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Iceland, the Jews, and Anti-Semitism, 1625-2004

Vilhjálmur Örn Vilhjálmsson

Jews were only occasional visitors in Iceland from the 17th century onward. Until the 1930s, the Holy Scripture as well as the most recent European trends in anti-Semitism constituted nearly the only knowledge the Icelanders had about the Jews. Jews in the flesh materialized as Jewish refugees from Nazi Germany in the 1930s. Most of the refugees moved on to other countries, and some were even expelled or deported. In the postwar period, Jews living in Iceland remained an isolated group. They quickly realized that most Icelanders showed no concern about the sufferings some of them had undergone during WW II. Members of the prewar Icelandic Nazi Party became high-ranking officials, war criminals found safe haven in Iceland, and an odd, social-democratic politician even engaged in publishing an anti-Semitic journal along with the Protocols of the Elders of Zion in Icelandic. Possibly because of anti-Semitic sentiments, some Jews in Iceland tried to conceal their Jewish background altogether. At present, the small Icelandic Jewish community keeps a low profile amid rising anti-Semitism centered on the Middle East.

Vikings and Jews

For nearly 1100 years, Iceland - a rather large island in the North Atlantic with only one religion and one people, who allegedly descended from chieftains and kings in Norway - was a country without minorities. Thanks to archaeology and anthropology, we now know that the first settlers, who arrived in Iceland at the end of the ninth century, derived from different locations in Scandinavia and the northern British Isles. They were descended from a more heterogeneous group than the selection of noblemen from southwest Norway who authors of the medieval Icelandic *Sagas*, and other books, tried to convince themselves and others were their ancestry.[2]

A poor society of farmers inhabited this isolated island. The settlements consisted of scattered farms, and there were no towns or urban settlements. Losing their independence to Norwegian rule in the mid-13th century, then becoming a Danish colony in the 15th century, the inhabitants tried their best to survive under harsh conditions. Natural catastrophes such as volcanic eruptions and soil erosion, followed by famines and plagues, made life even more difficult and the population was often on the brink of extinction. A Jewish community in the European sense would never have been possible in Iceland before the 19th century, and even then it was absent. It was not until the 1930s that Jewish refugees started arriving in Iceland, and Icelanders began encountering Jews in the flesh. They were called *Gyðingar*, and most Icelanders only knew them from the Bible. In a country whose language has remained nearly the same for centuries, most foreign terms have been substituted with an Icelandic word. The word *Gyðingar*, which has existed in the language since the 11th century, has been the most widely used term for Jews in the Icelandic language, and is actually a diminutive form of the word *Guð* (God). The monks who wrote the Icelandic *Sagas* probably invented this word for the Chosen People. They even wrote a *Gyðinga Saga*, the Saga of the Jews, a colloquium of translations from the *First Book of Maccabees* and fragments from the writings of Flavius Josephus.[3]

The word *Júði* (plur. *Júðar*) was another word for Jews in the Icelandic language, deriving from the "south Germanic" languages. In the 17th century, both forms were given a negative connotation in Icelandic religious poetry. The Passion Psalms (*Passíusálmar*) were composed by the clergyman Hallgrímur Pétursson (1616-1674). There are fifty hymns in all, and *Júðar* and *Gyðingar* are mentioned at least fifty times and only for their perfidy, falseness, wickedness, and other malice. These hymns were, of course, written in the spirit of the day and reflected the contemporary trends in the religious poetry of Northern Europe. A typical passage is:

> The righteous Law of Moses
> The Jews here misapplied,
> Which their deceit exposes,
> Their hatred and their pride.
> The judgement is the Lord's.
> When by falsification
> The foe makes accusation,
> It's His to make awards.[4]

The very first documented information about a Jew in Iceland dates from the mid-1620s. Actually, the first Jew in Iceland was no longer a Jew when he arrived; he had converted to Christianity in Our Lady's Church in Copenhagen in the presence of the chancellor and the

State Council. In 1620, Daniel Salomon was baptized and his name changed to Johannes Salomon. Having been a poor Jew from Poland, the baptism gained him a career and respect. Later, in 1625, he received 6 *Rixdollars* (equaling 30 Marks in 1625) to travel "up to Iceland."[5] What he was supposed to do there, and how well he managed, we do not know.

In 1704 Jacob Franco, a Dutch Jew of Portuguese origin who had been allowed to settle in Copenhagen, was appointed to prepare and export all the tobacco that was to be sold to merchants in Iceland and on the Faeroe Isles. In 1710, Abraham Levin and his companion Abraham Cantor of Copenhagen were given similar responsibilities. Isak, the son of Abraham Cantor, held these same responsibilities from 1731.[6]

In 1815 the first "Jewish ship," the *Ulricha*, arrived in Iceland.[7] It was rented by a merchant, Ruben Moses Henriques of Copenhagen, who sold all sorts of fabrics, hats, and paper at a small trading post in North Iceland.[8]

In 1853 the Icelandic parliament, the Althing (*Alþingi*), rejected a request by the Danish king for an implementation of the law of 5 April 1850 on "The access for Foreign Jews to reside here in the State." The Danish law was not found suitable for Iceland. Two years later, the Icelandic parliament suddenly changed its position and announced to the king that the legislation should also apply to Iceland and that Danish Jews as well as foreign ones were welcome. In its letter to the king, the Althing explained its change of mind by the fact that the Jews were enterprising merchants who did not try to lure others to their religion. As far as we know, no Jews, either Danish or foreign, accepted this offer to settle in Iceland.[9]

In the 19th century there were very few Jews in Iceland; they were probably outnumbered by anti-Semites. One of the anti-Semites was the first president of the University of Iceland, Professor Björn M. Ólsen (1850-1919). As a young scholar at the University of Copenhagen, he submitted an essay to an Icelandic journal called *Þjóðólfur (Thyotholfer)*, the first periodical in Iceland. In it he wrote about a trading firm in the county of Húnavatnssýsla in North Iceland, which he referred to as the "Jewish congregation of merchants." He commented: "It is noteworthy that this firm has chosen a Hebrew name, and the Jewishness radiates from all of their activities....This firm wears various disguises, but Jews are always easily recognizable by their voice." Ólsen refers to this essay in a letter to an Icelandic professor in Cambridge, Eiríkur Magnússon: "I have, between ourselves, written an essay on a trading company in the county of Húnavatnssýsla, which I can imagine the Danish merchants will not be happy to read. I am interested in the company and their activities because I descend from Húnavatnssýsla. The essay will be distributed for free back home and is now in print."[10] The "Jewish merchants" whom Ólsen wrote about were, however, no more Jewish than he himself was.

There were also some 19th-century Icelandic cosmopolitans who wrote favorably about Jews. The poet Benedikt Gröndal stayed for nine years in the house of the Hartvigsen (Hartvigsohn) family in Copenhagen and had a pleasant time. He wrote: "The food is precisely like the food of the Christians, but they never ate any other meat than that prepared by a Jewish butcher. One is not allowed to fry in butter, but in some different form of fat." The poet and prefect Bjarni Thorarensen (1786-1841) was also an outspoken philo-Semite. He wrote to his countryman in Denmark, Professor Finnur Magnússon (1781-1847): "It is good that the Greeks become independent, although they are, and always have been scoundrels, because Europe has much to thank this nation for. But I say that the entire world has more reason to be grateful to the Jews." Thorarensen went on to quote the Danish author Johan Ludvig Heiberg from his play, *King Salomon and Jørgen the Hatter*: "Well, why don't they buy Palestine for them?"[11]

In the late 19th century, about 80 percent of the trade in Iceland was run by native Icelanders. A small number of the foreign trading agents and wholesale firms that were active in Iceland were owned by Danish Jews. Among them were the Arnhejms, agents from the firm of Albert Cohn, a merchant by the name of Gryn, and agents from the firm of A. Henriques & Zøylner.[12]

The Hungarian physician, journalist, and Zionist, Max Nordau (Simon Maximilian Südfeld, 1834-1923), came to Iceland in 1874, where he was supposed to cover the thousand-year jubilee for the settlement of Iceland. The country was a huge disappointment to Nordau, who wrote briefly about his visit in his book *From the Kremlin to Alhambra* (1880). In a letter to his family, he wrote that he would rather be a dog in Pest (a section of Budapest) than a traveler in Iceland.[13]

In 1906, a Danish shopkeeper named Fritz Heymann Nathan (1883-1942) arrived in Iceland. He quickly became a prosperous merchant. In 1913 Fritz Nathan, together with a Danish companion, founded the firm Nathan & Olsen in Reykjavík. After Fritz Nathan married in 1917, he quickly realized that because Iceland lacked the means for conducting a Jewish life, he could not keep living there with his family. He settled in Copenhagen, and traveled to and from Iceland and around Europe as an agent for the firm in Iceland. The firm was highly successful until the Icelandic government introduced trade restrictions in the 1930s. Back in 1916-1917, Fritz Nathan built the then-largest building in Iceland, which to this day is still somewhat majestic and continental in appearance. With its five stories it was for a while one of the wonders of Iceland.[14]

Another lone Jew who settled in Iceland was Poul O. Bernburg, a violinist who converted by marriage to a woman from one of the Danish families in Reykjavík. He, too, arrived in Reykjavík in 1906. In a cold country where musical instruments were rare, he and his music were welcomed by the bourgeoisie of Reykjavík. However, music was not a breadwinning profession in Iceland and Bernburg had to work at the Petroleum Company in Reykjavík. An Icelandic author, Jón Trausti, gave this description of Bernburg:

> For years I have seen him up next to the organ in the cathedral, where he strengthens the ongoing ceremony by playing his violin. And approximately one hour later he was on duty in his workman's clothes in toil with the petroleum. But wherever you see Bernburg, he is always happy and smiling and is nice to everyone. One never detects any signs of rooted bitterness and weariness. And wherever he goes it shows that he comes from a finer background than that of a common worker and that he has received a better upbringing. Even in his dirty workman's clothes, there is some kind of an elegance surrounding this man.[15]

Poul O. Bernburg was the son of a wealthy Danish merchant named Julius Isaac Liepman, who changed his name to Bernburg. Julius Bernburg held many positions in Danish commerce and cultural life. The younger Bernburg, who turned his back on his Jewish family in Denmark, received a yearly allowance from his father. The money was channeled through the Jewish Community Council in Copenhagen, and a minister in a Reykjavík church delivered it to Bernburg.[16]

The Arrival and Rejection of the Refugees

The fear that Icelanders showed toward foreigners in the 19th century did not wane during the first decades of the 20th century, despite the fact that the majority of merchants and other alleged suppressors now were Icelanders. An increase in Icelandic nationalism in the early 20th century may have fostered more xenophobia in the society. After 1918, when the country got home rule (it was hereafter still a part of the Danish kingdom with limited autonomy), Iceland's immigration policy mostly followed the legislation in Denmark. For instance, when Denmark shut its gates to the Austrian Jews in May 1938, the authorities in Reykjavík did the same a few weeks later. The situation for Jewish refugees in 1930s Iceland was generally worse than for other foreigners. During the Depression years it was much easier for non-Jewish immigrants, mostly Germans and Scandinavians, to obtain work and residence permits than for Jewish immigrants.[17]

While Iceland was closing its harbors and restricting certain professions to Icelandic citizens, many Icelanders also viewed Hitler and Nazism as a possibly key to gaining their independence. In 1939, three pro-Nazi Icelanders visited a German prince, Friedrich Christian zu Schaumburg-Lippe, and asked him to become the King of Iceland in case their hoped-for German takeover of Iceland materialized. The prince, a member of the Nazi Party since 1929 and an official of the Third Reich, took this request seriously and brought it to Joseph Goebbels. According to the prince's autobiography published in 1952, Goebbels liked the idea but Foreign Minister von Ribbentrop dismissed it.[18]

In 1933, a small Nazi Party was founded in Iceland. In 1934, it became a National Socialist Party, *Flokkur Þjóðernissinna* (the Nationalist Party) with connections to the German Nazi Party. The party never gained enough popularity to obtain seats in the parliament, and it gradually dissolved and mixed with other political parties in 1938. Like many other Icelandic politicians, the leading Nazis of Iceland wanted to preserve the alleged purity of the Icelandic race. Although the party could not make Icelandic Jews their archenemies, since there were so few Jews in Iceland, they saw Jews and Jewish conspiracies everywhere. In one of the Nazis' pamphlets, the politician Ólafur Thors was called "an honorable rabbi". His father, Thor Jensen, had risen from poverty as an orphan in Copenhagen to become the wealthiest man in Iceland. It was not, and still is not, uncommon in Iceland to hear and see the terms *Gyðingar* and *Júðar* attached to wealthy individuals with negative connotations.

Although the few Jewish refugees in Iceland had no significant problems with the Icelandic Nazis, they had a basic problem with the nationalistic Icelandic authorities. The Jews were simply not welcome in this country.

"A Pure Nordic Country, Free of Jews"

In the late 1930s, the *Hilfsverein der Juden in Deutschland* (the Aid Association of German Jews) monitored the situation in Iceland just as in other countries. With most European countries now in the process of totally closing their doors to Jewish refugees, the aim was to find what refuge was available. In a circular sent by the *Hilfsverein* in February 1939 to the *Auswanderberater in Reich* (the Emigration Consultant of the German Reich), there is a report on the situation for Jews in Iceland. The *Hilfsverein* concluded that a large emigration of Jews to Iceland was impossible. The information on the situation there came from Hans Mann, a young Jew from Berlin who had fled to Iceland with his mother. Hans Mann wrote:

> Hereby I notify the *Hilfsverein* that Hans R. [Hans Rottberger, his brother-in-law],who, who came here last year in June has received a rejection of his request for a residence permit, and has been expelled from Iceland. I am still here with my mother. We have no residence permit....We really want to get away from this unfriendly and inhospitable polar county, if only we could.
>
> The officials create all kinds of difficulties to prevent further immigration of foreigners. A foreigner only receives a residence permit if he has gained a recommendation from an Icelander as a semiskilled worker, whose skills are not already available in the country. Unemployment and poverty in the country force the authorities to take these measures.

> I support myself and my mother as a farmhand, but I cannot recommend for anyone to work with farming here. The way of living and the hardship in the countryside is in the long run unbearable for European people. The main food intake consists of fish and salted meat; vegetables are completely lacking. The frightful polar storms make that impossible. I am ill from my last occupation and have arrived in Reykjavík, where my mother is staying in a small room. I am blind in one of my eyes (detached retina) and have a rash all over my body (metabolic disorder). I aim at going to a more friendly country. This isolation from all Jewish life is nearly unbearable. I know only two Jews here. Both have married Icelanders in order not to get expelled.[19]

The reality was even worse than what Hans Mann described. In November 1937, his brother-in-law Hans Rottberger contacted the Danish legation in Reykjavík and asked for assistance because he and his family were threatened with expulsion. He had been reported to the police by an Icelander who claimed that Rottberger was robbing him of his market for leather goods. The first secretary of the Danish legation in Reykjavík, C.A.C. Brun, who on other occasions had helped Jews in Iceland, tried to do what he could. He wrote in his diary: "Although the Jewish policy of the Nazis might be necessary in principle, one is shocked when one is confronted with real cases, and Nordic countries should not be inhumane." The minister of the legation gave C.A.C. Brun permission to plead the case of the Jewish family to the Icelandic prime minister, Hermann Jónasson. Brun wrote in his diary about his discussion with the prime minister at a dinner in the Danish legation:

> After dinner I approached the prime minister. He showed extraordinary understanding for my arguments and authorizes me to announce to the little Jew that he definitely has to leave - it is a principle in Iceland; Iceland has always been a pure Nordic country, free of Jews, and those who have entered in the last years must leave - but: Rottberger can get a respite until spring to complete his affairs. Fair enough![20]

Before the Rottberger family was expelled to Denmark in May 1938, the largest Icelandic newspaper wrote in its lead article: "It must be welcomed that the authorities have shown firmness in dealing with these vagabonds....Hopefully the authorities will ensure...that foreigners, who are still here without a residence permit will be sent out of the country immediately."[21]

A young Jew from Leipzig was also poorly treated in Iceland. Alfred Kempner came to Iceland already in 1935, after having stayed in Copenhagen, where he had moved in the hope of getting a job in his uncle's firm. But restrictions on Jewish refugees in Denmark made that impossible. In Iceland he quickly found a job on a farm, but the wages were meager. By January 1938, he was unemployed. He tried to earn a little by giving private German lessons, but the income was insufficient to cover the rent at the small guesthouse where he was staying in Reykjavík. The owner of the guesthouse eventually contacted the police, who apprehended Alfred Kempner for being without means. He was sent on the first boat to Bergen in Norway. There the Norwegian authorities refused to admit him and sent him back. Back in Reykjavík, Kempner explained that he had family in Copenhagen.

Alfred Kempner sat in a Reykjavík prison while the police authorities decided what to do with him. In May 1938 he was expelled and sent to Copenhagen, with instructions written by the director of the Division of Immigration of the Chief of Police in Reykjavík, and an attached translation in German. These documents state:

> A German citizen, Mr. Alfred Kempner, is being sent to Copenhagen on board the steamship *Brúarfoss*. Mr. Kempner has been expelled from Iceland because he was without means. In accordance with specific wishes he is being transferred to Copenhagen, as he has declared that he plans to apply for a residence permit there. I take the liberty to ask the police authorities to take care of his further transfer to Germany in case he does not get a residence permit in Denmark. All expenses related to that will of course be covered by Icelandic authorities. Attached you will find his passport, the report of the police authorities in Bergen, as well as a German translation of a report that the police authorities here have written on his case.[22]

Thus the Icelandic authorities were willing to cover all expenses related to expelling Alfred Kempner to Germany in case Denmark was not willing to accept him. Upon his arrival in Copenhagen, the message from the Icelandic authorities was delivered to the Immigration Department of the Danish State Police. The police officer who wrote the report on the case was clearly somewhat resentful of the Icelandic procedure. In a note to the Justice Ministry he wrote: "It should result in a reprimand that the Icelandic authorities execute expulsions in such a manner without any approval from Danish authorities." A young official in the Justice Ministry, Erik Hastrup, who actively participated in expelling stateless Jews from Denmark to Germany during WW II, wrote the following, which alludes to the Rottberger family, who had been expelled to Denmark somewhat earlier than Kempner: "Isn't it possible now for the police to establish with the Icelanders that they must send their Germans directly off to their native country, because we are not interested in them?"[23] Alfred Kempner was, however, just barely, allowed to stay in Denmark, while several other Jews who were expelled or rejected by the Icelandic authorities had to return to Germany and Austria and were murdered in extermination camps.

Only a small number of Icelanders pleaded the case of the Jewish refugees in Iceland. They include the doctors Katrín Thoroddsen and Jónas Sveinsson, the author Hendrik Ottósson, the publisher and Manufacturer Ragnar Jónsson, as well as the afore-mentioned secretary of the Danish legation in Reykjavík, C.A.C. Brun. Generally, however, Icelandic spiritual leaders, ministers, bishops, academics, and authors did not lend support to the refugees. Icelandic

authors who did not espouse romantic nationalism, or even National Socialism, were often acolytes of Stalin and the Soviet empire.

The greatest Icelandic author of the 20th century, Halldór Kiljan Laxness, winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1955, was in Berlin in 1936 during the Olympics. At that stage he was a convinced socialist if not a communist. A "Jewish girl with a hooky nose," as Laxness described the daughter of an alleged Jewish acquaintance, provided him with tickets for the games at the *Reichsstadion* in Berlin on 9 June 1936.[24] However, Laxness did not tell his readers about a second trip he made to Berlin in 1936. He made this trip after having defended Stalin at a PEN conference in Rio de Janeiro. This time the purpose of the author's visit to Nazi Germany was to collect the royalties that the Austrian publishing house Zinnen owed him and his agent Steen Hasselbalch in Denmark.[25] Laxness eventually wrote in one of his memoirs that he had problems with the publishing house's offices in Germany because of rumors that he had a hostile attitude toward Nazi Germany.[26] More likely the publishing firm, which was owned by Jewish families in Austria and not by Social Democrats as Laxness claimed, had difficulties paying the authors whose work the branch in Germany published. The Danish Foreign Ministry hurriedly sent a letter to the Danish legation in Berlin that was supposed to assure the German authorities that Laxness was totally nonpolitical - or possibly a Social Democrat at most.[27]

WWII and Iceland

On a cold day in the fall of 1940, Yom Kippur was observed for the first time in Iceland. In fact, this marked both the first Jewish and the first non-Christian service in the country since the Icelanders embraced Christianity in the year 1000. On 10 May 1940, British forces (whom some Icelanders considered British occupiers) had arrived in Reykjavík, and more kept coming in the following months. Among them were Jewish servicemen, who immediately sought coreligionists and a synagogue. There was no synagogue to be found, but eventually they found some refugees who had arrived a few years earlier and been allowed to stay.

One of these was a Jewish woman from Berlin, Henny Goldstein Ottósson (born Rosenthal). She married an Icelander by the name of Hendrik Ottósson. By marrying her and adopting her twelve-year-old son, Ottósson saved the two of them from expulsion. Henny's mother, Minna Lippmann, had also against all odds been allowed to stay in Reykjavík. She greatly missed Jewish life, and her Icelandic son-in-law contacted the British forces to find out if there were any Jews among them. The result was the first non-Christian religious service in Iceland in 940 years. About twenty-five Jewish soldiers from England, Scotland, and Canada gathered together with eight Jewish refugees and Hendrik Ottósson, who had studied Hebrew, as their *shames* (sexton).

The Icelandic authorities offered the chief of the British military chaplains, Chaplain Hood, that the Jews could borrow a chapel in Reykjavik's old cemetery to conduct their services. Hendrik Ottósson found this proposition insulting and instead rented the hall of the Good Templars' Lodge for the services. He and his wife improvised interior changes to make the hall look like a synagogue, and with some help from a librarian they borrowed the only Torah available in town.

Without a rabbi, with only two prayer shawls and one skullcap, the new congregation's services went well. Alfred Conway, a cantor from Leeds, sang the Kol Nidre prayer. Chaplain Hood gave a speech and talked about British soccer and long jump. The audience was not impressed. After the full day of fasting and services, followed by a photographing session, the hungry people gathered for a meal at a nearby Reykjavík hotel, and the first Jewish congregation in Iceland was officially founded. Arnold Zeisel, an elderly manufacturer of leather goods from Vienna, became the first head of the community. In the following years this group gathered regularly, until American forces took over from the British. The first bar mitzvah in Iceland took place on the Shabbat of Passover, 1941, though the matzos arrived too late for that Passover. And the community persevered during that year even though the British forces were unwilling to send a rabbi to Iceland.

After the American forces succeeded the British army in 1941- 1942, Jewish life in Reykjavík and on nearby military bases became more active. Late in 1941 an American field rabbi arrived in Iceland, and the congregation had grown so large that a new building had to be found for the services. Apart from the congregation of American soldiers, which some of the Jewish refugees were members of, there was also an Orthodox congregation that had a synagogue in a corrugated-iron hut, opposite the building where the larger community held their services. The American rabbis who were stationed in Iceland during the war maintained contacts with the refugee Jews. The German-speaking Jews liked the modern, fresh approach of the young American rabbis, unlike what they had experienced in Germany or Austria. Some of them were shocked, however, to learn that some of the Reform rabbis excluded prayers such as Kol Nidre.[28]

At the Rosh Hashana service in 1944 at the Keflavík airbase, there were five hundred Jews present and a Torah scroll was flown in from the United States. From that point till the mid-1950s there were two Jewish congregations in Iceland. In 1944 the number of Jewish servicemen in Iceland was estimated at 2000 out of a total of 70,000, and for a few years a rabbi was stationed in Keflavík.

The world first heard about Jews in Iceland when the journalist and author Alfred Joachim Fischer[29] wrote about Jewish life there after his visit in 1955.[30] A Jewish refugee from Germany who eventually settled in London and Berlin, Fischer's account was based on Hendrik Ottósson's description of the first Jewish service in Reykjavík in 1940. Fischer mentioned that

nearly all Jews who had come to Iceland and been naturalized had taken Icelandic names, as the law demanded. Harry Rosenthal became Haraldur Magnússon, Hans Mann became Hans Jacobsson, Heinz Karl Friedländer became Hjörtur Haraldsson (although his father's first name was Josef and not Haraldur), and Otto Weg became Ottó Arnaldur Magnússon.

God's Chosen Nation

The Republic of Iceland was founded in 1944. The ties to Denmark were finally severed while Denmark was occupied by Germany. In the new Republic, which boasted the oldest parliament in the world, anti- Semitism did not disappear. Jónas Guðmundsson (1898-1973), head of a department in the Social Affairs Ministry and a Social Democrat member of parliament,[31] was obsessed with the "Jewish and Zionist plans for world domination." During 1946-1958 he published a journal that focused mainly on the "dangerous Jews." In 1951, he published an Icelandic translation of the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. Guðmundsson was a great follower of a British eccentric named Adam Rutherford, who in 1939 published a book maintaining that the Icelanders were the descendants of the "real" Jews[32] - specifically, the lost tribe of the Benjaminites.

About the war, Guðmundsson had this to say in his journal: "WW II was also their [the communists'] invention and the Zionists organized a fabulous plan to destroy Germany, the bulwark of the free states of Europe. They created and supported the Nazi Party and introduced Hitler as its leader. The quest for the destruction of the Jews was only a propaganda trick, created in order to fool the opponents."[33] Only five years after WW II, a Social Democrat in Iceland could express himself thus without any consequences.[34]

Jónas Guðmundsson was only an extreme case of the widespread Icelandic xenophobia. Like Prime Minister Jónasson in 1938, people wanted to keep Iceland "racially pure." From WW II till the 1960s, several Icelandic cabinets led by different political parties asked the U.S. military authorities not to send black soldiers to the NATO bases in Iceland, and the U.S. government complied. This became more difficult after the human rights legislation of 1964.[35]

Becoming an Icelander

The small Icelandic Jewish population has never played a role in Icelandic-Israeli relations. Iceland was, however, one of the thirty-three states that voted in favor of Israel's establishment in the UN Partition Resolution of 29 November 1947. That day an Icelandic diplomat, Thor Thors, gave the first speech at the United Nations.[36]

Meanwhile, the Jews in Iceland kept a low profile during the postwar period, preoccupied with becoming "good Icelandic citizens." Most of them wanted to attract as little attention as possible to their background and religion, preferring to adopt a new Icelandic identity. With their new, Icelandic, "Viking" names, new lives, and often a new religion, they sought to avoid further unpleasant experiences, having already endured so much as Jews in prewar Europe and during the Holocaust.

There was hardly any basis for Jewish life in Iceland after WW II. Many of the Jews were not religious and kept to themselves, avoiding contacts with other Jews. As we have seen, trends in Icelandic society made Jews want to conceal their Jewish background.

One of the Jewish refugees allowed to stay in Iceland during the war was Ottó Arnaldur Magnússon, formerly Otto Weg (1893-1984). He was born in Leipzig and had a doctorate in geology as well as mathematics. In November 1938, Otto Weg and his brother Franz were transported together with 148 other Jewish men from Leipzig to the Buchenwald concentration camp. On 9 December 1938, Otto Weg was released. The next day he was notified that his brother had been killed in the camp.[36]

Otto Weg never received an academic post in Iceland despite being, for a long time, the best-qualified geologist in the country. He made a living from construction work and later from giving private lessons and publishing small pamphlets with solutions to problems in the algebra and Latin books of the Icelandic high schools. His solutions were an invaluable pedagogical aid to a few generations of Icelandic students, who struggled with hopelessly outdated books. Everyone knew that Otto Weg's solutions could be purchased in a certain secondhand bookstore in Reykjavík. Otto always stressed to this author the importance of putting one's old life behind if one wanted to become an Icelander. For him Judaism had vanished in the Holocaust, like most of his family, and he constantly warned this author against Zionism. Whether Otto Weg was ever looked upon as a true Icelander in his new country, as he desired, is doubtful.

In other cases, Jews tried to protect their nearest ones from any knowledge about their origins and past. In September 1983, this author met an Israeli named Eliahu Arbel (née Elemer Günsberger) in London. When Mr. Arbel heard that the author was from Iceland, he asked whether the author knew a Jewish woman there from Slovakia. Although the answer was negative, it turned out that Mr. Arbel and the woman were distantly related and that he wanted to get in touch with her again since they came from the same town in Slovakia, Ruzomberok. She had married an Icelander in England.

The author was able to establish contact between these two people, and did not hear further from Mr. Arbel until the latter located the author in Copenhagen in 1998. It turned out that the woman in Iceland died a few years after the contacts were established, and Mr. Arbel and her

relatives in Israel wanted very much to get in touch with her children. The author was able to locate her oldest son, a businessman in Reykjavík who had just turned fifty. The news that his mother had been Jewish obviously came as a shock to him. Upset, he claimed there must be a misunderstanding; his mother had, to his knowledge, been a Christian and there were no Jews in the family. He wrote: "It is certain that my mother was born and raised in the Christian faith and as such she was both baptized and confirmed. Both her parents were, according to my best information, of the Christian faith."[38]

Skeptical about the whole situation, this author translated the response for Mr. Arbel, who immediately wrote back and explained every detail about the woman's background, enclosing letters and proofs from her relatives in Israel. It seemed she came from distinguished Jewish families on both her father's and mother's sides, and among their ancestry was a well-known rabbi from Utrecht in Holland.

After receiving the documents, the oldest son concluded about his mother: "She seems according to everything to have been a Jew on both sides of her parents' families. If she, herself, was of the Jewish faith, then she succeeded completely to conceal this from us, her children."[39] Now the family is at ease with their newly discovered background and are in touch with their relatives in Hungary and Israel.

Why did the woman hide and repress her background, like so many other Jews in Iceland? Mr. Arbel had an explanation: "From her letters I learned that Icelanders are not very sympathetic toward Jews. She asked me never to mention her Jewish descent and contacts with Jews, and if I remember properly, I sent my letters through London, where I visited from time to time on my business trips and where a family from our town in Slovakia lived since 1939....I used to send my letters to her with their help and vice versa."[40]

Iceland and the Holocaust

With regard to the Holocaust, Iceland is not a blank page. A few Icelandic members of the Waffen-SS fought for Nazi Germany, and a few Icelanders served in concentration camps in 1943-1944, including one who served as a guard at the notorious Dora-Mittelbau camp in Germany, also known as Dora-Nordhausen.[41] The son of Sveinn Björnsson, the first president of the Republic of Iceland, was a member of the S. S. He was rescued from prosecution in Denmark by the Icelandic authorities and later lived in Argentina. There were also non-Jewish Icelanders living abroad who were killed in concentration camps because their Nazi countrymen in, for instance, Norway and Germany had informed on them regarding their political views. Most Icelanders who served in the Third Reich were treated with contempt after the war.[42] However, there was a lapse of memory when it came to the former members of Iceland's own Nazi Party. After the war, some of them quickly attained high positions in society, including a couple of chiefs of police, a bank director, and some doctors.

In 1997, it did not make headlines in Iceland when it became known that in the late 1930s the Icelandic authorities had offered to pay for the further expulsion of Jews to Germany, if the Danish authorities would not take care of them after they had been expelled from Iceland (as in the above-described case of Alfred Kempner).[43] In 2000, Iceland participated in a Holocaust conference in Stockholm, and it has signed a declaration of the European Council that obliges the member states to teach the Holocaust in their schools. In reality, this has not meant increased instruction on the Holocaust and genocide in Iceland's educational system.[44] However, there seems to be a great need for such information about the Holocaust. In 1994-1995, the Icelandic daily *Morgunblaðið* published a series of letters to the editor by an Icelandic Holocaust denier. An Icelandic neo-Nazi participated in the ensuing debate, and wrote in response to one of the few critics of the Holocaust denier: "the goal of [his] article is to destroy the Icelandic nation, because he doubts the importance of the Icelandic language, our beautiful mother tongue. It is barbaric to want to destroy one's nation, and not wish for the success of the Aryan race. The truth will be revealed, this discussion is just beginning."[45]

Such views are not rare in Iceland, and should possibly be seen as ultimate manifestations of a bizarre form of Icelandic ethnocentrism that was quite widespread in the late 20th century. As the director of the Icelandic Language Center, *Íslensk Málstöð*, remarked in 1994: "I dread that the Icelanders have neglected education about themselves. There is a danger that foreigners can fill us with lies if we are not ready with arguments. Those among us who lack knowledge cannot contradict the arguments of ignorant people."[46]

A War Criminal in Iceland

Evald Mikson, an Estonian war criminal who was assisted by Swedish authorities to escape prosecution, ended up in Iceland when the ship that was carrying him from Sweden to the United States ran aground there. He was, like many other foreigners in Iceland, never fully accepted as an Icelander, even with his brand new Icelandic name, Eðvald Hinriksson. It helped, however, that his sons were members of Iceland's national soccer team and, later, successful professional players for famous teams abroad. Many Icelanders were ready to believe the lies Mikson told in his biography, published in Iceland in 1988,[47] about his role in WW II Estonia. A request by the Israeli branch of the Simon Wiesenthal Center that the Icelandic authorities investigate Mikson's case sparked sharply negative responses. The State of Israel, which was not involved in the request for an investigation, was blamed for attacking a good Icelandic citizen. During a debate in the Althing, many members of the parliament related the request to Middle Eastern politics. Among them was Dr. Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson, leader of a left-wing party in the Althing, who in 1996 was elected president of Iceland. Dr.

Grímsson criticized the Israeli government and reminded it of the "murder" of Hezbollah leader Abbas Musawi and of Israeli attacks on Southern Lebanese towns. The mayor of Reykjavík, Ingibjörg Sólrún Gísladóttir, claimed that "the Israeli authorities were no special representatives of justice despite the terrible Holocaust of the Jews during WW II."[48]The mayor also argued in an op-ed that Nazi hunters make it "easier for the military State of Israel to define itself as a victim that can claim the sympathy of the world community, and not as an aggressor that violently attacks other nations [in the Middle East]."[49]

The entire Icelandic media, except for one weekly, kept silent because of political pressure and published no information about the case apart from a few initial reports. Efraim Zuroff, director of the Simon Wiesenthal Center in Jerusalem, was proclaimed one of the main enemies of Iceland because of his wish to have Mikson prosecuted.[50] *Íþróttastjörnur (Stars of Sport)*, a book published in 1992, contains nearly as much information about Evald Mikson as about his son, one of the book's athletic heroes. Atli, the son, is quoted as saying:

> [My father] is persecuted and defamed by a foreign group of fanatics, and has to tolerate the worst...accusations that have been published about an Icelandic citizen....By attacking the Estonians and accusing them of war crimes against the Jews, the Wiesenthal Center will do the Russians a great favor. At the same time, the Center once more gains worldwide sympathy for the Jews. If the Center could find many Estonians who could be accused of war crimes against the Jews, that would undoubtedly give a bad name to the Estonian nation. In that way the Simon Wiesenthal Center would simultaneously help the Russians to strengthen their position in Estonia. Possibly there is some collaboration going on. Although dad is persecuted by a fanatic organization, which thinks it is working in the name of the Jewish people, my view on the Jews has not been changed. I have nothing against them, because most of them have nothing to do with this organization."[51]

Evald Mikson died in 1993, shortly after the Icelandic government and the state prosecutor finally decided to take into account all the evidence they had received from the Wiesenthal Center and Estonian archives.

On 3 October 1999, the daily *Morgunblaðið* published an interview with Atli Edvaldsson titled "The Devil Never Sleeps." Edvaldsson told about the last time he saw his father alive: "dad said to me: Dear Atli, remember to finish my case. And he also said: The Devil never sleeps. He wanted me to remember that although Communism had collapsed, the Soviet Union had crashed, and even though he was dead and gone, the persecution would not stop." In a sinister response to Zuroff's reaction[52] to this interview with Edvaldsson and the incorrect information it contained, the editors of *Morgunblaðið* claimed that the evidence against Mikson was not reliable because some of it originated with the KGB.[53]The editors also argued that the Wiesenthal Center possessed no confession from Mikson, nor a verdict to back up its charges against him.[54] Yet *Morgunblaðið*, which in 1992 decided not to report on the evidence supplied by the Wiesenthal Center, paid little if any attention to the conclusion of the Estonian International Commission for the Investigation of Crimes against Humanity, published in 2001, that Evald Mikson had committed war crimes and engaged in the murder of Jews.[55] Some individuals in Iceland continued to defend Mikson and even blamed Israel for the results of the Estonian report.[56]

Anti-Semitism on the Rise

As already mentioned, Jews in Iceland experienced open anti-Semitism before the issue of Israel and the Middle East conflict emerged. Today, in a country with so few Jews, the sentiments toward the State of Israel are probably the best way of measuring anti-Semitism.

Trends tend to come quickly to Iceland, and the resurgent European anti-Semitism is no exception. In October 2003, the chairman of the Icelandic Palestinian Association posted on the group's website a message called "Israel, Israel, über alles." Support for the Palestinians in Iceland is now characterized by repeated comparisons of Israel to Nazi Germany. At the same time, the Israelis are condemned for "misusing the Holocaust."

The following message was posted on the website of the Icelandic state telephone company, SÍMI, on 30 May 2004:

> I have nothing against the Jews but I cannot tolerate the Israelis. The goals of the Israelis are simple. Their aim is that only Jews can live in their state. They suppress the Palestinians and kill them with the lousy excuse that they are preventing terrorism. If you take a look at the Israeli flag, you can see two blue lines and between them the star. The blue lines in the flag symbolize the Nile and Euphrates rivers and the star between them means that only Jews are supposed to live between these rivers. As I said, their goals are obvious.[57]

The Icelandic Jews Today

News about Jews in Iceland is scant. In one instance, a news agency reported that a rabbi had scalded some bystanders when he accidentally poured boiling water on them while performing a ritual cleansing at a fish factory, which aimed to begin exporting the renowned Icelandic fish to kosher consumers in the United States. There have also been singles tours for young Jews to Iceland, with a Shabbat service in a geothermal lagoon as the main event.[58] A recent Canadian documentary argued that Jews are buried in the old cemetery in Reykjavík and that

their headstones are engraved with the Star of David.[59] There is, however, a different and much simpler explanation for the Star of David that is found on some Icelandic headstones and as an ornament on a few houses in Reykjavík: it was used as a motif by the relatively numerous Freemasons in Iceland. A Jewish-Icelandic connection was, however, confirmed when the above-mentioned president of Iceland, Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson, married the Israeli citizen Dorrit Mussaieff on 14 May 2003, making her the world's first Jewish First Lady and first Israeli one outside Israel. Grímsson having won a third term in the June 2004 presidential election, the couple will occupy the presidential manor until at least 2008.

Nowadays, a new generation of Icelandic Jews gather on the Jewish holidays. Religious observance is very liberal. The community uses a printed Torah scroll that was donated by Hans Mann before he died. In recent years there have been four bar- and bat mitzvahs in Reykjavík.[60] The Jewish community has discussed applying for registration as a religious organization, but there has never been sufficient interest to do so. Amid the strong support for the Palestinian cause, most Icelandic Jews have not wanted to attract attention to themselves as Jews. Most Icelanders are still unaware that there are Jews in the country, and the handful of Jews would rather not change that perception because of the anti-Semitic climate.

On the American NATO base in Keflavík, there has been a Jewish congregation since WW II. A decade ago, the multi-religious Temple of Light was built on the base; one of its halls can be transformed into a synagogue. That was also the case in the 1970s. The temple was then in an old, military, corrugated-iron hut. During Jewish services, Catholic figurines were kept in closed chests on the wall, ready to be taken out for the Catholic mass the following day, after the menorahs had been removed and the *bima* (podium) and Ark of the Torah slid behind a curtain.

The Jews in Iceland are but a small number of the newcomers who have made Icelandic life more varied and interesting in recent decades. Increasing immigration to Iceland demands greater tolerance by the Icelanders. The attitude that there is only room for one "minority" in Iceland, the Icelanders themselves, should be abandoned. It is not likely that the Icelandic Jews will be the touchstones for this nation's tolerance. However, the history of the Jews in Iceland could function as a guide so that past mistakes will not be repeated with other immigrants and religions in Icelandic society.

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Notes

* In memory of Eliahu Arbel, z''l

1. A slightly shorter version of this article with illustrations first appeared in *Rambam* (No. 12, 2003), a journal published by the Society for Danish Jewish History. The author wishes to thank Michael Levin (Reykjavík) and Eva Fischer (Berlin).
2. In the first settlement population in Iceland there were elements of Sami (Lappish) people as well as people from the British Isles, but the community was predominantly from Norway; see Vilhjálmsson (1990). Studies undertaken by Hans Christian Petersen (University of South Denmark, Odense) on the oldest skeletal remains in the National Museum of Iceland show great metric variations in the skeletal remains of the earliest population of Iceland, indicating admixture of different ethnic groups.
3. *Kulturhistorisk Leksikon for Nordisk Middelalder*, Vol. 5, cols. 603-604 (Icelandic).
4. Pétursson (1978), hymn 25, verse 4. The hymns are read every evening on Icelandic National Radio for fifty days before Easter.
5. *Rigsarkivet* [Danish National Archive], *Archive of the University of Copenhagen:* 85, *Acta consistorii 1619-26*, fol. 96 (Danish); *ibid. Acta consistorii 1619-26*, fol. 415 (entry of 9 February 1625) (Danish); Katz (1981), p. 59; Weitemeyer (1919), p. 338 .
6. Salomon and Fischer (1914), pp. 31, 129-131.
7. Espólín (1855), Vol. 4, Ch. 79.
8. Information kindly provided by the Icelandic historian Snorri G. Bergsson. For information about Ruben Moses Henriques (b. 1787) and the important Henriques family in Denmark, see Metzon (1989), Henriques (1994).
9. *Tíðindi frá Alþingi Íslendinga 1853*, pp. 46-49; 214-225, 260-261, 350-353, 615-625, 635-641, 840-851, 1032-1034 (Icelandic); Bergsson (1995) has argued that Iceland witnessed a settlement of "Jewish conversos" in Reykjavík after the trade restrictions were lifted in Iceland in 1855. That, however, is wishful thinking, which simply relates to speculations about the origins of some of the Danish merchants in Iceland. Most of the merchants were in fact of Danish or German, not Jewish, origin. For two decades after 1855, 50-60 percent of all merchants in Iceland were either Danish or of other non-Icelandic nationality.
10. Pétursson (2003), p. 21.
11. Helgason 1943), pp. 186, 298; *Rigsarkivet* [Danish National Archives], Private archive No. 5943, A.I. 5 (Danish). Thorarensen's letter was written to Professor Finnur Magnússon on 2 March 1830; Pétursson (2003), p. 20.
12. The owner was Gustav Henriques (1859-1939); Metzon (1989), p. 93, Henriques (1994), pp. 56-62.
13. Nordau (1881); see Bergsson (1995). Later in life Nordau was better known as the president of the first World Zionist Congresses.
14. Nathan (1993), pp. 83-87; Hammerich (1992), pp. 279-282; interview (11 September 1997) with Professor Ove Nathan, son of Fritz Heyman Nathan, at the Niels Bohr Institute in Copenhagen. The company still uses the old name Nathan & Olsen, and is one of the largest food import concerns in Iceland.
15. Here in the translation of the author; see Pétursson (2000), p. 25.
16. Pétursson (2000), pp. 24-25.
17. Bergsson (1994), pp. 28-29; According to a law passed on 31 May 1927 on restrictions on employment, managing industries, and so on, the rights for foreigners seeking employment in Iceland were limited. Foreigners could only be employed as farmhands or as crewmembers in the Icelandic fleet. A law of 23 June 1936 set even stricter regulations for foreigners; a departmental order of 16 October 1937 introduced various restrictions that mainly affected Jews.
18. Helgason (1992), p. 85 .. Prince Friedrich Christian zu Schaumburg-Lippe's book (Wiesbaden, 1952) was titled *Zwischen Krone und Kerker*.
19. A translation from the German by the author from: "Rundchreiben B Nr. 378 an alle Auswanderberater im Reich und die Sachberarbeiter im Hause. Betrag: Einwanderung nach Island," which includes a transcript of Hans Mann's letter to the *Hilfsverein* of 28 January 1939;U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, *USHMM Archives, RG-11.001M.01. Reichssicherheitshauptamt CRSHAJ-SD Berlin (Osoby; Fond 500, Opis 1; Folder 686) (German)*. (This material originates from *Reichssicherheitshauptamt* in Berlin, and was micro-filmed for the USHMM in Russian archives in 1993.)
20. C.A.C. Brun's personal diary for 1937, entry for 17 November 1937 (yet to be published).
21. For more on the Rottberger family's continuing problems in Denmark, see Blüdnikow and Vilhjálmsson (1997), p. 4.
22. *Rigsarkivet* [Danish National Archive], Archive of the Danish State Police, Division of Immigration, Foreigner's file 39.222: The Chief of Police in Reykjavík, Division of Immigration to the Passport Control Office in Copenhagen: (a) *"Abschrift nach dem Verhandlungsprotokolle Ausländer betreffend,"* signed by Ragnar Jónsson of the office of the Chief of the Reykjavík Police, translated into German by Professor Guðbrandur Jónsson; (b) the director of the Division of Immigration of the Chief of Police in Reykjavík, Jónatan Hallvarðsson, to his Danish colleagues, 28 May

1938. Hallvarðsson (1903-1970) later became a justice on the Icelandic Supreme Court. He was a trainee at the Criminal Police of the Gestapo in Berlin in 1933-1934.
23. *Rigsarkivet* [Danish National Archive], Archive of the State Police, Division of Immigration, Foreigners' file 39.222 (Danish); see Vilhjálmsson (1997), pp. 4-6.
24. Laxness (1962), pp. 267-269.
25. *Rigsarkivet* [Danish National Archive], Archive of the Foreign Ministry, the Legation in Berlin (delivered in 1951): "81.A. 91: Icelandic writer Halldor Laxness." The letters are from the period 17 October 1936 to 24 March 1937, as well as March 1938.
26. Laxness (1943), pp. 282-289.
27. *Rigsarkivet* [Danish National Archive}, Archive of the Foreign Ministry, the Legation in Berlin (delivered in 1951): "81.A. 91, Icelandic writer Halldor Laxness": The Foreign Ministry (J. Krabbe) to the Danish envoy in Berlin, Chamberlain Zahle, 20 October 1936.
28. Ottósson (1951), pp. 165-169; Vilhjálmsson (1994), p. 39; idem (1998), pp. 3-5; Fischer (1958a, 1958b).
29. Alfred Joachim Fischer (1909-1992) fled to Turkey from Nazi Germany. After WW II, when not travelling and reporting from all over the world, he had a base in London and after 1959 in Berlin. He came to Denmark in the 1930s. His autobiography was published in Fischer (1991).
30. The article was titled "Juden in Island" (Fischer, 1957). It was kindly provided by Eva Fischer (b. Haas) in Berlin, who is the widow of Alfred Fischer. Later, similar articles were published under the titles "Jews in Iceland" (Fischer, 1958a) in the journal of the Association of Jewish Refugees in London, and "Die Juedischen Gemeinden in Island" in the German version of *Jediot Aharonot* (Fischer, 1958b);Wiener Library, London, press cuttings, Denmark (Iceland).
31. Jónas Guðmundsson was chairman of the National Association of Municipalities in Iceland for a number of years, a member of and chairman of the Icelandic ILO (International Labour Organisation) delegation, and chairman of numerous committees and boards on social welfare in Iceland and abroad.
32. Adam Rutherford, *Israel-Britain: An Explanation of the Origin, Function and Destiny of the Norse-Anglo-Celto-Saxon Race in the British Empire, USA, Holland, Scandinavia and Iceland* (London, 1939).
33. *Dagrenning*, June 1950 (Icelandic); Sigurðsson (1993). The website of the Icelandic parliament does not mention a word about Jónas Guðmundsson's literary production in an otherwise detailed biography of him.
34. In 1995, when living in Reykjavík, this author received a pamphlet in the mail. It was titled "A Jubilee for Iceland" and originated from a post box address in Calhoun, Georgia, USA. This pamphlet, which was sent to all Icelandic addresses, contained claims such as: "Since these Khazar-Aschkenaz Jews of today trace their own lineage back to their forefather Japhet - the progenitor of the Gentiles - then the term 'anti-Semitic' has no foundation whatsoever." It also claims that the modern Jews are really Khazars who have stolen the true Jewish identity from the Icelanders among others.
35. Whitehead (1974), p. 6.
36. Eban (1977), pp. 97-99.
37. *Thüringischen Hauptstaatsarchiv*, Weimar: "Geldkarte der Geldverwaltung des Lagers Buchenwalds für Otto Weg" (Häftlings, No. 24497), and "Frantz Weg" (Häftlings, No. 30535); a list containing the names of the Weg brothers from Leipzig is titled: "Überführung festgenommener Juden nach dem Konzentrationslager Buchenwald"; also informative was a letter from the Gestapo *Staatspolizeistelle Leipzig* to *Das Kommandantur des Konzentrationslagers Buchenwalds* of 11 November 1938 (German). The information was kindly provided by Gedenkstätte Buchenwald in a letter of 23 September 1997.
38. According to wishes of the family of the woman from Rozumberok, her name is not mentioned.
39. The son of the woman from Rozumberok, in a letter to the author of 15 July 1998.
40. Information provided by Eliahu Arbel (Ramat Gan, Israel) in a letter to the author of 18 May 1998.
41. Dora-Mittelbau was originally a subcamp of Buchenwald. Prisoners from Buchenwald were sent to the area in 1943 to begin construction of a large industrial complex. In October 1944, the SS made Dora-Mittelbau an independent concentration camp with more than thirty subcamps of its own. In 1943, prisoners at Dora-Mittelbau began construction of large underground factories and development facilities for the V-2 missile program and other experimental weapons.
42. See Guðmundsson (1996).
43. Vilhjálmsson (1997).
44. Information provided by Sólrún Jensdóttir, head of the international section of the Icelandic Education Ministry, in an email of 7 January 2003. Iceland has agreed to hold a "Day of Remembrance" in the schools from 2003, in accordance with a decision reached in a seminar on "Teaching about the Holocaust and Artistic Creation," Strasbourg, 17-19 October 2002.
45. A letter to the editor by I. Sigurðsson, "Um kynþœtti" (On Races), *Morgunblaðið*, 25 February 1995, p. 49 (Icelandic).
46. The author's translation from Icelandic from an interview with Baldur Jónsson, director of *Íslensk Málstöð* (the Icelandic Language Institute), titled *"Allt er í húfi"* (Everything at Stake), published in *Morgunblaðið*, 8 May 1994, pp. 24-25 (Icelandic).
47. Mikson's biography was published in 1988 in Einar Sanden, *úr eldinum til Í sland* (From the Fire to Iceland) (Reykjavík: Almenna Bókafélagið) (Icelandic).
48. *Morgunblaðið*, 26 February 1992, p. 26 (Icelandic). See also *Ha'aretz*, Friday Magazine, Letters to the Editor, 30 January 2004, by V.Ö. Vilhjálmsson titled "Marital Compromise."
49. *Morgunblaðið*, 10 February 1993, p. 16 (Icelandic).
50. Vilhjálmsson (1999). An independent commission has concluded that Evald Mikson was guilty of war crimes in Estonia. See the commission's report at http://www.historycommission.ee/temp/conclusions-frame.htm.
51. Heimir Karlsson, *Íþróttastjörnur* (Stars of Sport) (Reykjavík: Almenna Bókafélagi ð, 1992), pp. 66-67 (Icelandic).
52. "Bréf til Morgunblaðsins frádr. Efraim Zuroff" (a letter to the editors of *Morgunblaðið* from Dr. Efraim Zuroff), *Morgunblaðið*, 5 November 1999, p. 62 (Icelandic).
53. "Eðvald Hinriksson ekki sekur um neina glœpi" (Eðvald Hinriksson is Not Guilty of Any Crimes), statement by the editors of *Morgunblaðið*, 5 November 1999, p. 63 (Icelandic).
54. "Ásakanir" (Allegations), response of the editors of *Morgunblaðið*, 17 November 1999, to a comment in the same volume by Efraim Zuroff, in which he reacts to a judgment on the innocence of Evald Mikson made by *Morgunblaðið* on 5 November 1999 (see *ibid.*).
55. The report can be read at http://www.historycommission.ee/temp/conclusions - frame.htm.
56. See Vilhjálmsson (2001), p.14.
57. A statement in Icelandic about Jews, translated by this author, on www.hugi.is.
58. The following notice appeared on the website of the Amsterdam office of Icelandair in 2002:
Jewish Singles Festival in Iceland - October 24-27, 2002. Head north for a fun-filled weekend in Iceland, Europe's "hottest" country! Meet other Jewish singles and enjoy sightseeing, night-life, hot springs and shopping in Reykjavik Iceland. You'll also enjoy the world's most exotic Shabbat service, held at the amazing Blue Lagoon geothermal springs.
59. Documentary filmmaker Nikila Cole of Vancouver has produced a television documentary called *Wanderings* that describes her and her daughter's cultural tour to Jewish locations around the world, among them "Jewish Reykjavík."
60. Information provided by Michael Levin, Reykjavík.

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DR. VILHJÁLMUR ÖRN VILHJÁLMSSON was born in Reykjavík in 1960, and received a Ph.D. in archeology from the University of Aarhus (Denmark) in 1992. He was an archeologist and a curator at the National Museum of Iceland (1993-1997), and senior researcher at the Danish Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies (2000-2002). He is currently completing two books about Denmark's expulsion to Germany of stateless Jews during 1940-1943.

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5800 Park Heights Avenue
Baltimore, MD 21215

13 Tel Hai
Street
Jerusalem
92107 ISRAEL