop owners and artisans, and their extremely active community life all make these hasidim the closest heirs of a traditional lifestyle of late Eastern European feudal society. Far more than other sectors of Jewish life, they maintain a differential mode of being, a specific religious and cultural identity, the parameters of an ethnic identity. This hard core of Jewishness — to use the still appropriate term coined by Albert Memmi — can no longer be separated from Jewishness as a whole. Even if the contradictions and conflicts between the hasidim and other sectors of the Jewish world, particularly in Israel, are occasionally very virulent, the interactive processes are no less real. In Israel, therefore, apart from such isolationist communities as Mea Shearim, the hasidim are active in the political life of the country through the religious parties, always negotiating on this or that issue

with the other political parties, contributing through different alliances to the forging and undoing of successive governments. We have described the revivalist ardor of the Lubavitch, one element of the ideology of identity among influential American Jewish organizations. In Antwerp, by their extreme observance, the hasidim have certainly helped other religious communities to become more hardline. Thus, despite their exoticism, and their relative withdrawal from the world, the hasidim constitute a hard core within the most 'Jewish' sectors of the Jewish world.

Notes

1. Whereas it remain important, particularly in the small villages in Poland. See Celia Heller, *On the Edge of Destruction. Jews of Poland Between the Two World Wars*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1977, p. 144.
2. For my description of the Hasidim of Antwerp in 1966, see my 'Hasidim de notre temps', *Les Nouveaux Cahiers*, 7, Fall 1966, pp. 56-62. See also Arnold Mandel, *La Vie quotidienne des Juifs hassidiques du XVIIIe siècle à nos jours*, Paris, Hachette, 1974, chapter VI, 'À Anvers, un jour de semaine', pp. 147-173.
3. Antwerp had already become an important Jewish center, of several thousand Between the two world wars; see Jacques Gutwirth, 'Le judaïsme anversois aujourd'hui', *Revue des études juives*, CXXV, 4, 1966, pp. 365-384.
4. See Jacques Gutwirth, *Vie juive traditionnelle. Ethnologie d'une communauté hassidique*, Paris, Minuit, 1970.
5. No exact demographic data exist on the Jews of Antwerp. Belgian censuses do not consider religion and to my knowledge, no Jewish institution has ever made a demographic study on this issue.
6. Most dynasties take their names from the Yiddish names of the Eastern European cities that were home to the first rebbes of the different movements.
7. See Jerome Mintz, *Hasidic People. A Place in the New World*, Cambridge, London, Harvard University Press, 1992, p. 33. This excellent scholar of American Hasidim has, unfortunately, recently died.
8. See Janet S. Belcove-Shalin, 'Home in Exile: Hasidim in the New World' in Janet S. Belcove-Shalin (ed.), *New World Hasidim. Ethnographic Studies of Hasidic Jews in America*, Albany, State University of New York Press, 1995, pp. 216, 232.
9. The Bobover rebbe died on August 2, 2000 at 92 years of age. Approximately 100,000 people attended his funeral service in New York.
10. On the Crown Heights Lubavitch, see. J.

Mintz, *op. cit.*, pp. 139-153 and Shlomo Brodowicz, *L'Âme d'Israël. Les origines, la vie et l'œuvre de Menahem M. Schneerson, rabbi de Lubavitch,* Paris, Rocher, 1998, pp. 249-256.

11. In Los Angeles for example (see Neil C. Sandberg, *Jewish Life in Los Angeles*, Lanham (MD), New York, London, University Press of America, 1986, p. 41), and elsewhere.
12. See Julien Bauer, *Les Juifs hassidiques*, Paris, PUF, 'Que sais-je?', 1994, p.106; Ilan Greilsammer, *Israël, les hommes en noir. Essai sur les partis ultra-orthodoxes*, Paris, Presses de la Fondation nationale des sciences politiques, 1991, pp. 115, 233-235; J. Mintz, *op. cit.*, pp. 357-358. A rebbe living in New York, and who had never set foot in Israel, profoundly affected Israeli politics.
13. Surprisingly enough, this messianic campaign elicited few reactions and little criticism in the Jewish communities are not directly concerned by religious issues. See David Landau, *Piety and Power. The World of Jewish Fundamentalists*, New York, Hill & Wang, 1993, pp. 78-82; J. Bauer, *op. cit.*, p. 95.
14. Professional activities among the Lubavitch are relatively varied because the proselytized *baalei-tshouve*, 'masters of repentance', come from different backgrounds Some of them have gone so far as to earn Ph.D.s.
15. A 1982 estimation in Harry Rabinowicz, *Hasidism and the State of Israel*, Rutherford, Farleigh Dickinson University Press/London, Associated University Press, 1982 p. 271; given the remarkable demographic expansion among the hasidim, they have obviously increased in number.
16. I. Greilsammer, *op. cit.*, p. 223. This work by a political scientist is also a good introduction to different socio-cultural aspects of Israeli Hasidism.
17. D. Landau, *op.cit.*, p. 39.
18. Between 5000-8 000 families. See Tamar El-Or, *Educated and Ignorant. Ultraorthodox Jewish Women and Their World*, Boulder, London, Lynne Riemer Publishers, 1994, pp. 15-16.
19. Cf. Joseph Dan, 'Hasidism: the Third Century' in Ada Rapoport-Albert (ed.), *Hasidism Reappraised*, London, The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 1997, pp. 421-422 ; and Marc-Alain Ouaknin, *Ouvertures hassidiques*, Paris, Jacques Grancher, 1990, p. 92.
20. The rebbe's attitude towards non-Hasidic Jews resembles that of American evangelists who also refuse the most fundamentalist dogmatism and withdrawal and are active proselytizers. Billy Graham and Menahem Mendel Schneerson had many points in common.
21. Half of the approximately 4500 Lubavitch Hasidim families in Israel have 'returned' to religion (cf. I. Greilsammer, *op.cit.*, p. 215).
22. According to one of the major authorities of the Lubavitch movement, the 1350 Lubavitch institutions receive more than $100,000,000 annually, mainly from non-orthodox Jews. (cf. Michael Specter, 'The Oracle of Crown Heights', *The New York Times,* 15 March 1992, section 6, p. 35).

The Gaon of Vilna: History and Legende

Jean Baumgarten ■

As of the end of the 18th century, the Jewish representation of holiness and of holy persons has tended to diversify and to become more complex. Before the 'exit from the ghetto' the circle of illustrious great men was limited to a number of emblematic figures who were essentially just men, wise men, learned men, and martyrs. Modernity and the slow changes in traditional Jewish society led to a diversification of experience and beliefs: communities exploded into many contradictory religious currents, movements, and policies. Each of the communities generated new figures of just men, saints, and historical heroes, as if the process of making 'great figures' remained a constant and a vital force of modern culture. These unusual figures were the privileged vectors of Jewish identity, and sources for messianic hopes and the incarnations of the Jewish struggle for recognition: they crystallize dreams, spiritual energy and the struggles of the Jewish masses. The protagonists of the many books of legends created a new gallery of exceptional individuals who continued and occasionally replaced the circle of past glories.

■

Holiness and Representation

The modern era also meant the progressive removal of the taboo concerning visual representation.[1] In parallel with the story, the image or icon became a means of sanctifying or remembering famous characters or important historical events, past and present. The growing numbers of this type of portrait can be understood as part the strategies used as Jews entered modern society to legitimize, affirm, and build a Jewish identity. Printing promoted cultural change. Central and Eastern Europe were flooded with small inexpensive books, popular imagery, printed sheets or posters representing famous rabbis, political leaders, philanthropists or great figures of Jewish history, including medieval rabbis, Maimonides, the leaders of Hasidism or *metnaggedim*, including the Gaon of Vilna.[2] The representation of religious figures is part of the popularization and praise of the masters in the same way as the legendary tales. The Ballei Shemot or miracle makers appeared in a whole series of pious images. Of course we think of the imaginary representations of the Baal Shem Tov, but also of the portraits of other thaumaturgies such as Sekel Isaac Loeb Wormser.[3] These images were distributed in Jewish foyers throughout Central and Eastern Europe, and in addition to popularizing the important figures of Judaism, they also served as talismans or amulets with curative, protective, and prophylactic properties. But it was above all in hasidism that the cult of images, together with the dissemination of legends and hagiographic stories about the *tsaddikim*, played a major role in popular religiosity. We are thinking especially of the group portraits that were generally hung in the homes of hasidim or in the Sukkoth cabin.[4] These images included representations of different periods and places. There were medieval wise men such as the Rashi or Maimonides, cabalists like Isaac Luria, 19th century *tsaddikim* and contemporary rebbes, to demonstrate the continuity between generations of guardians of the Torah and between Hasidism and rabbinical Judaism.[5] Setting these masters within a prestigious lineage going back to the talmudic or medieval period cast an aura, a political legitimacy, and a prestige on rebbes whose authority was still occasionally contested.

Sabbathai Tsevi, whose messianic personality and romanesque life spawned many legends was probably the first individual to constitute a break in the gallery of holy figures such as it was usually presented in classical Jewish hagiography.[6] These stories were distributed in a great variety of texts — letters, memoires, visions, dreams, poems and homiletic discourses, all of which contributed to the birth of the myth of the false messiah and of his prophet Nathan of Gaza. This

abundant literature included the *Moraot Sabbathi Tsevi* and the *Sippurei Halomot*, which went through 16 editions until the 19th century, and *Eyn shoyn nay lid fun meshia*, the Yiddish poem published in Amsterdam in 1666 by Yaakob Tausk, describing the new coming of Sabbathai Tsevi in Amsterdam and the collective folly that took hold of the European communities.[7] Hayyim Joseph David Azzulai, the Hida, is another telling example, for whom a collection of praise, *Shivhei ha Hida* was written.[8] There is also Moses Sofer or Hatam Sofer, one of the most fervent opponents of the Reform movement,[9] and Israel Salanter and the Musarnikes, who became a preeminent figure of European Judaism.[10]

As of the end of the 19th century, the subjects of popular representations and imaginary tales included most of the major figures of the major religious or political currents. There were also intellectual, social or political figures like Moses Mendelssohn, Sir Moses Montefiore, Captain Dreyfus, and later, Theodor Herzl who, each in his own way, became the object of many pious images likening them to secular saints. Secularization gave rise to new types of figures of secular just men who had several points in common with the wise men of the past: they were metamorphosed into the heroes of cycles of legend traditions or of a rich popular imagery.

Tales and Conflicts: *Hasidim* and *Mitnaggedim*

Of the many religious currents and historical events that marked the life of the communities in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, the opposition between hasidim and *mitnaggedim* remains one of the major theo-political fractures.[11] This religious war was violent, full of anathema and fury, and gave rise to many stories including histories, anecdotes, and souvenirs that represent so many testimonies to this confrontation. The opposition between these two dimensions of modern Judaism could not help but give rise to stories and symbolic representations. Many adventures were recounted using fictions that perpetuated the high points of the tumultuous conflict that shook the Jewish communities of Europe while at the same time prefiguring the wrenching of contemporary Judaism. Just as the hasidim created a vast hagiographic tradition,[12] the mittnaggedim also immortalized the life and deeds of their leaders in cycles of hagiographic tales. As the movement emerged, traditions of legends grew up around the Gaon of Vilna, whose GR"A acronym stood for HaGaon Rabbi Eliyahi, one of the greatest religious and determining figures of modern Judaism.[13] He shaped the course of Jewish religious life

in Eastern Europe. He became a holy hero during his own lifetime who was represented in popular art, images, imaginary portraits,[14] a whole range of miraculous tales like those in the work of Asher ha-Cohen[15] or in H. Lunsky's anthology, *Di legendes vegn Vilner Goen*.[16] The author of this article[17] was educated in an orthodox milieu and helped S. An-Sky to organize the Jewish ethnographic voyage. In preparation, he assembled thousands of documents, archives, objects, books, and in particular, legends concerning Jewish life and the great popular figures of Judaism, including the Gaon of Vilna. The GR"A's life and extraordinary intellectual capacity, specific practices,[18] and exceptional personality made him a quasi-holy figure during his own lifetime, and he dominated late 18th century Ashkenazi Judaism. Even today, he counts along with Rashi, Maimonides and the Baal Shem Tov among the few geniuses of Jewish intellectual history who, beyond their work as commentators or exegetes, exists in many hagiographic traditions. These legends enable us juxtapose the data and historical facts concerning the life and work of the GR"A[19] with the history of mentalities, the creation of a collection of legends and the imaginary extrapolations, all of which provide a more complex, complete image of the Gaon of Vilna.

These texts are also interesting because they clarify the concordance between the narrative models used to create the legends and the structure of the talmudic aggadot, midrash legends and Hasidic tales. Proof that the themes and patterns of Jewish tales were reused in many contexts to describe many imaginary figures as different as the Baal Shem Tov and the GR"A. This formal resemblance attests to the continuous transmission of narrative stereotypes and of the potency of models specific to the Jewish hagiographic tradition. These correspondences teach us many things about how the mythical representations of the great figures of Judaism were created or constructed often outside the historical context in which they took shape. The existence of a cycle of legends about the Gaon of Vilna is proof that the hagiographic genre, limited until then to certain models, became receptive to new personalities from different currents. The process of making heroes and creating holy figures diversified and moved towards other types of characters representing the most divergent currents in Judaism. One of the characteristic aspects of modern Jewish culture, therefore, remains the multiplication, diversification, and uninterrupted emergence of holy figures, wise men, and just men.

The Legends of the Gaon of Vilna

In the Shivhei ha-GR"A[20] there is an interesting transference of hagiographic models: the collections focus on one of the most tenacious, virulent enemies of hasidism, but are based on narrative patterns copied from those of hasidic literature. These types of stories go back to an already ancient tradition, and the hasidic tale is set within the context of aggadic tales or medieval legends like those based on such Rheinish hasidic leaders as Shmuel and Yehudah He-Hasid.[21] These hasidic tales are original in that the doctrine of the Besh»t and his disciples provide new themes, particularly concerning the birth of the movement and the slow creation of circles of the BeSh't's disciples who disseminate his teaching. For example, there is the central role of the tsaddik[22] in the life of the hasidim, and in the messianic process, which plays a central role in the narratives. The themes specific to Hasidic thinking — theurigical practices, prayer, the relationship between the earthly and the divine worlds — feed the religious imagination of the BeSH't's followers and provide so much material for countless tales that the narrative structures become virtually interchangeable. The same themes are used from tale and tale and only the names of places, hasidic courts, or rebbes change. Specifically hasidic narrative forms reappear in radically different religious contexts in only slightly modified ways, such as in the *Shivehei ha-Gr"A*.

Lunsky's anthology has a classical chronological structure from the Gaon's birth to his death, praising his exceptional merits and piety. It exalts his greatness, emphasizes his spiritual combat, his asceticism, emphasizes his intellectual ability and his role as the uncontested religious leader of the Ashkenaz world. The anthology adopts a biographical division frequently used in hagiographic booklets. The legends first discus his childhood and family followed by a period of seclusion and apprenticeship that correspond to a sort of spiritual incubation and slow unfolding of his religious genius. This period is crowned by his wandering from one community to another, for a period of five years that represented that transition between his early years and the public's growing recognition. His holiness and his expertise in religious and community affairs blossomed upon his return to Vilna. Next came a period of public revelation and the realization of an exceptional destiny making him one of the major figures of Judaism along with Maimonides and the Baal Shem Tov, among others. Most biographies of holy figures in the Jewish legend books — Isaac Luria and the Kabalists of Safed,[23] the life of BeSh't[24] and the traditional tales about Rabbi Nahman of Bratslav[25] — are struc-

turally similar. They all describe the same spiritual development and mystical ascension forged during a period of solitude and seclusion followed by revelation and social recognition.

The first oral tradition concerns the the Gaon's miraculous birth. The work explains that his cradle stood in the *bimah* of the (*Goens kloyz*) in exactly the spot where the Gaon prayed during his entire life. This quasi-holy place has become a pilgrimage site for many of his disciplines. Sketches and photographs of this hall of worship were disseminated and sold abundantly and remain part of the ongoing cult of veneration and sacralization of the Gaon. The correspondence between the site of the cradle and the *bimah* set the life of the Gaon under the sign of saintliness and of divine election. His existence will be set in the exclusive service of the defense of the Jewish religion, of the battle for a stronger faith and Judaism.

The Shivhei ha-GR"A emphasize the Gaon's prestigious ancestors. He descended from a line of rabbis. His father, reb Solomon Zalmuan, was a very poor scholar who devoted his life to study. His grandfather, Moshe ben Haftali Hirsh Rivkes, known as the pious, wrote an important commentary of the *Shulhan Arukh*, the *Beer haGolah*. In 1655, after the Shmielnick massacres and during the Russian Polish war, he took refuge in Amsterdam. According to the legend, he walked to the Dutch capital with only a walking stick, his talit, his tefilin and a calendar so that he could know the hours and days of the Sabbath and of the holidays. He later returned to Vilna, where he died. The inscription on his tomb, located near that of the Gaon, reads 'Here lies an honest, just man, R. Solomon Zalman.' An interesting legend concerns his very pious, honest mother, Troyne, from the Lithuanian village of Selets. One day, while pregnant, she took a narrow alleyway in the Jewish section of Vilna. Polish soldiers riding full speed nearly ran her down and killed her but she pressed her stomach against a wall to save her baby while reciting the Shema Israel. A miracle occurred at that moment. The wall collapsed, creating a niche that enabled the mother of the Gaon to take refuge and protect her child. Both were barely saved from death.[26] The story explains that the place is now considered a holy site, the object of pilgrimages and of worship. It is in fact a variation of the story concerning Rashi and his mother. A legend describes how both were saved in Worms thanks to a miracle that is similar in every detail to this one.[27] The legend obviously circulated in medieval Germany and 18th century Poland. Like many other similar tales, it bears witness to the hero's holy nature and indicates that his life was placed under direct divine protection. In addition to prefiguring the exceptional destiny of the Gaon, this miraculous escape lends him a supernatural aura, proves his election and his exceptional character. The following inscription is written on the tomb of the Gaon's mother which is

located near that of her son, who died at age 90: 'The happy mother of many sons.'[28] An allusion to the happiness of this pious woman who gave birth to such a powerful genius.

The legends emphasize the Gaon's health, his unusual vitality, precociousness, erudition and exceptional intelligence, a sort of Wunderkind. At age of six and a half, he delivered a sermon in the great synagogue of Vilna. During the third Sabbath meal, he was invited to repeat the sermon whose clarity and depth impressed all the educated men. During his visit to Vilna, Abraham Katzenellenbogen, the rabbi of Brest-Litovsk, taken by the Gaon's rabbinical knowledge, sent him to study with Moshe Margaliot, the author of the commentary *Penei Moshe,* in Kaidany, in the province of Kovno,. Many legends recall his exceptional talent for learning. Having vowed to study two difficult Talmudic treatises, the Zevahim and the *Menahot,* in a very brief period of time, he isolated himself in a bedroom and read more than 50 pages every two hours. In slightly less than a night, he had read both Talmudic books. His teacher predicted that this young child would illuminate the world by his knowledge and his wisdom. At eight years of age, he impressed the venerable scholars of Vilna by commenting the *Mishneh Torah* of Maimonidies. Despite his youth, the Gaon saved the old men who had been unable to explain the delicate question of the *kiddush hahodesh,*[29] or the movement of the stars and planets that determined the calendar, because of his profound interest in astronomy.[30] He also studied the theoretical and practical Kabbalah so well that at age 13, he began to create a golem and only stopped because of the potential of disrupting God's forces.

Wisdom, Study, and Piety

Many tales both real and legendary insist on the Gaon's exceptional ability to concentrate, the depth of his knowledge, and his taste for the asceticism, the mortification, and the solitude required for studying. Like many talmudic, hasidic and medieval tales, these tales paint a portrait of an exceptional but perfectly modest erudite whose grandeur stems from his ability to concentrate, to endlessly comment texts, and to remove himself from the world, to reject earthly frivolities and devote himself to his sole concern: God. What emerges from these hagiographic legends is the image of a Jewish saint or hermit, entirely conscious of human suffering, and therefore full of goodness and compassion for others, especially for the poor. In his live an ascetic devotion so strong that he would withdraw from the

world to study alongside a very strong sense of earthly injustice. These legends closely resemble those of other important saintly figures of Judaism, including Rabbi Akiva and Rabbi Yehudah he-Hasid.[31] These legendary representations describe saintly heroes specific to a Jewish tradition linking knowledge, study, and intense piety while making no concession to earthly pleasures.[32] The Gaon is presented as a wise man possessed by the passion of study. Alone in a small cabin deep in the forest,[33] he spends his days and nights studying holy texts. By day, he closes the curtains and shutters so as not to be disturbed, and by night, he studies by candlelight hardly eating. He sleeps for two hours each day but never for more than half an hour at a time. In winter, in an unheated room with his feet soaking in frozen water so as to remain awake, he leads a reclusive life focused on study, without respite.[34] One tradition recounts that he managed to read the entire Talmud in a month. This asceticism gave rise to many legends about his virtually inhuman capacity for intellectual concentration, and his ability to be limitlessly absorbed in the holy texts. The Gaon's prolixity and the breadth of his knowledge, ranging from holy matters including the Talmud and the Kabbalah[35] to secular sciences, is also a subject of astonishment and admiration that is part of his image as a Jewish genius like Rashi and Maimonides. The tales emphasize the impressive number of texts written by the GR"A, including countless treatises on the Bible, the Talmud, the Kabbalah[36], the Zohar, mathematics[37], and grammar. In addition her wrote many implacably precise and rigorous scholia, glosses, notes and corrections in the works that he read. The disparity between his immense oeuvre and his refusal to have his works printed during his lifetime contributed to the legend of the GR"A.[38] What emerges from these extreme and radical character traits is the image of an exceptional man whose intellectual genius equals his modesty and taste for reclusion and secrecy. In this, he resembles the great sages of the academics of the Talmud period and the hidden just men of the mystical and hasidic tradition, many of whom are represented in Jewish hagiographic literature. H. Lunsky says, 'He was the Wiseman who was superior to the prophet[39]' (*hakham adif mi-navi*[40]). At age 20, as was the custom among young yeshiva students, the Gaon of Vilna spent 5 years travelling from community to community to meet the erudite of his period and to continue his study.[41] These *holekhei hagolah*, or walkers of exile, were also to repent and redeem their sinful generation in a messianic sense. His reputation quickly spread throughout Eastern Europe. One interesting episode tells of his visit to Berlin where he was invited by the community *parnas*, Rabbi Yaakov Tsvi. The Rabbi had also invited a non-Jew to his home, a professor and president of different academies and learned societies. After the Gaon had brilliantly answered questions on astronomy, the professor burst out, 'Your guest is not a man, but an angel.' This type of symbolic episode belongs to the legend of the Gaon's genius as a connoisseur and scientific expert. These tales have a basis in truth, of course, since the Gaon's interest in mathematics is well know — he

favored the Hebraic translation of Euclid — along with his interest in medicine, music, astronomy and geography.[42]

However, popular imagination took hold of these facts to create a whole set of fabulous tales designed to exalt his grandeur and genius. In 1745, at the age of 25, the Gaon returned to Vilna: a moment marking a decisive phase in his public revelation. Associated legends also circulated about his contemporaries and close disciples. According to the legend, for example, it was Sha'agat Arieh[43] who was responsible for naming the Gaon GR"A. Aged 70, this Rabbi Arieh Leib left to travel the roads of Europe by foot, going from community to community. He arrived in Vilna, met the Gaon, and tested his knowledge. Each answer elicited the enthusiastic admiration of the Sha'agat Arieh, one of the greatest rabbinical authorities of the period. Upon leaving the home of the Gaon, Rabbi Arieh Leib is said to have exclaimed: 'A genius, a genius, a genius!' The legends mention two of his important students, Hayyim of Volozhyn[44], the founder of the Ets Hayyim yeshivah, and Rabbi Saadia ben Nathan Neta of Vilna, who founded a yeshivah in Eretz Israel named for his teacher Midrash Eliyanhi. The Gaon's celebrity in Europe became so great that in 1756, Jonathan Eybeschutz[45] looked to him to resolve his argument with Jacob Emden about amulets, and the accusation against him of sabbateanism. Another pious image running through these tales presents the Gaon as the perfect hasid, profoundly simple, pious, compassionate, and loving towards others.[46] Therefore, despite his great superiority to most of the Vilna authorities in Talmudic and particularly halakhic knowledge, he never accepted the title or decision-making role of rabbi. Other tales describe his compassion for poor Jews. Some legends recount how generous he was in giving money to free prisoners, in helping those in need for marrying poor young girls. This propensity to simplicity led him to seek silence, to remain uninvolved in public affairs that he usually considered ridiculous, to refuse any hasty signs of affection, especially from his close family, to suppress his feelings and maintain his distance from all vanities and frivolousness. These characteristics provided the basis for tales that exalted his compassion and radical asceticism.

The Gaon of Vilna and the Struggle Against Hasidism

Many legends concern the major late 18th century struggle in Ashkenaz communities between the mitnaggedim and the hasidim. The polemical confrontation fractured the Ashkenz world of Eastern Europe, but beyond this, this historical

antagonism was propitious for creating a rich rabbinical folklore,[47] by raising the stakes with its implied simplifying duality. The tales still express the doctrinal conflict but magnified by social disruption. The narrative rhetoric remains propitious for a very contrasted, visual picture of divergences in thinking, and for radicalizing doctrinal positions concerning, among other things, the unity and fragmentation of Jews, the place of study, the fervor of religious life, or the secular temptations of Jews, proven by Sabbateanism and francium. In addition, there is also a humorous dimension of mockery, derision and disparagement. The year 1772, when the Gaon launched the *herem* against hasidism,[48] and 1780, when Yaaqov Yosef of Polonoye published his *Toledot Yaaqov Yosef* (later burned[49]) are, from this point of view, symbolic moments that helped to crystallize narratives and tales. In the same way, there was Shneur Zalman of Liady's attempt to convince his adversaries that hasidism did not endanger the foundations of the Jewish faith. But the GR"A refused to meet him and the attempted reconciliation failed. This antagonism also touched on religious practices.[50] The Gaon considered that the essential issue was to respect the *mitsvot* scrupulously and literally and to study and meditate on the Torah silently day and night, with concentration, perseverance, and assiduity.[51] By contrast, the hasidim preferred to study the Torah enthusiastically (*Hitlahavut*), by chanting the psalms, singing, and even dancing their praise of God. Study in itself was as essential as the pure intention (*kavvanah*) and fervor with which it was undertaken.[52] One criticism levied against the hasidim concerned their emphasis on intense prayer,[53] internal connection with God (*devequt*) through the soul's encounter with higher worlds, that is, an effusive and even holy emotionalism expressed by tears or joy. This was to such a degree that their enemies often stigmatized the hasidim as ignorant men who gave too much importance to prayer and to the outward signs of devotion, by contrast to the depth and intellectual interiority of traditional rabbinical study. The major point of discord concerned the study of the Torah as its own goal (*Torah lishmah*), unmotivated by such ulterior motives as repentance. The Gaon considered it important, above all, to study the Torah for the good of the Torah or for the Torah itself. The hasidim were criticized for making study a devotional exercise for the good of God or to become closer to the holy world. It was appropriate to concentrate more on the texts themselves than on God, which was the hasidic ideal of *devequt*. Other differences concerned the authority of the *tsaddiq*, the use of a special knife for ritual slaying, and the adopting of ritual Lurianic prayers, all of which the rabbis considered as threats. Legends continued to be a propitious imaginary site for representing these divergent interpretations and practices, setting the major doctrinal principals into narrative form as attest the tales of the *Shivhei haBeSh't*, which beyond their legendary character, served to spread the notions of nascent hasidism. The tales also mention the Gaon's attempt to go to Eretz Israel.[54] This trip never took place for, according to the legend, the Gaon of Vilna was an offshoot of Moses who could therefore

never enter the promised land. What remains of this trip is the astonishing letter, a sort of spiritual testament, that the Gaon of Vilna sent to his wife while en route, from Konigsberg[55] where he decided to renounce his trip and turned back. The missive vibrates with rigor and compassion, and was incorporated into the legends as the revelatory model of the Gaon's spiritual greatness and high-mindedness. A short excerpt reveals his goodness and extreme attention to others. 'I beg you not to torture yourself about my trip to the Land of Israel (may it be rebuilt and reestablished). You promised me that you would not. And why should you be anxious. Many people travel for many years in search of money, leaving wife and children behind them. They are also wanderers who have nothing. Whereas I, may God be praised, am on my way to the Holy Land that everyone wants to see. This is the country that all the people of Israel want to see, which is also the wish of the Holy Praised be He. All of those on high and those here below are inhabited by this wish. I am travelling in peace, may God be praised, even though you know that I have left my children — my heart cries for them — my beloved books, and the glorious splendor of my home[56]: I have become like a stranger in another land.'

What remains in the tales of the complex quarrels between the hasidim and *mitnaggedim* and of the documents on the GR"A's trip to Eretz Israel are a merely simplified, condensed and occasionally skeletal sketch. We do find the same kind of transformation into legend that we observed with respect to Rashi, Maimonides, Yehudah he-Hasid and the Baal Shem Tov. Only fragmentary, embellished echoes remain in the tales of the important figures of Jewish history and religious thought, whose impact was so important on the Jewish masses. However they do help to reconstruct the development of collective memory and the tale-making. The transition from religious doctrine or philosophical thought to narrative or legend clearly shows hagiographic crystallization and sanctification at work. Only a few exceptional beings have crossed the threshold from historical figures to heroes of legend. The case of the Gaon of Vilna is interesting in that it bears witness to the way in which holy imagery and the popular figure of a spiritual leader are constructed, and how an emblematic hero is made.

Heinrich Graetz and Writing Jewish History

Most of the stories about the GR"A were so influential that they have affected even modern Jewish historiography. Heinrich Graetz' *History of the Jewish People*,[57] for example, includes many of the images created around the Gaon myth.

Referring to the battle among the hasidim Graetz explains, 'The first violent struggle against them was launched by a man whose influence was blessed during his life and after his death and who, in a more favorable context, could have done far more for the moral progress of other Jews, like Moses Mendelssohn. Lithuanian Jews still speak with tremendous reverence and love of the Elia Vilna, whose title was Gaon. He was a rare exception among the mass of Polish Jews. His character was pure, and he never put his considerable talents to pernicious use. It suffices to recall that despite his learning and profound Talmudic knowledge, he refused the position of rabbi, whereas most of the learned men of Poland who desired these jobs got them through artificial means. Despite his prodigious writings in many areas of Jewish literature, he never allowed his work to be published during his lifetime. This again contrasts starkly with the practices of his close disciples who, in order to make a name for themselves and to see their ideas in print, rarely waited for their ink to dry. By his disinterest, Elia Vilna incarnated the Talmudic ideal of a Jewish teacher who 'should use the law neither as a crown to crown himself nor as a shovel to dig.' Despite his superior knowledge and complete, unanimous recognition, he consciously and modestly avoided self-promotion. The gratification of his research and his quest for knowledge entirely sufficed. His intellectual method corresponded to the unaffected simplicity of his personality and his life. He encouraged his disciples and his friends to study the secular sciences and openly expressed his conviction that Judaism would greatly benefit from this type of study. Only his scrupulous piety, perfect behavior, generosity, and renunciation of every position or honorary post saved him from being accused of heresy, to which his interest in extra-talmudic branches of knowledge may have left him open.

Graetz' historical method is certainly based on an inventory of Jewish suffering and on the tableau of the great figures of Judaism, which can explain the composition of this portrait. The excerpt nonetheless recalls how much 19th century Jewish historiography often found its material in the legends about the emblematic figures of modern history. Historical facts, apologetic discourses and hagiographic tales intertwine in a single composition. The positivist historiographer tries to reconstruct the past on the basis of reliable documents and tangible proof, privileging the document, in particular. In parallel, anything resembling fiction or legend is devalued, as if its heuristic value were lesser or even non-existent. There is a line of demarcation between what constitutes historical truth and what belongs to the phantasmagoric realm of legend. Written sources, including archives and documents from the period, become the only sources that the historian has a right to use in order to write the history of great men. The magic tales, stories, dreams, and prophecies of rabbis, learned men, and just men are considered to be 'rabbinical nonsense and humbug (*nugae rabbinorum*), which the historian need not

take into account.[58] We realize that Jewish history of the late 19th and early 20th century is still, in fact, often penetrated with mythic tales and constructed partly from the legends and an imaginary folklore. These narrative traditions of great Jewish heroes have clearly retained their symbolic and social effectiveness. They have certain idenficiatory qualities harboring messianic energies, and served as stimuli at a time when the new values of modern Jewish society were being invented.

The two antithetical figures of the Baal Shem Tov and the Gaon of Vilna therefore produced legends and praise with divergent goals. The tales of the Baal Shem Tov emphasized his propensity to mysticism, to the devotional practices inspired by the Kabbalah and his inclination to express feelings and religious fervor during religious services. By contrast, the narrative traditions retain an image of the Gaon as a reserved ascetic, silently concentrating on knowing God and on prayer; on making no concession to the events or futilities of earthly life, to emotions or to affective outpourings. This extreme, radical asceticism borders on misanthropy but is tempered by his immense love and limitless compassion for the Jewish people, especially for the most humble. Beyond their doctrinal differences of these two portraits, what we should bear in mind, is the similarity in writings about holiness, and the convergence of the itineraries of any exemplary life, thematic repetitions, and an omnipresence of discursive matrixes used to construct the stories. These models will serve to create representations of famous great men with often contrasting destinies. The constant metamorphoses of the legends, their permanent renaissance at different and distant periods of time, recall the importance of the narration in creating and consolidating the Jewish tradition. The tales have clearly helped Jews to struggle, live and hope throughout their history.

NOTES

1. Richard Cohen, *Jewish Icons, Art and Society in Modern Europe*, Berkeley, 1998.
2. Representations of rabbis and dignitaries begin to appear in the 16th century in Italy and in the 17th century in Amsterdam and London. See R. Cohen, 'Ha-Rav ke-iqonin', *Zion*, 58, 1993, pp. 407-452.
3. S. I. L. Wormser (1748-1847). His magic powers and knowledge of cabalah made him famous in Germany as the Baal Shem of Michelstadt. He wrote amulets, healed people, particularly mad people, and provided advice about daily life.
4. Today Meah Shearim, in Bnei Braq, Jerusalem, Brooklyn, Williamsburg, Crown Heights, Borough Park and Antwerp, among others, sell photos and portraits of rebbes and tsaddiqim to be hung in homes. Other boutiques specialize in pictures of miraculous Sephardic rabbis, like Baba Salé.
5. The spread of photography helped to distribute photos of the great hasidic rebbes quite widely, and these were given or sold to their disciples. Today, for example, photos of the Lubavitch rebbe are widely distributed in the world's ultra-orthodox communities. Other hasidic courts, such as the Guerer, make it less of a practice, and even forbid the sales of images of rebbes.
6. Z. Gries, 'Hagdarat sifrut hashevahim hashabbeta'it', Mehqarei Yerushalaim bamahshevet Israel (forthcoming).
7. Jean Baumgarten, 'Textes mystiques en langue yiddish (XVIIe – XVIIIe siècles)', *Kabbala*, 2, 1997, pp. 65-103.
8. At the end of his bibliographical *Shem hagedolim*, there is a text entitled *Shivhei haHida*. The first of the two texts, *Shema tov* (in the *Ma'agal tov* edition, Leghorn, 1877) and the *Shivhei haHid'a* which follows in the same edition. Hayyim Yosef David Azulai was one of the first Hebraic authors to collect Jewish folklore legends and stories, in his *Zikron Ma'asiot ve-nissim*.
9. Y. Nahshuni, *Rabbenu Moshe Sofer*, Jerusalem, 1981.
10. D. Katz, *Tenu'at hamussar*, 5 vols., Tel-Aviv, 1967.
11. M. Wilenski, *Hassidim u-mitnaggedim*, Jerusalem, 1970.
12. Martin Buber, *Récits hassidiques*, Paris, 1963.
13. Louis Ginzberg, *The Gaon*, Rabbi Elijah, Philadelphia, 1920.
14. R. Schnold, 'Elijah's Face: The Portrait of the Vilna Gaon in Fold Art,' *The Gaon of Vilna, The Man and His Legacy*, Tel Aviv, 1998 (catalogue of the Tel Aviv Diaspora Museum)
15. Asher ha-Cohen, Keter Rosh, *Siddur Ishei Israel*, Tel-Aviv, 1968, pp. 521-544. See also collected tales, Joshua Heschel Levine, *Aliyot Eliyahu*, Vilna, 1855.
16. H. Lunsky Legendes vegn Vilner Goen, Vilna, 1924. The title page says: 'geklibn fun mentshn un sforim', 'collected from people and books.' Concerning H. Lunsky, see the *Leksikon fun der nayer yidisher literatur*, vol. 5, New York, 1963, col. 14-6 and Z. Reizen, *Leksikon fun der yidisher literatur, prese un filologye*, Vilna, 1927, vol 2. See also, *Seyfer shifhe meha-Goen mi-Vilne: vunderlekhe mayses fun vilner goen*, Warsaw, 1907.
17. He also wrote, *Geoynim un gdoylim fun noentn over*, Vilna, 1931, collected tales of aggadot concerning wise men and rabbis. Lunsky participated in the bicentenary of the birth of the GR"A in Vilna.
18. See the *Ma'aseh Rav* (Zolkiew, 1808, Vilna, 1832), Issachar Ber de Vilna compiles the customs and practices of the GR"A.
19. For the life and work of the Gaon of Vilna, see *Sefer ha-GR"A*, edited by Rav I. L. Hacohen Maimon, Jerusalem, 2 vols., 1953. See especially chapter 1, 'Toledot ha-GR"A', pp.1-200. S. Schechter, *Studies in Judaism*, vol I, Philadelphia, 1915, pp. 73-98.
20. The generic term shivhei, meaning praise or celebration, designates the books of hagiographic Jewish legends.
21. *Mayse bukh* (Basel, 1602) includes a cycle of legends about the Ashenazim hasidic masters.
22. Y. Jakobson, *La Pensée hassidique*, Paris, 1989, pp. 161-178.
23. J. Baumgarten, *op. cit.*, 1997, pp. 65-103.
24. *Shivhei haBesht*, edited by A. Rubinstein, Jerusalem, 1991.
25. T. Alexandre, 'Qaddosh ve-hakham: Ha-Ari veha-Rambam be-sippurei'am', *Jerusalem Studies in Hebrew Literature*, 13, 1992, pp. 29-64.
26. H. Lunsky, op. cit., pp. 3-4.
27. This tale is in the *Shalshelet hakabbalah*, in the cycle of legendary traditions of the Rashi.
28. Ps. 113, 9.
30. The Gaon of Vilna was one of the first rabbis to prefer knowledge of the hard sciences: natural science, grammar, algebra, geometry, and mathematics. He wrote treatises primarily concerning these disciplines. He is often considered to be a precursor of the Haskalah, a sort of proto-maskil. See A. Nadler, *Mitnaggedim*, Baltimore, 1997, pp. 127-150.
31. The *Sefer hasidim* insists on these same values for a wise man: modesty, self-effacement, asceticism, and concentration. The portraits of R. Yehudah he-hasid in the *Mayse bukh* in

yiddish (Basel, 1602) use the same image of the perfect just man, capable of ataraxie, of a communicative piéty turned towards others and of an unshakable inner strength.

32. What the texts call *perishut me-olam ha-zeh* 'Separation from this world,' See A. Nadler, *op. cit.*, 1997, pp. 88-90.
33. The Baal Shem Tov also like to be alone in what he called his house of solitude, (bayt hahitbodedut) to better meditate and pray.
34. See Israël de Shklov, *Sefer peat hashulhan*, Safed, 1838, introduction.
35. Rav I. L. Hacohen Maimon, *op. cit.* pp. 69-73 «Ha-GR"A, *Hakham harazim: Le Gaon de Vilna: sage et connaisseur des secrets.*»
36. A legend recounts a young girl studying the Zohar and mystical texts of learned men. The Gaon predicted that on her wedding day, her soul would leave her, which is what happened. See Keter Rosh, *op. cit.*, 1968, tale no. 8.
37. H. Lunsky, op. cit., p. 17, describes the fact that in 1778 the GR"A asked the maskil, R. Barukh ben Yaakov Schick of Shklov, to translate Euclid's geometry into Hebrew. The first part was published in 1780.
38. Rav I. L. Hacohen Maimon, *op. cit.*, p. 176.
39. H. Lunski, *op. cit.*, p. 17.
40. Allusion to TB Megilat 15a.
41. Rav I. L. Hacohen Maimon, *op. cit.*, pp. 60-69.
42. These posthumous texts on the hard sciences were collected in the *Ayil Meshullash*, Vilna, 1834. This taste for science led him to be seen as a follower of the Haskalah. However, studying science was never an end in itself, but was to give a better understanding of the Torah. As he used to say, 'All sciences are necessary for our holy Torah and included in it.'
43. Concerning Sha'agat Arieh, see Rav I. L. Hacohen Maimon, *op. cit.*, pp. 8-9.
44. Rav I.L. Hacohen Maimon, op. cit., pp. 114-137. R. Hayyim of Volozhyn is, among other things, the author of *L'Âme de la vie*, published par B. Gross, Paris, 1986.
45. Rav I. L Hacohen Maimon, *op. cit.*, pp. 11-12.
46. He was then called HaGaon heHasid mi-Vilna, the saintly genius of Vilna.
47. Most anthologies of hasidic tales include anti-mitnaggedim stories or describe conflicts between the two movements. See, for example, S. Y. Zevin, *Treasury of Hassidic Tales*, 2 vols, 1979-1982 (index: mitnaggedim). Conversely, the tales of mitnaggedim stigmatize the boundless ignorance and mysticism of the hasidim.
48. Rappoport Albert, 'Hasidism after 1772: Structural Continuity and Change', in *Hasidism Reappraised*, London, 1996, pp. 76-140.
49. Samuel H. Dresner, *The Zaddik*, London, New York, 1960, rééd. 1994.
50. Like the constant wearing of tefilin and tsitsit that shouldn't be worn only for praying. See Keter Rosh, *op. cit.*, 1968, no. 15. The GR"A inventoried his customs in the *Siddur ha-GR"A* which established certain practices different from the usual service.
51. Keter Rosh, *op. cit.*, 1968, no. 28.
52. A. Wertheim, *Law and Custom in Hasidism*, Hoboken, 1992, pp. 126-167.
53. L. Jacobs, *Hasidic Prayer*, London, 1972, pp. 17-21.
54. A. Morgenstern, *Geulah be-derekh ha-teva*, Jerusalem, 1989.
55. I. Abrahams, *Hebrew Ethical Wills*, Philadelphia, 1926, tome 2, pp. 311- 325. The publication of the *Alim li-terufah* (Warsaw 1856) includes a Judeo-German version of this letter. New documents seem to prove that the Gaon was in Amsterdam in 1778 before returning to Vilna.
56. Allusion to his wife, according to *Esther* 1,4.
57. H. Graetz, *Geschichte der Juden*, tome 11, Leipzig, 1900, pp. 109-115.
58. See L. Ginzberg in his introduction to the *Legends of the Jews*. As of the 18th century, the aggadic parts of the Talmud and Midrash were pointed to in order show that it was impossible to reconstruct Israel's past from such a mess of irrational tales, exaggerated stories, and imaginary counts.

Hasidic pilgrimages in Poland

Par Shifra Epstein

A new type of organized tour is attracting a growing number of hasidim to Poland from Israel, the United States and Europe. Anthropologists often compare these organized trips combining tourism and religion to veritable pilgrimages bringing travelers to the most remote corners of Poland in search of the villages that were home to the founders of hasidic communities, or of the tombs of an illustrious rebbe.

Today, as in the past, the hasidim are not a monolithic group but more of a community divided into approximately 60 groups of very different sizes, ranging from a few families to several hundred thousand members of various traditions. And yet, since the opening of the borders of Eastern Europe in the 1990s, the entire movement has begun to practice organized trips to Poland, in the footsteps of Americans who began some 30 years ago. These trips are extremely successful today, in part because Israeli hasidim can now obtain the necessary visas.

Hasidic pilgrimages to Poland are designed primarily to visit the tombs of *tsaddikim* and to make them sites of worship. The idea remains quite controversial within the Jewish community, however. The Jerusalem Talmud is opposed to erecting commemorative stones on tombs, especially those of famous *tsaddikim* whose 'memory resides in their words.'[1] Whereas the tradition of paying tribute to the great figures of the Jewish world goes back to Biblical times,[2] Maimonides strongly denounced the practice in his day of meditating on graves, even those of parents or relatives.[3] The practice is widely accepted today, and considered to be a way of venerating the soul of the dead and to have their memory endure.[4]

Hasidim honor the graves of their rebbe because they occupy a fundamental place as spiritual guides. The rebbe is a charismatic individual who is considered to

be a *tsaddik*; the members of the hasidic community can make no important private or professional decision without consulting him. In Poland, the tomb of the *tsaddik* is easily distinguished from other graves; this funerary monument is overset with an oblique roof. This *ohel* (tent in Hebrew) offers a place for prayer and meditation to the faithful who can light candles on it.

Inspired by the Lurianic cabalists who settled in Safed in the 16th century, the hasidim have incorporated into their ritual practices pilgrimages to the tombs of *tsaddikim* on Yortsayt days (the anniversary of their death). Like the cabalists, they organize annual holidays, *yoma de-hilula* (day of celebration in Aramean), or *hilula* (celebration) on the tomb of their rebbe or on the spot where he taught.[5] On these occasions, the rebbe presides over a *tish* (table, literally) and oversees the major events of hasidic social life: the entire community gathers around the table set up in the *bes medresh* to share food and drink. Participants tell stories about the deceased and the evening generally ends in dancing. The *yortsayt* has thus slowly become a joyful occasion for Eastern European hasidim on which they can forget the worries of what is often a difficult daily existence.[6]

The criticisms of this practice essentially reiterate the injunction against a cult of the dead resembling idolatry, and therefore highly reprehensible in Jewish law.[7] The hasidim defend themselves by quoting a Talmudic verse: 'holy men never die and should be considered as eternally living.'[8] The *tsadikkim* hear the requests made on their tombs, 'their lips are invited to open' and can answer the hasidim who solicit them.[9] According to hasidic tradition, it is particularly effective to pray on the very site of the tomb of the person whom one is addressing.[10] Many have claimed that their wishes have been realized, and describe veritable miracles.[11] Even more, recalling the life and ideas of the *tsaddik* at his burial site and studying on the anniversary of his death helps elevate and perfect the soul.[12,13]

Many pilgrimages were made to the tombs of hasidic rebbes before World War II. Many accounts bear witness to the annual pilgrimage to Lyzhansk on the 21st day of Adar to commemorate the death of R. Elimelekh (1717-1786), a trip that was so much in vogue from the 18th century until 1939 that a fair took place at which many traders gathered.[14] Stalls were set up around the cemetery selling buy food and all sorts of merchandise.[15]

■

Some Remarks of an Ethnographic Nature

Pilgrims in the past made their own itineraries and travel arrangements. Today, this has changed. Most pilgrimages engage travel agencies offering organized tours to disburden themselves of the material details of visits covering more than 600 miles in a few days, and often in just 48 hours. In this society of consumption, the pilgrimages stay in luxurious hotels, dine only in gastronomic restaurants where kosher food is brought in from Switzerland, and travel only in buses equipped with good heating, air conditioning and toilets.

Some travel agencies, run by members of hasidic movements, organize these pilgrimages in Poland for a clientele from America, Europe and Israel. The most well known are Reichbert and Sons Travel, Ideal Tour — two New York agencies — and Akiva Tours, located in Bnei Brak.[16] Their owners belong to different hasidic groups, the Bobover, the Gurer, and the Vizhnitzer. Reichberg and Sons Travel is the oldest of these, having gone into business more than 30 years ago. All observe shabbat, which is essential with regard to their clients.

These agencies also propose organized trips to Europe, Israel and to the United States for practicing Jews, not only hasidim. They often work together to get good prices, but remain competitive.

The difference lies largely in the range of services. Indeed, during a large pilgrimage, it is often difficult to get a plane reservation or a room in a Polish hotel. Moreover, the tour calendars for the hasidim observe shabbat, ensuring that all find a place to pray and to meditate in the hotel. Mrs. Reichberg often travels with the organized pilgrimages and prepares a tsholent, kugel, and meat. These agencies are also careful about separating men and women during trips on planes and in buses; men usually get the best seats.

The costs of the trip are no obstacle to the hasidim. None of those whom I interviewed complained about paying $1500 for 7 days or $850 for two days. This kind of trip takes considerable planning and everyone saves the cost of travelling to Poland or sending a child a few months or years later. Whatever the cost, the success of these pilgrimages clearly demonstrates that the economic situation among the hasidim has clearly improved during the last decades. We might also point out that others prefer to travel independently, by renting a car or a taxi.

The Pilgrimage Route

Most pilgrimages are organized around tombs located in Central Poland and Galicia, to the south, the two regions of Poland that were home to many post-war families.

In Polish Galicia, Kkroke (Crakow) is the most popular destination, with the synagogue of Rema, Rebbe Moshe Isserles (known under the same acronym, died on 18 Iyar 1572, the foremost authority on Halakah and commentator of the *Shulhan Aruch.*)[17] His is certainly one of the best-known tombs of the *tsaddik*, not only in Poland but worldwide. It is also one of the only sites included on the trip that is not literally part of hasidic memory since the Rema lived nearly 200 years before hasidism was born. Nearby, the graves of Rema and several famous wise men are in one of the oldest cemetery's in Europe, including Yoel Sirkes (1561-1640), a Polish Talmudic scholar best known as Bach.[18] Another, more recent cemetery is located nearby, in Miodova Street, where pilgrims visit the tombs of illustrious hasidim. These include the tombs of Rebbe Kalonimus ben Kalman ha-Levi Epstein of Krakow (died in 1823), author of the *Maor va-shemesh*; Rebbe Shimon Sofer (1820-1883), Rebbe of Krakow and member of the Austro-Hungarian parliament in Vienna;[19] and Rebbe Shmuel Teitelbaum of Gorlitz, who died in 1889.

BRIGOL (Brzesko, 30 miles southwest of Krakow)

The tombs of Rebbe Arye Leibush of Vizhnitz (1767-1840) author of responsa to the *Shulkhan Aruch*, Ari debi Ili'a; son of Hayyim Lifshitz and son-in-law of Rebbe Moshe Teitelbaum (1759-1841) who introduced hasidism to Hungary.

SANDZ (Nowy Sacz, 30 miles south of Brzesko)

The tomb of Hayyim Halberstam (1793-1876), founder of the Zanz dynasty and acknowledged religious erudite. He joined the hasidic current under the influence of Rebbe Yaakov Yitshak (the Khoze, or Seer) from Lublin, and later wrote the *Divre Hayyim*. The tomb of his sons Meir Nathan and Aharon are next to his.

GORLITZ (approximately 12 miles east of Nowy Sacz)

The tomb of Rebbe Baruch of Gorlitz, son of Rebbe Hayyim Halberstam.

RYMANOW (70 miles east of Nowy Sacz)

The tomb of Rebbe Mehahem Mendel of Rymanow (died in 1815) whose teacher was Rebbe Elimelehk of Lyzhansk, and whose disciples include Rebbe Naftali of Ropshitz (1760-1827) and Rebbe Tzevi Hirsh of Rymanoz. His texts on the Torah are collected in *Menahem Tsiyon, Divrei Menahem* and *Ateret Menahem*.

DYNOW (40 miles northeast of Rymanow)

The tomb of Rebbe Tsevi Elimelekh Shapira (1785-1841), a recognized érudite, disciple of Rebbe Yaakov Yitshak (the Seer) of Lublin and of Rebbe Mehahem Mendel of Rymanow; the Rebbe of Dynow and of Munkacz, prolific author, particularly of Bnei Yissachar.

LANCUT (30 miles north of Dynow, near Rzeszow)

The tomb of Rebbe Naftali Txevi of Ropczytz (1760-1827), disciple first of Rebbe Elimelekh of Lyzhansk and then of Rebbe Menahem Mendel of Rymanow and of Rebbe Yaakov Yitzhak of Lublin. Author of the *Zera Kodesh*.

LSYHANSK (Lezajsk, 20 miles north of Lanzut)

The tomb of Rebbe Elimelekh of Lyzhansk (1717-1786), disciple of Rebbe Dov Ber of Mezhirech, considered to be the founder of Galician hasidism. His work *Noam Elimelekh* examines his notion of the relationship that should exist between the rebbi and the hassidim.

In Central Poland

LUBLIN (100 miles north of Lyzhansk)

The old Jewish cemetery of Lublin contains many tombs venerated by pilgrims. The cemetery was dug up and the tombstones are scattered every which-way.

Tombs include those of Rebbe Shalom Schachna (ben Rebbe Yosef) of Lublin (died in 1558), and his grandfather, Rebbe Yaakov Kapel (died in 1769); Rebbe Yaakov Yitshak of Lublin (1745-1815); Rebbe Abriel (son of Dov) Halevi Horowitz (died in 1818), nicknamed the Maharshal; Rebbe Yaakov Polack, Rebbe Shlomo (died in 1643). The old yeshiva of the Wisemen of Lublin, built in 1724 and transformed into a medical training center is another important pilgrimage site in Lublin

KOTZK (Kock, 34 miles north of Lublin)

Reconstitution of the tomb of Rebbe Menahem Mendel of Kotzk (1787-1859), a disciple of Yaakov Yitshak of Lublin, Yaakov Ytishak *(Yid hakadosh,* or holy Jew in Yiddish) of Przysucha, and of Rebbe Simha Bunem of Przysucha.

WARSAW

The Gnesher cemetery on Gnesher Street is one of the most frequently visited pilgrimage site. Nearly 400,000 Jews were buried here after World War II in tombs aligned in veritable streets. The tombs of the ultra-orthodox are separated from those of non-practicing Jews. The hasidim are primarily interested in the tombs of the important hasidic figures and of the authorities of halakahic law.[20]

GUR (Gora Kalvaria, 34 miles south of Warsaw)

The hasidic cemetery of Gur was destroyed during World War II and the tombstones are piled up in total disarray. They include those of the founder of the Gur hasidic community, Rebbe Yitshak Meir (RothernbergAlter) of Gur (1789-1866), author of the *Hiddushei Ha-Rim.* Next to him is the tomb of his grandson Rebbe Yehuda Arye Leib (Alter) of Gur (1847-1905), author of the *Sefat Emet.*

PSHISHAH (Przysucha, 104 miles south of Warsaw)

The tomb of Rebbe Yaakov Yitzzzshak of Przysucha (1766-1813), one of Yaakov Yitshak of Lublin's closest disciples until they had a significant argument.

ALEXANDER (Aleksandrow, 6 miles northeast of Lodz)

Tomb of Rebbe Hanoch Henyekh of Aleksandrow (1798-1870) founder of the city's hasidic community which was, one of the most important in Poland, after Gur until World War II.

RADOMSKO (approximately 100 miles south of Warsaw)

Tomb of Rebbe Salomon (Ha-Kohenj Rabinowicz of Radomsko) 1803-1866, author of *Tiferet Shlomo* and disciple of Rebbe Meir of Apta. His son, Rebbe Avraham Issachar of Radom, author of *Hesed le-Avraham,* is also buried here.

The pilgrimage itinerary essentially follows the traces of hasidic culture and history, and thus clearly underscores the specific nature of these ritualized trips. With very rare exception, the sites that are visited are places where the movement's great figures lived, in most cases, four or five generations after the Baal Shem Tov, or Besht, the movement's founding figure. His period surely corresponded to a golden age of hasidism during which there was productive intellectual exchange and a rapprochement among the different currents through marriages, etc. It was as of this period that hasidic leaders were no longer chosen on the basis of merit but on the basis of their family, as is still the case today. It was also during this period that many of the dynasties, the Guerer, the Satmarer, the Bobober, the Vizhniter, were born, each with its own traditions and beliefs. Most of these are still powerful today.

American and Israeli pilgrims also visit, on rare occasion, non-hasidic Jewish tombs. This calls attention to the originality of their tradition and distinguishes them from other hasidim. These tombs include meditation areas associated with pre-hasidim commentators and érudites, such as the synagogue and tomb of the Rema in Cracow, the tombs of Rebbes Neta Lipman, called the Bach, Simeon Sofr, and Kalonimus, born Kalman, ha-Lefi Epstein. Hasidim who were long considered not to respect the Halakah, pay tribute in this way to its importance today, just as they recall their membership in the greater Jewish community by honoring the memory of certain non-hasidic wise men. The pilgrimage itinerary provides one way for them to reassert their ideas and the approach appears even more powerful when members of other currents participate in the trip.

In the large majority of cases, the pilgrimages are organized around the yortsayt of a hasid. The most popular took place in Lyzhansk in mid-March, the anniversary of the death of Rebbe Elimelekh,[21] founder of the Galician branch, on the 21st day of the month of Adar. Nearly 5000 hasidim participate in this pilgrimage each year.

The other popular pilgrimages visit the tomb of Moshe Isserles, the Rema, on Lag Ba-Omer (33 days after Pesach) in the old cemetery of Cracow; of Rebbe Yom Tov Lipman, in the same cemetery on the 6th of Elul; and that of Rebbe Simha Bunem in Przysucha, on the 12th of Elul. Certain groups organize more private trips, like the one that took place before the tomb of Rebbe Hayyim Halberstam on the 25 Nisan, and in which virtually only Bobover participated. We might recall, however, that the pilgrims do not visit a single site during their trip; most agencies even offer excursions outside of Poland to Romanian, Hungarian, and Czech cemeteries.

Americans and Israelis prefer the month of Elul for their trips, but they have specific habits during their trip to Poland. American often only spend 48 hours on their trip, for professional or financial reasons it appears, whereas Israelis often prefer to spend an entire week in Poland.

While Auschwitz and Birkenau are almost always on the itineraries of trips to Poland organized by Jewish travel agencies, they are not obligatory stops for American hasidim who typically remain away from ceremonies organized by non-practicing Jews or non-Jews, like the testimonial to Holocaust victims on the 27th Nissan. Hassidim consider that no official institution today enjoys sufficient legitimacy to initiate such a ceremony or to erect an official monument. They prefer to mourn for the death of their relatives alone. While Israeli hasidim do visit these camps, which have become places of memory, they do so because they want to signify what links them to all Jewish people, beyond ideological differences. Their attitude at Auschwitz and Treblinka is, in fact, interesting. For a long time, pilgrims only paid a tourist visit and forbade any religious gesture. For the last few years, however, two prayers are said on the site: El Male Rahamim, the prayer to the martyrs in the Jewish tradition, and the Kaddish, the prayer for the dead. El Male Rahamim is said in homage to Nazi victims. Americans should slowly include a visit to the camps in their pilgrimages, given that the hasidic authorities have not officially condemned the increasing numbers of pilgrimages to these sties by loyal Israelis.

During their visit, the hasidim avoid most of the places that are not directly linked to the memory of their movement,. They do not visit the monuments commemorating the uprising of the Warsaw ghetto, or the Jewish museums of Cracow and Warsaw. When they visit a cemetery, they are only interested in the tombs of illustrious hasidim, or the great figures in the Halakic tradition, but never those of the great Jewish writers, philosophers, artists or political figures who are buried there. These are often considered to be secular figures, and the most extreme hasidim consider them responsible for the Holocaust because of their lack of respect for God.

The time constraints, particularly for the Americans, are part of the reason that the pilgrimage becomes a real race, whose only goal often seems to be to visit more tombs than are on the itinerary. The groups usually remain an average of 20 minutes at any given site, to the great distress of certain participants who would prefer to visit fewer sites and spend at least half a day at them.

Certain sites are visited for a longer period of time, depending on the importance of a given sage, such as the Rema synagogue and the tomb of Rebbe Elimelekh of Lyzhansk.

The Participants

The pilgrimage to Poland revitalizes community links and offers a rare occasion for forgetting arguments about how to read certain texts or how to organize rituals. An experience is shared, despite religious or political differences, particularly with respect to the existence of Israel.[22]

This article was prepared by accompanying two groups of pilgrims. Those visits enable us to briefly study the composition of the group. The group of 145 Americans and 50 Israelis belong to the hasidic movement — the author was the only exception. If the travel agencies avoid restrictive marketing, the reality is one of compartmentalization. Most of the Americans came from the Satmar community, and the others belonged to the Bobov, Gur, Klausenburg, Neturie Karta[23], Lubavitch and a few other smaller sects. Many Satmarer had never gone to Israel whereas they had already made several trips to Poland, which was a way of demonstrating their opposition to Zionist ideology. Most of the Israelis were from the Vizhnitzer, some from the Toldot Aharon, Belz and Gur groups.

Few women participate in most hasidic ceremonies and important events, and very few women pilgrims came on these trips. There were three women in the Israeli group, including a grandmother, her daughter, and granddaughter, and six women in the American group, including the author. Most of the participants were elderly, and were free to travel for several days. The men were about forty years old, for the most part, or between 60-75 years old. Many owned small businesses or enterprises, or worked in a business owned by hasidim. There were also several yeshiva professors and rebbes. Finally, about ten adolescents were also on the tour, but there was only one young boy who traveled with his father. There were few holocaust survivors — about ten people had been prisoners in the camps or had lived in Europe before the war — but there were many children of deported Jews. Finally, Mr. Reichberg of Reichberg and Sons Travel. was the only Polish-speaking hasid on the tour.

The Pilgrimage and its Rituals

The pilgrimage to Poland has slowly become an essential part of the sacred duties of the hasidim. By studying it, we have an original perspective on the culture of this community and its traditions. Two sorts of religious rituals are observed during the trip. Some are required by the religious law, and therefore observed by all practicing Jews, but only the hasidim observe those that are not included in the Halakah. The boundary between the two is flexible, however, since the most recent ceremonies to which the pilgrimage gave rise may soon appear in the Halakah.[24]

The Halakah requires three daily religious services and prayers for several acts of daily life such as eating and drinking. During a trip, therefore, participants usually pray and study in the bus, in the plane, in a hotel room or even in a camp that serve as synagogues for the occasion. The *mikve* (ritual bath) that men take after visiting a site, or the prayers and supplications that follow, are specifically hasidic, like part of the ceremonies of the pilgrims' shabbat.

Visiting a site therefore gives rises essentially to two activities: paying tribute to the wise men whose tomb was just honored, and making supplications concerning various more personal requests. Paying tribute involves prayers and lamentations around the recitation of the Kaddish, and the supplication includes long tearful prayers during which small pieces of paper, or *kvitlekh* 'requests of a rebbe' are placed on the tombs. It is often difficult to distinguish which actions are designed to honor which wise man and which are only designed to attract favors to the pilgrim. The candles lit following the prayer are supposed to make the memory live, for 'the spirit of man is the light of God' (*Proverbs* 20:27), but many pilgrims light many candles on each site, in memory of the deceased members of their own family.

Given the brevity of the visits, the rituals are often carried out during the trip rather than at the site itself. Pilgrims study religious texts, meditate, or reflect on the life and work of a holy man on the bus. The same is true for ritual prayers or for lighting candles. Reciting chapters and excerpts of chapters of the Book of Psalms has become customary on hasidic pilgrimages but it often takes throughout the trip, at the different sites, and aboard the bus or plane. The recitation of Psalms com-

bines veneration, contemplation and supplication, and illustrates the passage from a ritual common to Judaism to a more closed, specifically hasidic ritual.

The Book of Psalms, which includes a certain number of chapters organized into four large books, occupies a special place in Jewish tradition. It is often considered to have been inspired by God to King David, who sang it in the Jerusalem temple. Reciting psalms during religious services and saying the prayers that punctuate daily life[25] are considered to be a form of study, especially by those less well-educated in religious matters,[26] as a means of protecting against misfortune, and a means of redemption.[27] In the past, psalms and prayers were recited during droughts and devastating floods, for example[28].

For the hasidim, prayer itself has more religious value that studying the Torah or the Talmud. The Psalms are therefore supposed to facilitate mystical union with God, the very essence of the mystical experience, which the Lurianic cabalists reserved for those who had reached the kingdom of the holy. Hasidim promise that this mystical union is within everyone's reach and can be achieved through prayer and through the practice of a professional activity or in the context of a physical activity. An individual tries to elevate his soul towards God to obtain redemption through his own effort.[29] The Besht therefore recited different psalms for each day. Similarly, there are specific psalms for different occasions, some, for example, are to be recited so that a sick person recovers.30

The number of psalms pronounced on a tomb depends on how long the pilgrims meditated at that tomb. More chapters from the Books of Psalms are recited on the tomb of Rebbe Elimelekh of Lyzhansk, who gets at least an hour, than at those that are visited in only about ten minutes. Reciting psalms can take different forms. They can be read in the order of the Book of Psalms[31] or as a function of the day of the week. Different esoteric formulas, pronounced by some pilgrims, are attributed to Rebbe Aharon of Chernobyl (1787-1871): chapters 107, 19, 33, 34, 98, 103, 104, 143, 144, 15, Shir ha-Maalot, 12 refrains from chapter 20, the benedictions Asher Henia, Yashav basater, and Ana bekokh.[32] Rebbe Yoel Teitelbaum, the former rebbe of Satmar (188-1979) had another formula: reading chapters 90-108, and if one wanted, reading them again. Another formula, called Tamania api, consisted of reading verses whose first letters formed an acrostic of the name of the person for whom the requests were being made, or the word *neshama* (soul, in Hebrew).

A supplication, Yehi ratson, «That God deigns to hear our prayer» precedes and concludes the recitation of psalms to create a state of mind conducive to a mystical impulse. The Talmud mentions different formulas for the Yehi ratson, which

correspond to a specific period of the year. Some of these may have been written during the first Crusade, but most were written by such hasidic wise men as Rebbe Elimelekh of Lyzhansk.[33]

During the recitation of psalms, men and women frequently break out into tears and give free reign to wrenching lamentations.[34] These practices are profoundly linked to the mystical experience, to which they give their full sense.

Shabbat in Poland

During a several-day long pilgrimage, participants spend shabbat together. The hotel closest to the Rema synagogue, where several groups used to go to celebrate shabbat, was being renovated, and another hotel in the region opened its doors so that the pilgrims could use the rooms as a synagogue. Shabbat in Poland provides an occasion for members of different hasidic groups to practice certain religious activities together. Hasidim used to spending shabbat with their rebbe in their bes-midrash (house of study), discover other traditions and cultures.

The *melave malke*, a ceremony that takes place one hour after sunset at the beginning of shabbat, is specific to hasidism, just like the ritual that closes shabbat on the following day. Inspired by the Lurianic mystics of Safed, this ceremony has become «the fourth shabbat meal» and gives the rebbe and his community an opportunity to prolong shabbat in an original manner. As is often the case in the hasidic tradition, the ceremony leads to a tish bringing the rabbi and his followers around the same table to share a meal and to sing songs and recount stories about the *tsaddikim*.

In Poland, things happen slightly differently. The elegance sought by the organizers and participants to lend the event more solemnity is already apparent in the way the tables are organized in a U, and dressed with impeccably white tablecloths, bright red napkins and bouquets of flowers. The alcohol and the different dishes that are cooked and imported from Switzerland are strictly kosher. The participants wear black evening clothes, and a hat indicating the group to which they belong. Since there is no rebbe, one of the eldest guests directs the songs and tells stories, which are the major part of the ceremony.

The trip to Poland remains an important event in the life of the hasidim who proudly wear their holiday clothes and seem to want to show the Polish populations that they have survived the Holocaust. They succeed. You need only observe the look of the Polish people in the hotel where the pilgrims stay to see how their appearance and clothing fascinate them. A young woman who was on the tour told me: 'For me, it is as important to observe shabbat in Poland as it is to celebrate one of the important Jewish holidays.'

As we already mentioned, hasidic duties include three daily prayers to God, which makes it interesting to observe the recent changes in the style of prayer in Cracow's Rema. One of the moving moments of the trip was the morning prayer in one of the rare Polish synagogues that survived World War II and still functions today. And yet, during the week, there are not enough men for a minion.

Itineraries are organized so that the different groups meet in time for the morning prayer in the Rema synagogue, to share and meet each other. Before World War II, this was not a specifically hasidic synagogue, and even in the recent past, men came here to pray according to their own tradition, inspired by Lurianic prayer. However, during a trip in 1988, Rebbe Shlomo Halberstam, the grand rabbi of the Bobover community, asked his followers to adopt the style of prayer of the Ashkenazim, out of respect for how the prayer was said before the war.[35] Things have been done this way since.

The success of the hasidic pilgrimage to Poland, which combines religious enthusiasm with tourism in a most original way, reflects the capacity of one segment of the Jewish community to actively resist the challenges and temptations of the modern world. During their trip, participants often rediscover that they belong to the wide hasidic community, beyond the sectarian differences. Indeed, they suddenly have an opportunity to discover their common geographical and ideological origins. Members of different groups honor the same founders and visit the same sites, and use the same buses. These few days can also suffice to give new meaning and currency to the faith and religious commitment of the faithful. The pilgrimage also provides an opportunity for many hasidim to experience the link between the mystical Jewish tradition and the contemporary world.

NOTES

1. Cf. *The Jerusalem Talmud*, Shekalim, ch.5:2.
2. The Bible tells that Calev left for Hebron to visit the tomb of his parents: Genesis, 2.
3. See Ben Maimon, *Hiékhot avel*, 4 :4.
4. For what erecting a tombstone (*matseva*, in Hebrew) means in Judaism, see Otzar Dinim, 1970, pp. 246-247.
5. See Taamé ha-Minhagim, pp. 485-486.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 488.
7. Maimonides forgives the 'requests made on behalf of a dead person.' See Maimonides, *Mada*, p. 7.
8. *Babylonian Talmud*, Hullin 7b.
9. See Tsaddikin Keruyim Hayyim, p. 6.
10. See, for example, Toldot ha-niflaot, 5, 1899, in which Rebbe Elimelekh of Lyzhansk appears in a dream to Rebbe Kalman Kalonimus Epstein and reproaches him for having told a woman not to visit his tomb.
11. See, for example, Khal Hasidim ha-hadash, 72, 1902 and Sippurim noraim, 39, 1875, in which the story is told of a man who finds the money that he had lost after having prayed to a Lubavitch rebbe on his tomb.
12. Taame ha-Minhagim, p.447; Rashi, *Babylonian Talmud*, Tevamot, 122.
13. *Ibid.*
14. See Pinkas Kehilot, 1984, p. 233.
15. *Ibid.* Another tale teaches us that on the anniversary of the death of Rebbe Yitshak Aizik (Taub) of Kallo (1744-1828), who had developed hasidism throughout Hungary, thousands of hasidim came to pray on his tomb in Razpirt. They spent Shabbat with this Rabbi Shalom Eliezer de Razpirt, and went to Kallo with him on the day before the anniversary. Thousands of Hassidim in Hungary traveled from Galicia to celebrate the anniversary of the death of Hayyim Halberstam at Nowy Sacz. These visits also provided an opportunity to arrange marriages, to hire a woman from a Jewish house, or to hire a Jewish preceptor.
16. *Ibid*, pp. 257-258.
17. I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to Mr. Reichberg of Reichberg & Sons (New York), Mr. Weiss of Akiva Tour (Bnei Brak) and R. Nahmen Elboim of Ideal Tours (New York /Jérusalem) for their helpful cooperation. I would also like to thank all the hasidim who made it possible for me to share in their experience and meals. This project was made possible by a grant from the Memorial Foundation for Jewish Culture.
18. This acronym is based on the Hebrew initials of his first work, Bayis Hadash, commentary of the Arbaa Turim of Rabbi Yaakov ben Asher.
19. He is also famous for having created the orthodox organization, Mahazikei ha-dat, which, together with the support of Hassidic rebbes of Zanz and Belz, energetically protested against the Haskalah.
20. For a longer list of the tombs revered by the hasidim, see Kerem ha-Hassidout, 4, 1986, pp. 173-212. For a list of Halakic authorities often visited by Hassidim, see Alter, vol. 1, 1986, pp. 201, 207-210.
21. For a brief history of hasidism, see Josef Dan, 'Hasidism', in M. Eliade (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Religion*, 1987, vol. 6, pp. 203-211. Dan recalls that during certain periods, the religious leader within a movement was a hereditary position.
22. On the internal conflicts of the contemporary movement, J. Mintz, *Hasidic people: A Place in the New World*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1994. American and Israeli newspapers often mention this, by contrast.
23. Neturei Karta is a group of ultra-orthodox extremists in Jerusalem, and is not part of the hasidic movement, even if they are close to the Satmar Hassidism in the US and in Jerusalem.
24. On the origins of public prayer, see J. Heineman, *Prayer in the Periods of the tannaim and the moraim. Its Nature and Its Patterns*, Jerusalem, Magnes Press, 1964, pp. 17-28.
25. Excerpts from the Book of Psalms are recited during the morning, afternoon, and evening services, and for Shabbat. Psalm 19 is recited for a wedding, and for a circumcision, psalm 12.
26. *Babylonian Talmud*, Yevamot, 93; Bekhorot, 31.
27. According to the Talmud, He who recites Psalm 145 three times a day will know the future world,' cf. Babylonian Talmud, Berakhot, 4b.
28. For a more exact list of the different use of psalms, see Shimushei Tehilim, first published in1552 and often studied by Cabalists.
29. Cf. Moshé Idel, *Kabbalah: New Perspectives*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1988, pp. 35-38.
30. See Taamei ha-Minhagim, pp. 104-105.
31. *Ibid*, p. 566
32. This formula appears in *Bet Tsaddikim*, p. 11 and *Tefila le-David*, p. 50, two works specifically for pilgrims.
33. This prayer appears at the beginning of many books of prayers. An English version appears in the *Sefer Noam Elimelekh*, which the Reichberg Travel Agency distributes to each participant.
34. On lamentations as a mystical practice, see M. Idel, *op. cit.*, pp. 75-88.
35. The Rema had indeed forbidden any change in the religious traditions of a city, even if it were only the melodies to which a prayer was sung. See *Shulkhan Arukh Orakh Hayyim*, p. 495.

The Alliance Israelite and Europe

Georges Weill

It would be fruitless to look for a single mention of Europe among the first, very numerous, texts of the Alliance: the word is simply never mentioned. The Alliance's founders wanted their new association to be universal; they did not want it to represent 'either a government, a society, or a specific territory.' The success of these principals was linked to the success of 'all true principals:' the cause that the Alliance was defending had to 'be linked to the cause of worldwide progress.' The Alliance proposed to accept 'joyfully people of all beliefs and all opinions' for an eventual 'holy expedition targeting spiritual freedom, equality in observing a religion, and the respect of the unalienable rights of conscience.'[1] The founders of the Alliance were still nostalgic for the disappointed hopes of the 1848 Revolution, and were doubtless idealistic. But they were not naïve. They certainly recalled the happy conclusion to the Damascus Affair when, in 1840, Adolphe Crémieux, Sir Moses Montefiore, and Salomon Munk were able to save innocent Jews from Mehemet Ali, Syria's ruler at the time. They had patiently monitored the parliamentary decisions in London that had devoted three long decades to emancipating Jews; they had been revolted by the Mortara Affair that did not culminate in a way that corresponded to people's rights.[2] But above all, in the early 1860s, several European countries were still intolerant. Some, like Switzerland, did not respect the freedom of conscience. Others, like the Papal States, did not ensure equal rights for all of their subjects. Others, located in Central Europe and in the Balkans, did not guarantee basic human rights. The comparison was eloquent with the Ottoman Empire where the Sultan of Turkey, by a firman of 1856, had just confirmed essential civic rights for all inhabitants, independent of their religion. To refer to Europe by soliciting the aid of everyone 'with talent and influence' in order to struggle to guarantee these rights would have been maladroit, at the very least, if these rights had been tacitly included in the founders' program.

And yet, Western Europe was, without any doubt, at the heart of their culture, their intellectual training, and their hopes. While they remained loyal to the moral teachings of the Jewish tradition, the founders based their doctrine largely on the writings of European Enlightenment philosophers. Their ideology took its inspiration from the fundamental principles outlined by the writers of the French Constitution in 1789. The Alliance founders took the most convincing arguments of their declaration from their European culture. Europe provided the great mass of its partisans and its first teachers, in addition to providing material resources. The Alliance undertook its first battles for civil rights in Europe, in the countries that were still refusing to emancipate religious minorities. It decided to solicit European powers to obtain the guarantees that it demanded for Jews in the Balkans, Russia, Morocco and Tunisia, and for the Christians of Lebanon, not without some failures.

This apology of a privileged relationship between Europe and the Alliance should not ignore the significant support received from the enlightened milieus of North Africa, Asia, and America from the outset. A study of the Alliance's doctrine, strategy, and results, however, cannot but highlight the symbiosis during the entire latter half of the 19th century and early 29th century between Alliance leaders and European countries whose humanistic traditions, diplomacy, and scientific and technical know-how they set in the service of a cause that they believed to be just. This cause was the emancipation and regeneration of persecuted Jews worldwide in the context of a battle that pretended to be universal and useful for all mankind.

■

Propagating the Principles of the Declaration of Human Rights

For the founders of the Alliance, the logic of the French Emancipation and its political and legal guarantees, seemed to be a perfect model. It should serve to inspire not only the civilized nations, but the nations of the East, as well, whose poorer populations it hoped to help 'regenerate.' The notion of religious tolerance defined in the 17th century by European Protestant thinkers using biblical sources and further developed during the Enlightenment, had certainly influenced their thinking. They were also influenced by principles laid out in the Declaration of Human Rights, which they firmly committed to 'propagating on behalf of spiritual freedom.'[3]

While they respected religious traditions, from which they drew a secular morality in particular, they allied themselves with positivism. They applied its rules to disciplines that had had no scientific method until then: the study of societies, human geography, statistics, and above all, education, designed to awaken a taste for innovation, an analytic mind, and the value of experimentation. They were even precursors in experimentation, which remains the foundation of today's public European education.[4] Rabbi Aristide Astruc, one of the six founders of the Alliance, was certainly responsible for the importance given to moral education, more than the German reformist school of the period. The founders were particularly original, however, in their doctrine. They had adopted the historical critical methods of the Science of Judaism, created in 1817 by the German Jewish Rabbis and scholars in order to rehabilitate European Jewish culture, which took the 18th century French Benedictine school as its model. This discipline was still virtually unknown in France, with the exception of a few scholars, including Isidore Loeb who became secretary general of the society in 1870, Salomon Munk, who presided over the Alliance for a few months in 1866, and Adolphe Franck, a member of the first committees. By taking some distance from the overly combative aspects of the Science of Judaism, they spread the method to every aspect of Jewish study, from Antiquity to the contemporary period, and to all of Jewish civilizations — European, African, Asian, and American. They made it both an instrument of permanent documentation to shape their strategy, and a research tool. They even managed to apply it in the universities. When Jules Ferry, advised by Eugene Manuel, one of the founders of the Alliance, and Gustave Monod, a Protestant historian, undertook the reform of education in France, many eminent members of the Alliance created the Society for Jewish Studies in 1880, to continue this rigorous tradition.

Their professional experience covered very broad areas, including law, medicine, mathematics, literature, erudition, journalism, art, business, finance and even politics. The founders possessed surprising amounts of curiosity and prescience, and were able to integrate the basis of their period's culture into their doctrine. They were Republicans who nonetheless allied themselves with political liberalism, which was more concerned with the contents of a form of government, provided that it ensured basic liberties, than to its constitutional form. They were able to assimilate the new economic doctrines, evaluate scientific progress born of the discoveries of Western science, and promote modern education. And at the same time, they praised the more abstract values such as civic virtues, patriotism, respect for beliefs, and fraternity, notions that France had put into place with the Revolution and which European democracies integrated into their own ideologies somewhat later.[5]

The European response was favorable to the founders' generous, rational philosophy, particularly that of the Protestant Evangelical Alliance and the Franc Masons; Adolphe Crémieux was a French grand master at the time. Most of the other liberal circles recognized shared values, so that the Alliance progressively gained the respect of most of enlightened European public opinion. This is attested to by the abundant correspondence that is still kept in the archives, which is stupefying in terms of the geographical and religious diversity of the writers. In addition, many political leaders and important European figures participated in the demonstrations of support for oppressed populations organized by the Alliance. Similarly, their diplomats responded to Alliance demands during the international conferences on the status of religious minorities in the Balkan provinces of the Ottoman Empire that were becoming independent, and in the Mediterranean countries that were subjected to European hegemony, willingly or not.

The founders themselves acknowledged that the European powers were favorable to the work of the Alliance during its first years. At the same time that the Alliance was undertaking its first political intervention on behalf of Russian, Polish and Balkan Jews, it could observe the triumph of the ideals of civil emancipation in Western European provinces and countries that had not yet abolished religious discrimination: Frankfort and Central Italy in 1861-1862; the Duchy of Baden, in 1862; Wurtemberg and the Greek islands, 1864; Switzerland, 1865; Venetia in 1866; Austria-Hungary, 1867; Prussia, 1869; the German Empire, 1871; Serbia and Bulgaria, 1880. Only Romania and the Russian Empire resisted any impulse for civil and political emancipation in their large Jewish populations until 1917. In 1871, Adolphe Crémieux, president of the Alliance and Justice Minister in the provisional government, had been able to extend French citizenship to Algerian Jews.

It was also in Europe that the Alliance was able to bring together the largest group of contributors. In 1860, its members numbered 850, and most of them were French. Ten years later, they numbered 13,000. In 1885, there were 30,000 members and by 1914 they ranged over five continents. Until 1914, Germany, France, including Algeria, Italy, Belgium, Holland, Switzerland, the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Romania, Bulgaria, Western Turkey, and Greece formed the Alliance's most impressive support structure. On the eve of the World War I, the German and Austro-Hungarian Empires counted 375 local committees among a worldwide total of 514, or more than 70% of the total who were very active in favor of the emigration of Russian Jews to Europe and America. The other countries included France and Algeria (59 committees), Romania (46), Holland and Scandinavia (31); and Italy (14). Unfortunately, the world war changed these impressive data by creating a total break between the belligerent nations and therefore also for the recruitment of European Jews who were faithful supporters of the Alliance's educational and humanitarian activities.

The public's moral support was certainly necessary to support this action, but it was not sufficient to cover the expenses, which could not be covered by adding a modest annual contributions of 6 francs (less than $1 in 2002 terms) or about 180,000 francs. The Alliance could also count on successful subscriptions launched in Europe for the victims of war, natural catastrophe, and, unfortunately, of pogroms and collective massacres. We should recall, however, that the lion's share of its resources came from a few wealthy notables who bequeathed part of their fortune to the Alliance. These included Salomon Goldschmidt, the Baron and Baroness Maurice de Hirsch, the Rothschilds (who, out of discretion, were never named), the Bischoffsheim, in addition to several thousand more modest donors, permanent foundations, and gifts that cover several pages in the annual reports. The Alliance also counted many non-European benefactors, among whom the best-known include the Kadoorie and the Sassoons whose contributions should not go unmentioned. This aspect of solidarity was not only Western, even if European Jewry accounted for the larger share, given the social position of its inhabitants. By contrast, after a decade, the Alliance quickly gave up recruiting teachers from European normal schools and decided to select them from among the best students of its own schools, to train them in Paris with specially adapted methods. They were also told not to impose European habits in any authoritarian way, and to respect local customs, which was unequally appreciated because Western habits had already influenced the lifestyle of populations as a whole. In a century and a half, therefore, 600,000 students were trained, which created profound social changes.

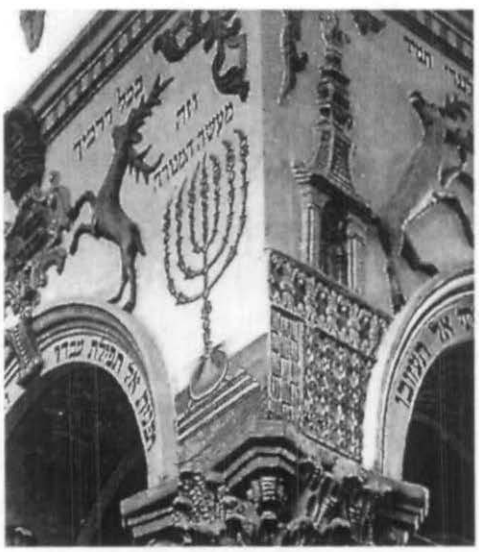
The Struggle against Intolerance and for the Respect for Civil Liberties

The political situation in Europe at the beginning of the third millenium has little in common with that of the 19th century, when the Alliance undertook its struggle for human emancipation and 'regeneration.' Yet most of the problems that it faced then seem strangely contemporary. It would probably be impossible and somewhat disheartening to make an exhaustive list. Yet it is appropriate to recall that the Alliance was the first international organization to proclaim the right of humankind to establish equitable relations, to affirm that nations were obliged to combat fanaticism, intolerance, and religious discrimination, and to demand that 'autocratic' governments respect civil liberties. The Alliance was the first to demand equal education for boys and girls, which is now a virtually universally recognized principle, although women's right to social independence is still too often opposed today. In France, England, and Belgium, the Alliance organized the first international conferences to demand the protection of populations threatened by civil wars and poor government planing, tragedies that endure today, unfortunately.

By putting into place a philosophy of action that reconciled Jewish messianic hopes with the most innovative themes of European thinking, the Alliance founders had hoped to convince nations to construct a future of justice, solidarity, and respect for the human person. Despite undeniable progress, their generous utopia did not become a reality during their lifetimes because the political mechanisms that they had chosen were too weak to impose these values on devastating totalitarian governments. When he drafted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, René Cassin was basing himself on the century-long experience of the Alliance, of which he had been president from 1943-1976. He created a new supranational theory of the relationship between citizens and their governments. We can hope that this will have a positive influence on the current European constructions and on tomorrow's world.

Notes

1. Quotes taken from the *Call to Israelites*, May 1860, when the AIU was created.
2. See *Cahiers de l'AIU*, no. 23, Feb. 2001, pp. 50-51.
3. See *Bulletin de l'AIU*, May 1860, no. 10.
4. On the Alliance's application of positivist theories, especially in education, see G. Weill, *Emancipation et Progrès*, Paris, 2000, pp. 66-71 and 137-140.
5. The 2 founding committees of the Alliance included two graduates of the Superior Normal School, Eugène Manuel and Isidore Cahen; 2 polytechnicians, Jules Carvallo and Olry Terquem; 2 lawyers, the former minister Adolphe Crémieux, and Narcisse Leven; 3 members of the Institute, Adolphe Frank, F. Halévy, and Jean-Louis Koenigswarater; 2 Rabbis, Aristide Astruc and Mayer Charleville, 3 doctors, N. Otterbourg, Manuel Leven, and Ernest Schloss; 3 high-school professors, Léon Léopold, Ernest Lévi-Alvarès, and David Schornstein; at least 2 traders, Charles Netter and Michel Erlanger; 2 artists, Jules Erlanger and Moyse Stern.



The European Association for Jewish Culture:

The mission of the European Association for Jewish Culture is to enhance Jewish life by fostering and supporting artistic creativity and achievement, assisting scholarly research, and encouraging access to Jewish culture across Europe.

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no.7: 'Sephardic Maritime Routes and Experiences',
no.8: 'Hasidic Pilgrimages in Poland' and '1945-2000: Conditions for a Renaissance'

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