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Deutscher Widerstand**

**German Resistance  
Memorial Center**

**German Resistance  
1933 – 1945**



**Arnold Paucker**

**German Jews in the  
Resistance 1933 – 1945  
The Facts and  
the Problems**

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## Introduction

The present narrative first appeared fifteen years ago, in a much-abbreviated form and under a slightly different title.<sup>1</sup> It was based on a lecture I had given in 1988, on the occasion of the opening of a section devoted to 'Jews in the Resistance' at the Berlin Gedenkstätte Deutscher Widerstand, an event that coincided with the fiftieth anniversary of the *Kristallnacht* pogrom. As the Leo Baeck Institute in London had for many years been occupied with the problem, representation and analysis of Jewish self-defence and Jewish resistance, I had been invited to speak at this ceremony.

The first edition of the brochure has been out of print and a mere re-issue would no longer reflect the current state of the research on the resistance. This field has progressed so considerably — including the subject of the resistance of German Jews — that a new appraisal is due. Even if a complete overview cannot even be attempted here, a comprehensive update is still necessary to take account of the current state of knowledge. Parts of the first edition reappear almost verbatim, while others have been removed, replaced or reformulated. Several passages stem from later works by the same author.<sup>2</sup> Other sections were newly drafted to incorporate the knowledge that has been acquired in more recent years thanks to the intensive research of a younger generation of German and Jewish historians, whose work has been

<sup>1</sup> Arnold Paucker, *Jüdischer Widerstand in Deutschland. Tatsachen und Problematik (Beiträge zum Widerstand 1933–1945)*, Berlin 1989 (publication of the Gedenkstätte Deutscher Widerstand); 2<sup>nd</sup> edition: *Deutsche Juden im Widerstand 1933–1945. Tatsachen und Probleme*, Berlin 1999; expanded English-language version: *Jewish Resistance in Germany. The Facts and the Problems*, Berlin 1991, 1997 (2nd edition). The text of the 3rd German edition, Berlin 2003, appeared simultaneously — with the kind permission of the Gedenkstätte Deutscher Widerstand (which I gratefully acknowledge here) and a few minor changes — in Arnold Paucker, *Deutsche Juden im Kampf um Recht und Freiheit. Studien zu Abwehr, Selbstbehauptung und Widerstand der deutschen Juden seit dem Ende des 19. Jahrhunderts*, Berlin 2003, 2004<sup>2</sup> (edited by Barbara Suchy, with an introduction by Reinhard Rürup).

<sup>2</sup> Arnold Paucker, *Standhalten und Widerstehen. Der Widerstand deutscher und österreichischer Juden gegen die nationalsozialistische Diktatur*, Essen 1995 (Stuttgarter Vorträge zur Zeitgeschichte 4); Arnold Paucker, 'Resistance of German and Austrian Jews to the Nazi Regime', in *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book XL*, London 1995, pp. 3–20; Arnold Paucker, 'Zum Selbstverständnis jüdischer Jugend in der Weimarer Republik und unter der nationalsozialistischen Diktatur', in Hans Otto Horch and Charlotte Wardi (eds.), *Jüdische Selbstwahrnehmung*, Tübingen 1997 (Conditio Judaica 19), pp. 111–128; Arnold Paucker, "'Non solo vittime". Reflections on the Resistance of German and Austrian Jews against the Nazi Dictatorship', in Paolo Amodio, Romeo De Maio and Giuseppe Lissa (eds.), *La Sho'ah tra Interpretazione e Memoria*, Naples 1998, pp. 31–48; Arnold Paucker, 'Zur deutsch-jüdischen Geschichtsschreibung über Abwehr, Widerstand und jüdische Verhaltensweisen unter der NS-Diktatur', in Michael Grüttner, Rüdiger Hachtmann and Heinz-Gerhard Haupt (eds.), *Geschichte und Emanzipation, Festschrift für Reinhard Rürup*, Frankfurt am Main, 1999, pp. 359–375.

exemplary. The Jewish resistance has not as yet sufficiently taken root in the consciousness of younger people in Germany. This overview is directed primarily towards them, and I hope that I will succeed in my goal of helping to shed some more light on Germany's tragic past.<sup>3</sup>

So much for the German readership. As this new version is directed towards an English-speaking public,<sup>4</sup> it might be necessary to familiarise them with the fact that tens of thousands of Germans sacrificed their lives fighting the Nazi regime, and that in this resistance German Jews also played their part.<sup>5</sup>

After the annihilation of European Jewry, the image long persisted of Jews as defenceless victims. That millions of helpless, innocent people were driven to their deaths is today only disputed by neo-Nazi pseudo-historians; but that this took place entirely without resistance on the part of Jews simply does not correspond with the facts and has been soundly refuted by competent scholars. Although the topic at hand is the resistance of German Jews, we must nevertheless also consider the part played by Jews all over the world in the military defeat of National-Socialist Germany.

In the course of the dispute among German historians in the 1980s, the so-called '*Historikerstreit*', a certain Berlin professor claimed that World Jewry had declared war on National-Socialist Germany in 1939.<sup>6</sup> I had always thought that it had been the other way round, but in any event we can state with conviction that over a million and a half Jewish men as well as many Jewish women fought in the armies of the Anti-Fascist Alliance — some 1.2 million of them in the Red Army and in the armies of the United States

<sup>3</sup> As the length of these notes has necessarily to be kept in check, the reader is advised to consult the extensive body of literature on the resistance, to which the studies cited here provide additional references. I thank Dr. Gabriele Rahaman and Dr. Barbara Suchy of the London Leo Baeck Institute for their help in preparing the German and English manuscripts for publication. The late Professor Werner Jochmann (Hamburg) and Yogi Mayer (London) furnished valuable corrections and suggestions, which were incorporated into the first English-language edition of 1991 and all subsequent English and German versions.

<sup>4</sup> This new English-language version broadly adheres to the German text published in 2003, but some sections have to some degree been enlarged and there are additional notes listing the latest literature on the German and Jewish resistance. Some essential explanations for the English reader have also been added.

<sup>5</sup> On this see Peter Steinbach and Johannes Tuchel (eds.), *Widerstand gegen die nationalsozialistische Diktatur, 1933–1945*, Bonn 2004 (Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, Schriftenreihe 438).

<sup>6</sup> Ernst Nolte's remarks on this 'declaration of war' by the World Jewish Congress neither can nor should be understood in any other way. See Ernst Nolte, 'Vergangenheit, die nicht vergehen will', in '*Historikerstreit*'. *Die Dokumentation der Kontroverse um die Einzigartigkeit der nationalsozialistischen Judenvernichtung*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, Munich 1987, p. 24 f. as well as the responses to Nolte in the same volume.

and Great Britain.<sup>7</sup> Leaving aside the regions quickly overrun by Hitler and considering that, in Palestine, some of the men had to stay behind to defend the threatened *Yishuv*,<sup>8</sup> it is clear that nearly all Jews capable of bearing arms did, wherever possible, fulfil their duty, which was also a Jewish duty. Hundreds of thousands volunteered, and were also fighting in the partisan units in the countries under German occupation. Even before that, during the Spanish Civil War, Jewish volunteers made up a significant number of the 45,000 Brigadists.<sup>9</sup> So much for the participation of Jews in the war against National-Socialist Germany. The impressive military involvement of an entire generation of German Jews who in the Second World War fought on all fronts against Fascism will be discussed in greater depth at the end of this survey.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Approximately 10% of all Jews (i.e. 1.6 million of the total world population of 16 million Jews at the outbreak of the war) fought against National-Socialist Germany. This estimate is accepted by most historians. Over half a million Jews served in the Red Army and at least 700,000 in the armies of the two largest Western Allies. In Palestine, over 30,000 Jews volunteered for service in the British Army, 6,000 of whom served in the Jewish Brigade in 1944.

<sup>8</sup> This term refers to the entire Jewish settlement area or entire Jewish population of what was then Palestine and is now the state of Israel.

<sup>9</sup> Konrad Kwiet and Helmut Eschwege, *Selbstbehauptung und Widerstand. Deutsche Juden im Kampf um Existenz und Menschenwürde, 1933–1945*, Hamburg 1984 (Hamburger Beiträge zur Sozial- und Zeitgeschichte 19), p. 101. Arno Lustiger's admirable study, *Schalom Liberdad! Juden im spanischen Bürgerkrieg*, Frankfurt am Main 1989 (and many later German and French editions), offers a detailed account of the particularly forceful and courageous service rendered by Jewish anti-fascists in the International Brigades.

<sup>10</sup> The terms 'fascism', 'anti-fascist' and 'anti-fascism' are used deliberately by this author in his account of the resistance of German Jews against the Nazi dictatorship. The term 'anti-fascism' derives, as we know, from Italy in the 1920s, having been coined by the democratic-socialist resistance movement *Giustizia e Libertà* — a movement in which many Jews played a leading role. The term then gradually spread and would ultimately be used by all those who fought against Fascism and National Socialism. Undoubtedly, there was a time during the Weimar Republic when the Communists more or less monopolised its use. It is also true that both — they and others — by using it at certain times in a questionable or false manner, succeeded in temporarily devaluing it. However, it is telling that, in Germany, the democratic-socialist underground movement *Neu-Beginnen* (in which Jews were also in the forefront) spoke of the onset of 'fascist' dominance in their first illegal pamphlets, which were produced in 1933. Since the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War, the opponents of Nazi Germany and of international Fascism — from Liberals, Socialists and Anarchists to Communists — all saw themselves as anti-fascists. Most young Jews who were executed in Germany for resistance activities went to their deaths thinking of themselves as anti-fascists. There is therefore not the slightest cause, above all in today's world, for the term 'anti-fascism' to be either replaced or abandoned.

## The Historiography of the Resistance of German Jews

It is well known that the historiography of the resistance in general — like that of the Jews in particular — was an entirely neglected subject area prior to 1970. In Western Europe and America, in the atmosphere of the Cold War, it was for many years simply not in fashion. For however one might try to twist the facts, no objective researcher could deny that, in the European resistance in general, the Communists played, if not always the leading, then at least a very major role. It is no use arguing that things may have been different before the German invasion of the Soviet Union; the communist influence on the resistance was simply hard for many to stomach. Indeed, on this point we encounter a whole range of taboos and considerable self-censorship on the part of historians.

The situation was much the same as far as German and Jewish research into the resistance was concerned. In the early years of the Federal Republic, the scant regard paid to Jewish activity against the Nazi dictatorship coincided with a more general tendency to underplay almost any non-military or non-Conservative resistance. While the *Weißer Rose* represented an admirable exception here, working-class resistance was condemned to oblivion; and yet for obvious reasons it was precisely in the realm of the left-wing resistance that Jews found their niche, where else — after all — could they have operated? In addition, the reduction of Jews to the role of victims corresponded well to the prevailing image of the Jew in the Federal Republic. In the GDR, in contrast, the way in which the resistance was perceived was rather the reverse: Only the Communist resistance fighters really counted which resulted in a comfortable falsification of history. And it goes without saying that any special emphasis on the Jewish contribution to the resistance would not have conformed to the Communist party line.

One might think that it would have been the duty and obligation of German-Jewish historiography to give this aspect of the Jewish past the attention it deserves; yet here as well, similar psychological and political obstacles had initially to be overcome. It has often been demonstrated that an older generation of Jewish historians, when turning, after the Shoah, to the history of their destroyed community in Germany, had strong reservations with regard to the resistance.<sup>11</sup> Theirs was a bourgeois-liberal orientation, and it was

<sup>11</sup> On this see, among others, Paucker, *Standhalten und Widerstehen*; Arnold Paucker, 'History in Exile. Writing the Story of German Jewry', in Siglinde Bolbecher, Konstantin Kaiser, Donald McLaughlin and J.M. Ritchie (eds.), *Zwischenwelt 4, Literatur und Kultur des Exils in Großbritannien*, Vienna 1995, pp. 241–266; Arnold Paucker, 'Mommсенstrasse to Devonshire Street', in Peter Alter (ed.), *Out of the Third Reich. Refugee Historians in Post-War Britain*, London and New York 1998, pp. 175–193; Arnold Paucker, 'Die deutsch-jüdische



beyond them to look favourably upon or even occupy themselves with left-wing Jewish activists. Moreover they were very deeply rooted in their past. Indeed, during the last years of the Weimar Republic it had been precisely this stratum that had criticized the powerful swing to the left of many young Jews and — although they really ought to have had more pressing concerns — had spoken in anxious tones of the dangers of ‘red assimilation’.

And so it was that the illegal, anti-fascist Jewish resistance remained, until 1970, virtually unaccounted for in German-Jewish historiography. In other words, there was resistance to the resistance, a criticism from which I have not been able to exclude even my own Leo Baeck Institute. This attitude was somehow linked to a certain inability to critically examine Jewish behaviour under the Nazi regime. Thus, at the very outset, the notion of the ‘Aufbau im Untergang’, i.e. the constructive Jewish achievements during the time of the Nazi persecution, was primarily addressed in historical research. Here we are confronted with reservations and inhibitions that one can both understand and respect. The founders of the first German-Jewish historical institute of the post-war era included functionaries who themselves had been involved in the events. The relations of these ‘unfree’ Jewish representatives to the henchmen and thugs of the Nazi dictatorship were complex and open to misinterpretation. Many years ago I had the opportunity to speak to surviving members of the *Reichsvertretung der deutschen Juden* about their thorny negotiations with the National-Socialist authorities. Here — in my opinion due to over-anxiety — the field was all too often left to incompetent people who falsified Jewish history. Thus, distorted images of Jewish behaviour were produced that are still in circulation today. The notion of an ‘Aufbau im Untergang’ just did not suffice. One must repeatedly emphasise that the fact that the bulk of the political resistance to the Nazi regime was borne by anti-fascists, who were often only loosely connected to the established Jewish community, easily led older Jewish historians to simply ignore their activities.

Geschichte im Jahrbuch des Leo Baeck Instituts’, a lecture given at ‘Deutsch-jüdische Geschichte. Die Entwicklung der historischen Forschung und Darstellung seit 1945’, a symposium held by the London Leo Baeck Institute in association with the Max-Planck-Institut für Geschichte, Göttingen, which took place at Ringberg Castle, Tegernsee, November 25–28, 1987. When, in 1970, I first attempted to incorporate the resistance of German Jews into German-Jewish historiography, I encountered some fierce “resistance” from the older generation of scholars at our institute. Leading personalities such as the historian Hans Liebeschütz; Max Kreuzberger, the first director of the New York Institute; and the literary historian and International Vice-President of the Institute, Hans Tramer, expressed their disapproval in the most strident of terms. Nor was Robert Weltsch, my predecessor as editor of the Leo Baeck Institute Year Book, particularly happy about this broadening of our editorial policy. All held fast to the opinion that the role of Jews in the illegal anti-fascist resistance of the German workers’ movement was not to be dealt with within the framework of the history of German Jewry.

A fundamental change took place when a younger generation of Jewish and non-Jewish historians took over the field of German-Jewish history and broke through these invisible barriers. This move was preconditioned on a broadening of the definition of who was to be considered a Jew. The London Leo Baeck Institute has long since incorporated resistance research into German-Jewish historiography and has been an energetic practitioner thereof. In our efforts towards a comprehensive representation of the resistance and towards the honouring of all its protagonists, I see a direct parallel with the exemplary work of the Gedenkstätte Deutscher Widerstand.

This about-face in the historiography began in 1970.<sup>12</sup> Since then, an impressive body of literature has been produced. In it, hosannas have been sung to the Jewish resistance — and rightly so — but the change and the counter-reaction also led to simplistic over-generalisations being made, ranging from theses of helplessness and passivity to the myth of collaboration on the part of official Jewish representatives. And yet this opposing of ‘heroes’ and ‘weaklings’ is as inappropriate as it is questionable. The standard work on the Jewish resistance by Konrad Kwiet and Helmut Eschwege vigorously and comprehensively treats all forms of Jewish defiance against the Nazi dictatorship.<sup>13</sup> Although the danger exists of overstepping the mark, it seems to me that in the present survey as well we should not entirely limit ourselves to political, anti-fascist work when paying honour to the resistance of German Jews.

### Jewish Self-defence before the Nazi Seizure of Power

Just as mistaken as the thesis that there was no Jewish resistance is the view that, in 1933, a completely unsuspecting Jewry was taken by storm by their sworn enemies. This claim is still made today, despite the large body

<sup>12</sup> Helmut Eschwege, ‘Resistance of German Jews against the Nazi Regime’, in *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book XV*, London 1970, pp. 143–180, was the first longer study within ‘established’ German-Jewish historiography. Three years earlier, the *Lexikon des Judentums*, Gütersloh 1967, column 868, had dismissed the topic of political Jewish resistance in Germany in only two sentences, contenting itself with referring to the fact that sabotage groups also included ‘members of Jewish origin’ and that ‘5 Jews’ were ‘also’ among the 17 members of the *Baum-Gruppe* who were sentenced to death (see below), although all of them had in fact been Jews. In addition, the entry bears witness to a strange mixture of ignorance and misinterpretation. This error no longer appears in the 1992 and 1998 editions of the *Neues Lexikon des Judentums*, Gütersloh and Munich; nevertheless, in its treatment of the resistance of German Jews, the volume remains extremely wanting.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. Kwiet and Eschwege, *Selbstbehauptung und Widerstand*; see the preface by Werner Jochmann as well as the volume’s introductory sections. To date, this remains the most comprehensive work on the subject, going far beyond the political anti-fascist resistance. The research project was proposed and supported by the London Leo Baeck Institute.

of literature that now exists documenting the opposite.<sup>14</sup> I am aware that I am also pleading my own case here, as I myself have spent the past forty years studying this Jewish self-defence struggle. All the same, it has been proven that Jewish organisations — above all the *Centralverein deutscher Staatsbürger jüdischen Glaubens*<sup>15</sup>, vehemently resisted the National Socialists in the years before their seizure of power, and in the years 1930 to 1932 developed a camouflaged propaganda campaign to support the democratic parties against the overall programme of the NSDAP. As such a campaign had necessarily to be veiled, some German historians still fail to take much note of it. They also seem to have failed to grasp how particularly intensive the Jewish cooperation was with the *Reichsbanner-Schwarz-Rot-Gold* and the *Eiserne Front*, and that the Social-Democratic politicians with whom the *Centralverein* closely cooperated included Julius Leber, Carlo Mierendorff and Wilhelm Leuschner — vigorous champions of propaganda offensives against the NSDAP, who would later play active roles in the German resistance.<sup>16</sup> This was certainly no accident.

For tactical reasons, the National Socialists' antisemitism was accorded a subordinate role in the Jewish defensive struggle to save German democracy. However, even if the NSDAP cleverly played down their antisemitism

<sup>14</sup> Arnold Paucker, *Der jüdische Abwehrkampf gegen Antisemitismus und Nationalsozialismus in den letzten Jahren der Weimarer Republik*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, Hamburg 1969 (Hamburger Beiträge zur Zeitgeschichte IV), particularly Chapter VII, 'Kampf gegen den Nationalsozialismus'. Today an extensive literature exists on Jewish self-defence in Germany: See, for example, Arnold Paucker, 'Die Abwehr des Antisemitismus in den Jahren 1893–1933', in Herbert A. Strauss and Norbert Kampe (eds.), *Antisemitismus. Von der Judenfeindschaft zum Holocaust*, Bonn 1985 and many further editions, pp. 143–163 (text) and pp. 164–171 (bibliography). Further studies have appeared in volumes XXXI–XXXVIII of the *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book*, London 1986–1993, or are listed in the bibliographies of these volumes. See also Arnold Paucker, 'Das Berliner liberale jüdische Bürgertum im "Centralverein deutscher Staatsbürger jüdischen Glaubens"', in Reinhard Rürup (ed.), *Jüdische Geschichte in Berlin. Essays und Studien*, Berlin 1995, pp. 215–228. On the camouflaged propaganda campaign of the *Centralverein* against the NSDAP and the 'Wilhelmstrasse office' it set up, see the following comprehensive publication (which was recently issued in association with the Leo Baeck Institute and the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung): Walter Gyßling, *Mein Leben in Deutschland vor und nach 1933*; and Leonidas E. Hill (ed.) *Der Anti-Nazi: Handbuch im Kampf gegen die NSDAP*, with an introduction by Leonidas E. Hill and a preface by Arnold Paucker, Bremen 2002. The *Anti-Nazi*, launched by the 'Wilhelmstrasse office' from 1930 to 1932, is reprinted in this volume for the first time since 1932, together with a comprehensive scholarly apparatus. This exceedingly rare publication — few original copies had survived — distinguishes itself through its superb analyses and skilful unmasking of the criminal National-Socialist movement.

<sup>15</sup> A comprehensive history of the *Centralverein*, which was founded in 1893, has now appeared: Avraham Barkai, *'Wehr Dich!'*. *Der Centralverein deutscher Staatsbürger jüdischen Glaubens (C.V.)*, 1893–1938, Munich 2002.

<sup>16</sup> Interview by the author with Hans Reichmann, the leading *Centralverein* functionary for Jewish self-defence; and Paucker, *Der jüdische Abwehrkampf*, passim. Mierendorff was a student of *Centralverein* ideologist Julius Goldstein. Leber and Leuschner were executed in 1944; Mierendorff died during a bombing raid in 1943.

from time to time, Jewish functionaries were only too well aware of the consequences that a victory by this party would have for the Jews.

Here let it suffice to have established and duly emphasised the significant historical fact that, already in 1930, representatives of a middle-class Jewish community clearly saw that, for the Jews, a total defence against Fascism was the only option. Of course we are speaking here of self-defence in a still-free Germany. After the Nazi seizure of power, these methods of democratic resistance quickly became superannuated. Nevertheless, several rearguard actions on the part of the *Centralverein* can be noted, such as the issuing in 1933/34 of a new brochure against the ridiculous accusation that Jews performed ritual murders; for safety's sake, the original title of this publication was toned down.<sup>17</sup>

Let us now turn to the possibilities that remained to the representatives of German Jewry in resisting a totalitarian dictatorship and the barriers it imposed. Only then shall we consider all the forms of political resistance practised by Jewish anti-fascists, as well as the set of issues for the Jewish community to which both Jewish and German resistance gave rise.

### Defiance and Resistance by the Jewish Community

The neglect of research into resistance produced some paradoxical effects. For example, many historians, in their enthusiasm to document upright behaviour among broader circles of the Jewish community in the years of National-Socialist repression, presented many actions on the part of individuals or of Jewish representatives as acts of resistance to the Nazi dictatorship when they do not really belong in this category. For if one regards every act of self-assertion as resistance — from protests against local infringements or excesses that were still tolerated in the earliest phase of National-Socialist rule, to deliberate heel-dragging in the implementation of state measures, to the pursuit of intellectual reinforcement in the form of adult education and cultural autonomy in cultural associations, to assistance in organising emigration — then German Jewry under Hitler was an absolute nest of staunch resistance fighters. This, of course, was not the case, and it is inappropriate to use terms such as 'defensive struggle' or even 'resistance' in relation to 'official' or in any event permitted actions on the part of Jewish representa-

<sup>17</sup> The title was significantly changed from 'Blutlügen: Märchen und Tatsachen' (1929) to 'Zur Ritualmordbeschuldigung'. The text however remained exactly the same.

tives in the historiography of the years following the Nazi seizure of power.<sup>18</sup> Likewise, the term ‘Amidah’, which was introduced and infused with meaning by Israeli historians and which signifies resoluteness and resistance under German occupation, can hardly be applied to the behaviour of the Jewish community in Nazi Germany prior to 1938. The view that the latter should be seen as a kind of forerunner to ‘Amidah’ as it would later be practised, particularly in the East, is deeply problematic. The psychological or moral resistance offered by Jews in the Eastern territories under German occupation, their defiance in the face of almost certain death, can be compared only conditionally with the various activities that were temporarily permitted to Jews in Germany at an earlier point in time and which were associated with either very few risks or none at all. Indeed for the National Socialists at this time, the outward forms of a distinct and autonomous Jewish cultural life were perfectly acceptable.<sup>19</sup> I need to insert a small qualification here, for only some specific Jewish actions (which are dealt with more expansively and generously at the Gedenkstätte) really border on resistance. Nor would I endorse the view that the frequent suicides that took place after the Nazi seizure of power — motivated initially by discrimination and the destruction of one’s livelihood and later by the prospect of imminent deportation — represent a form of individual resistance. These were acts of desperation and thus certainly constitute examples of protest.<sup>20</sup> However, one thing is certain: while it is an indisputable fact that Jewish representatives often behaved with courage and dignity in unbearable and hopeless situations, such actions do not amount to any forceful political, militant or anti-fascist resistance.

In any event, such resistance could not possibly have taken place within the Jewish community, as the very notion that the Jews as a group, that the Jew-

<sup>18</sup> The theses of the ‘self-defence struggle’ and ‘resistance’ of the Jewish community after the National-Socialist seizure of power were championed by two authors: See Marjorie Lamberti, ‘Jewish Defence in Germany after the Nazi Seizure of Power’, and Francis R. Nicosia, ‘Resistance and Self-Defence. Zionism and Antisemitism in Inter-War Germany’. Both contributions appeared in *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book XLII*, London 1997. pp. 123–134 and 135–147.

<sup>19</sup> On ‘resistance’ and ‘Amidah’ in Israeli research, see Yehuda Bauer, *Rethinking the Holocaust*, New Haven and London 2001, especially the sections ‘Jewish Resistance — Myth or Reality?’ and ‘Unarmed Resistance and other Responses’, pp. 119–166; Dan Michman, *Die Historiographie der Shoah aus jüdischer Sicht. Konzeptualisierung, Terminologie, Anschauung, Grundfragen*, Hamburg 2002, especially ‘Der jüdische Widerstand während der Shoah und seine Bedeutung: Kritische Anmerkungen. “Widerstand” und “Amida”’, pp. 154–183. Both publications reflect the current state of research in the field and are therefore simply indispensable for an understanding of all forms of Jewish resistance in Europe.

<sup>20</sup> On this point I differ from Konrad Kwiet, with whom I otherwise consistently agree. See his ‘The Ultimate Refuge: Suicide in the Jewish Community’, in *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book XXIX*, London 1984, pp. 135–167; as well as the chapter ‘Der Selbstmord’ in Kwiet and Eschwege, *Selbstbehauptung und Widerstand*, pp. 194–215.

ish religious community as such — an elite group of Jewish representatives in a country that had been thoroughly brought to heel and whose democratic institutions had ignominiously failed or been brutally destroyed — could even have considered taking direct political action against the regime is simply delusional. Nevertheless, there were many forms of Jewish opposition to state measures that occasionally verged on political resistance. In addition, in open protests and numerous interventions with the National-Socialist authorities and the national government, formulations were often used that are truly striking when one recalls that the speakers were representatives of a defenceless minority. Beyond the ‘Aufbau im Untergang’<sup>21</sup> a whole range of truly remarkable examples exist of Jewish self-assertion in Nazi Germany.

It was as a result of the National-Socialist persecutions that Jews again began streaming into the synagogues, and the task of giving them moral strength at that difficult time fell to the rabbis. Many rose to the challenge and dared to sermonise against the measures of the Nazi regime — sometimes in veiled terms, at other times unequivocally — in the presence of the Gestapo and other informers. The letter ‘H’, as in Haman<sup>22</sup>, seems very often to have been a fateful one in Jewish history: Hess, Himmler, Hitler, Heydrich are but a few of the names in that particular rogues’ gallery. The congregations understood only too well what references to Haman and similar hints meant. In the wake of the Nuremberg Laws, the *Reichsvertretung der deutschen Juden* issued a *Kol-Nidre* prayer<sup>23</sup> that was to be read aloud from the pulpits of all German synagogues. This text, which can only be defined as a stalwart protest, was forbidden by the Gestapo. Leo Baeck and Otto Hirsch, respectively President and Director of the *Reichsvertretung der deutschen Juden*, were arrested.<sup>24</sup> One could cite numerous other examples, as well. I myself can recall being present in a Berlin synagogue at this time, although unfortunately I cannot remember which rabbi<sup>25</sup> it was who read the follow-

<sup>21</sup> This expression was coined by Ernst Simon in his *Aufbau im Untergang. Jüdische Erwachsenenbildung im nationalsozialistischen Deutschland als geistiger Widerstand*, Tübingen 1959 (Schriftenreihe wissenschaftlicher Abhandlungen des Leo Baeck Instituts 2).

<sup>22</sup> Haman: enemy of the Jewish people in the Biblical story of Esther; in Jewish folklore, the ultimate man of evil.

<sup>23</sup> Prayer that ushers in the service on the evening of the Day of Atonement.

<sup>24</sup> This course of events has been described numerous times; see, among others, Paul Sauer, ‘Otto Hirsch (1885–1941) — Director of the *Reichsvertretung*’, in *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book XXXII*, London 1987, pp. 359–360.

<sup>25</sup> I assume that it must have been either Rabbi Dr. Max Nussbaum or Rabbi Dr. Joachim Prinz. Prinz had a whole repertoire of thinly disguised verbal attacks on the Nazi regime. On the forthright and daring behaviour of the two rabbis, many anecdotes exist. See, among others, Paucker, *Standhalten und Widerstehen*, pp. 60–61; Joachim Prinz, ‘A Rabbi under the Hitler Regime’, in Herbert Strauss and Kurt R. Grossmann (eds.): *Gegenwart im Rückblick. Festgabe für die jüdische Gemeinde zu Berlin 25 Jahre nach dem Neubeginn*, Heidelberg 1970, pp. 231–238; and ‘Max Nussbaum: Ministry under Stress. A Rabbi’s Recollections of Nazi Berlin, 1933–1940’, in Strauss and Grossmann (eds.), *Gegenwart im Rückblick*, pp. 239–247.

ing variation on the prayer for the beloved fatherland in which justice should reign — a justice which, in the Third Reich, had ceased to exist:

‘Lord of the world, father of all men  
We ask your protection for all  
Those countries in which Jews are allowed  
To engage in their work freely and unimpededly.’

This indeed showed courage and dignity.

We must also not fail to turn our attention to the way in which the Jewish press attempted to resist a regime of oppression. This is a very thorny issue. For six years — until they were banned — Jewish newspapers played a peculiar role. Of course, one must repeatedly emphasise that, in the Third Reich, the Jewish press enjoyed a kind of ‘*Narrenfreiheit*’, or fool’s freedom. To the so-called ‘inferior race’, which stood outside the German *Volksge-meinschaft*, even humanism and liberalism were allowed so long as these did not exceed certain limits and did not become too hostile to the state. By studying this controlled Jewish press, interesting conclusions can be reached. If one knows how to read between the lines, as contemporary Jewish readers did, one comes across many cases in which veiled expressions of protest were made against state antisemitism and the government measures associated with it.<sup>26</sup> Furthermore, through open polemics against what by this point had become a state propaganda in which Jews had been reduced to the status of sub-humans, Jewish editors and journalists took considerable risks; risks which, in turn, led to the banning of newspapers and to harsher punishments. These forms of Jewish self-assertion, made under a merciless dictatorship, can likewise unquestionably be regarded as contributory acts of resistance.

It is above all Israeli historians who deserve credit for having detected a willingness to fight a self-defensive struggle in the argumentative vocabulary of those who, within the clash of ideas within the Jewish community, were continually disparaged as ‘assimilationists’. In their reconstruction of the now-accessible archive of the *Reichsvertretung der deutschen Juden* (which, after 1939, was called the *Reichsvertretung der Juden in Deutschland*) Otto Kulka and Esriel Hildesheimer show how various efforts were made — above all

<sup>26</sup> This according to Robert Weltsch (former editor-in-chief of the *Jüdische Rundschau*) in numerous conversations with the author. He also wrote about the subject. We must refrain from listing here the many examples of Jewish ‘press protest’. See only Jacob Boas, ‘Countering Nazi Defamation. German Jews and the Jewish Tradition, 1933–1945’, in *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book XXXIV*, London 1989, pp. 205–226; Arno Herzberg, ‘The Jewish Press under the Nazi Regime — its Mission, Suppression and Defiance. A memoir’, in *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book XXXVI*, London 1991, pp. 367–388.

after the November pogrom of 1938 — to circumvent orders by the Gestapo and/or to distribute illegal literature. An essay in the *Schwarzes Korps* anticipating every stage of the Final Solution was secretly mimeographed by the *Reichsvertretung* in December 1939 and distributed among Germany's Jews as a warning.<sup>27</sup> Protests were held again the first deportations. Futile efforts were made to block or to prevent them. Jewish representatives like Otto Hirsch and Julius Seligsohn were arrested for this brave stand and paid for it with their lives. Many of these forms of defiance and resistance can now reliably be documented.<sup>28</sup>

The strategies of self-preservation for which the representatives of the Jewish community opted and the self-sacrificing protests which, occasionally, they bravely dared to make far exceeded the limits of what the Nazi regime temporarily permitted to the Jews.

### The Intensification of Resistance Research

Even sober estimates reckon that no fewer than 3,000 German Jews were actively involved in the resistance between 1933 and 1945, largely within the various groupings of the illegal workers' movement and the Jewish youth movement. However, the proportion of Jews in the liberal resistance was also not inconsiderable; a fact which, in light of the political affiliations of German Jewry, should come as no surprise. That their numbers were relatively small corresponded merely to the scope of the liberal resistance in general. If one keeps in mind that the Jewish population in Germany in January 1933 amounted to some 550,000 individuals (counting not only Jews by religion) and that by the outbreak of war in September 1939 this number had shrunk to 200,000; and if one regards this in proportion to the rest of the German population, then the Jewish contribution to the resistance would have been comparable to a mass movement of some 800,000 to 900,000

<sup>27</sup> On Kulka's preliminary work, see 'The *Reichsvereinigung* and the Fate of the German Jews, 1938/39–1943. Continuity or Discontinuity in German-Jewish History in the Third Reich', in Arnold Paucker (ed.), with Sylvia Glichrist and Barbara Suchy, *Die Juden im nationalsozialistischen Deutschland/ The Jews in Nazi Germany, 1933–1945*, Tübingen 1986 (Schriftenreihe wissenschaftlicher Abhandlungen des Leo Baeck Instituts 45), pp. 353–363; and 'The Central Organisation of German Jews in the Third Reich and its Archives', in *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book XXXIV*, London 1989, pp. 187–203.

<sup>28</sup> The first volume of documents has appeared: Otto Dov Kulka (ed.), *Deutsches Judentum unter dem Nationalsozialismus*, vol. 1, *Dokumente zur Geschichte der Reichsvertretung der deutschen Juden, 1933–1939*, Tübingen 1997 (Schriftenreihe wissenschaftlicher Abhandlungen des Leo Baeck Instituts 54).



non-Jewish anti-fascists actively operating in the Reich.<sup>29</sup> In reality, however, they were anything but so numerous. This calculation should nevertheless make us think, for what we are dealing with here is a very noteworthy ‘Jewish fighting force’. As one ultimately has also to take into account the proportion of Jews in the European partisan struggle in general, their numbers could be even higher. On the other hand, these categories can overlap and, as with any estimations, caution is advised, for there is a risk that some people might be counted twice. It was not uncommon for someone to have been initially active in the illegal resistance in Germany, to then have joined the International Brigades in Spain and ultimately to have fought in the French Maquis. Our cautious estimates, compiled between 1970 and 1980, pointed to some 2,000 Jewish resistance fighters.<sup>30</sup> Today this figure is generally believed to be some fifty percent higher — due not only, it should be added, to any new research findings into either the Jewish or the general anti-fascist resistance, but also rather to the fact that the ‘Jewishness’ of these anti-fascists is now coming to light, after having been obscured for so long by GDR historiography.

The intensification of resistance research has indeed been considerable. What has stimulated this development, particularly over the past decade?<sup>31</sup> Here clear parallels can be seen between German and Jewish research, if we wish to regard them as separate. In Germany — particularly in light of the fact that sections of the Wehrmacht were implicated in crimes of mass murder — there exists a historical and moral necessity to prove that at all times during the Nazi dictatorship, there were tens of thousands of decent and upright German men and women who did not submit but rather put their

<sup>29</sup> The figure of 800,000 men and women who ‘actively resisted’ actually does appear in Hanna Elling, *Frauen im deutschen Widerstand, 1933–1945*, 3<sup>rd</sup> revised edition, Frankfurt am Main 1981, p. 71. Moreover it continues to resurface today, even on British television. With all due respect to those Germans who resisted, activities are included here that have nothing whatsoever to do with anti-fascist underground work: Active anti-fascists are lumped together with the many who were persecuted for having belonged to democratic and left-wing parties, or who committed any ‘offences’ against the regime. If we were to start applying this method of reckoning, then German Jewry would indeed have been an outstanding example of a ‘community of struggle’.

<sup>30</sup> Some twenty years ago, Konrad Kwiet arrived at the carefully considered figure of 2,000 Jews active in the resistance. See his ‘Problems of Jewish Resistance Historiography’, in *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book XXIV*, London 1979, pp. 37–57. I myself also used to lean towards this figure, which is pegged too low.

<sup>31</sup> The following deserve special mention: the well-documented and moving exhibition ‘Juden im Widerstand’, March–June 1993, with its catalogue by Wilfried Löhken and Werner Vathke (eds.), *Juden im Widerstand. Drei Gruppen zwischen Überlebenskampf und politischer Aktion, Berlin 1933–1945*, Berlin 1993; the exhibition at the Jewish Museum in Frankfurt am Main, April–June 1995, with its catalogue by Georg Heuberger (ed.), *Im Kampf gegen Besatzung und ‘Endlösung’. Widerstand der Juden in Europa, 1939–1945*, Frankfurt am Main 1995; as well as the exhibition in 2002 ‘Jüdischer Widerstand im Zweiten Weltkrieg’ at the Kronprinzenpalais in Berlin.

own lives at risk by opposing it. Among Jews, there exists a historical and moral necessity — now, when the memory of the Holocaust is evoked with increasing force — to prove that resistance by Jews was possible and that it was practised more frequently than Jewish historiography has thus far suggested.<sup>32</sup> The information on German Jews that has been gathered in the past few years is especially impressive. Only a few years ago, we had no idea just how strong the Jewish contribution was to the working-class resistance in Leipzig<sup>33</sup> or to the left-wing opposition in the Ruhrgebiet<sup>34</sup> — nor, for that matter, that a Jewish youth group in Berlin produced an antifascist underground newspaper, that German-Jewish doctors were operating in the field hospitals of Tito's partisan formations in Yugoslavia or that more German Jews fought among the partisans in Italy than was previously thought.<sup>35</sup> And these are but a few of the insights to emerge from the latest wave of resistance research.<sup>36</sup>

### Jews in the Illegal Resistance of the Workers' Movement

Today no one seriously disputes that the proportion of Jews active in the whole range of illegal groupings of the banned workers' movement after the Nazi seizure of power was very considerable indeed, and that in proportion to their numerical representation in the working-class parties in the Weimar Republic, certainly more Jews than non-Jews quickly decided to resist actively. In the Communist resistance, the number of Jews was highest; indeed, far higher than we originally assumed.<sup>37</sup> Numerous Jewish comrades and in some cases even Jewish cells existed in all the major resistance groups,

<sup>32</sup> On the intensification of resistance research and the changes in the perception of the resistance in Jewish historiography, see also Arnold Paucker, 'Changing Perceptions: Reflections on the Historiography of Jewish Self-defence and Jewish Resistance, 1890–2000', in Ladislau Gyémánt (ed.), *Studia Judaica XI–XII*, Cluj-Napoca 2004, pp. 161–177; revised edition in: Marion Kaplan and Beate Meyer (eds.), *Jüdische Welten. Juden in Deutschland vom 18. Jahrhundert bis in die Gegenwart. Festschrift für Monika Richarz*, Göttingen 2005, pp. 440–456.

<sup>33</sup> Solveig Höppner, 'Juden im Leipziger Widerstand, 1933/34', in *Judaica Lipsiensia. Zur Geschichte der Juden in Leipzig*, Leipzig 1994, pp. 155–166.

<sup>34</sup> Stefan Goch, 'Westdeutsche Troztkisten im Widerstand gegen den Nationalsozialismus und im Exil', in *Internationale wissenschaftliche Korrespondenz zur Geschichte der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung* 32 (1996), pp. 143–171.

<sup>35</sup> See below the section on 'German Jews in the Spanish Civil War and in the Partisan Struggle'.

<sup>36</sup> For the latest research on Jewish resistance in Germany and Europe, see also Hans Erlinger, Arnold Paucker, Ernst Ludwig Ehrlich (eds.), *'Gegen alle Vergeblichkeit'. Jüdischer Widerstand gegen den Nationalsozialismus*, Frankfurt and New York 2003.

<sup>37</sup> Over one hundred Jewish activists, most of them Communists, were interned in the Dachau concentration camp alone in 1935. Interview by the author with Dr. Alfred Laurence, himself a former prisoner in Dachau, in London, on June 2, 1985.

including those of the SPD, the *Sozialistische Arbeiterpartei*, the Trotskyites, the KPD, the Communist Opposition (KPO) and the *Internationaler Sozialistischer Kampfbund*. Both the brains and the organisational force behind the Socialist resistance movement *Neu-Beginnen* were represented by Jews.<sup>38</sup>

Of course, this kind of proportional comparison can only apply for the early years of the Nazi dictatorship; in the wake of the mass emigrations and later the deportations, a different picture emerges. Many Jewish anti-fascists managed to flee in time, and Jewish participation in illegal activities in Germany plummeted. When one considers that in the period after 1941 there were about a hundred factory cells of the KPD in Berlin alone, then the number of remaining Jewish activists appears more modest. In making a numerical assessment, one must therefore clearly distinguish between two very different phases. For the years 1936/1937, however, the comparison made here is certainly valid.

So whom are we talking about? What contingents and age groups of Jews were involved in the German resistance? The major category consisted of those Jews who engaged in illegal activities within banned left-wing groups directly after the seizure of power — that is, Jewish Social Democrats, Socialists, Communists and trade unionists who had already been politically active during the Weimar Republic. This somewhat older group must have included some 2,000 people. As many of these resistance organisations were discovered early on by the Gestapo, many of their members were interned in concentration camps. Names and numbers are relatively easy to come by. Many Jewish concentration camp inmates were released between 1936 and 1939 under the condition that they leave Germany for good. However, there are also many examples of people who repeatedly crossed back into Germany for the purpose of continuing their illegal activities. These cases encompass a broad spectrum, from the skill and daring of cunning functionaries to the daredevilry of dilettantes.

<sup>38</sup> On the organisation *Neu-Beginnen* see especially Walter Loewenheim, 'Geschichte der ORG [Neu-Beginnen], 1929–1935. Eine zeitgenössische Analyse', in Jan Foitzik (ed.), Berlin 1994 (Schriften der Gedenkstätte Deutscher Widerstand, Series B, 1); and Paucker, *Standhalten und Widerstehen*, p. 50, which contains references to additional literature. Among the leading activists in *Neu-Beginnen* was the subsequently well-known English historian Francis L. Carsten, who was born in Berlin in 1911 and died in London in 1998. See his memoirs, 'From Revolutionary Socialism to German History', in Peter Alter (ed.), *Out of the Third Reich: Refugee Historians in Post-War Britain*, London and New York 1998, pp. 25–39; see also Francis L. Carsten, 'From Berlin to London', in *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book XLIII*, London 1998, pp. 339–349, especially the section 'The ORG and Neu-Beginnen', pp. 342–346.

The second-largest group includes those who were too young to have been politicised prior to 1933 and who were recruited or 'roped in' from within the Jewish youth associations to work against the Nazi dictatorship. In terms of their political orientation, virtually all of them belonged to the left-wing resistance; nevertheless, their illegal activities constitute a special chapter.<sup>39</sup> In this division, it should be noted that no clear line of demarcation can be made. There were youth leaders in the Jewish youth movement who from the very first were also involved in the illegal workers' movement, as well as very young Weimar activists who immediately began operating in Jewish youth associations. Nevertheless, if one keeps these qualifications in mind, I believe that the distinction made here is justifiable.

In the 1930s, the approximately 2,000 'illegal' comrades made up an integral part of the German working-class resistance. In the early years of the Nazi dictatorship or even until *Kristallnacht* they must certainly have believed that their future lay in a Germany liberated from fascism. It is therefore much more difficult to single out their actions specifically. Their history is always bound up with that of the particular group within the illegal workers' movement to which they belonged. Within this framework, they are correspondingly honoured at the Gedenkstätte Deutscher Widerstand. However, this does not justify the entirely insufficient amount of attention paid to the 'Jewish factor' in the historiography of the resistance of the Left in general, whereas a description of specific Jewish groups in the resistance would convey what was special about them in a much more well-rounded way.

Some German historians try to argue that, in light of the persecution of the Jews, it should come as no surprise that a high proportion of Jews were involved in the illegal political resistance. I would disagree. For after all, the process by which Jews were deprived of their civil rights did not follow a straight line; mass murder came later. Jews who resisted were naturally exposed to a double danger. Many resistance networks were quickly discovered by the Nazi authorities, and correspondingly the number of Jewish political prisoners was high. Many Jews voluntarily chose to expose themselves to such danger. This decision was clearly based on deeply held convictions as well as on the traditional roles many Jews played in the German workers' movement.

<sup>39</sup> Kurt Schilde also treats the subject of the resistance of young Jews in the Third Reich in Chapter IV ('Die jüdische Jugend') of his study, *Im Schatten der 'Weißen Rose'. Jugendopposition gegen den Nationalsozialismus im Spiegel der Forschung (1945–1989)*, Frankfurt am Main 1995. This important work deserves special mention, since it contains descriptions of numerous individual cases and episodes that could not be included in the subsequent sections ('Resistance within the Jewish Youth Movement' and 'Examples of Resistance') of the present brochure (see below).

It is possible — although probably unnecessary — to look to messianic and utopian tendencies in Judaism to help ‘explain’ the motives that led so many young Jews and Jewish intellectuals to embrace socialism, despite the fact that the community to which they belonged was largely middle class.<sup>40</sup> Perhaps it was out of feelings of solidarity that corresponded to their own experience as a persecuted group. From exile, Arnold Zweig once wrote movingly of the sincere bonds that existed between Jewish intellectuals and the German workers’ movement.<sup>41</sup> In any event, this is the political path that many middle-class Jews chose to follow; a path which, after 1933, often led quite logically to illegal activities.

Specifically Jewish motives were no doubt involved in making this choice; however, the role that they played was certainly a secondary one. For to the increasingly excluded and isolated German Jews, the solidarity of their non-Jewish comrades must have meant a great deal indeed. Many who survived would later have their brave Socialist and Communist friends to thank for having hidden them, at personal great risk. Many of these young Jews retained their idealism and their belief that a future socialist society was necessarily bound up with the promise of freedom. I knew some of these young men and women, who would later pay for their anti-fascist activities with their lives. It would be wrong to burden their memory with other or later historical events. I myself have never hesitated to characterise these people as humanistic Socialists and Communists.<sup>42</sup>

The final verse of an anti-fascist battle song that was sung specifically by Jewish Communist (and Socialist) youth during the war years in many countries and in many languages should not be allowed to disappear from our collective memory:

‘Unsere Macht befreit Europas Knechte  
Im letzten Kampfe strahlend sich erhebt  
Eine Welt der Freiheit und der Rechte [!]  
Leid und Armut haben ausgelebt.’

<sup>40</sup> This phenomenon can be documented for the whole of Western Europe. The large percentage of Jews in the left-wing resistance in occupied Europe can be attributed to the then widespread Jewish solidarity with the aspirations of the working class. See Paucker, *Changing Perceptions*, as well as Arnold Paucker, ‘Der Widerstand der Juden im Zweiten Weltkrieg’, a paper delivered at a symposium of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung in Berlin, September 2002, on the occasion of the opening of an exhibition of the same name in Berlin on September 4, 2002 (manuscript, Leo Baeck Institute, London).

<sup>41</sup> Arnold Zweig, *Bilanz der deutschen Judenheit. Ein Versuch*, Amsterdam 1934, pp. 281–282.

<sup>42</sup> See also Paucker, *Standhalten und Widerstehen*, pp. 23–24.

'Our might will free the slaves of Europe  
The last battle that our heroes fight  
Defeating evil will bring forth  
Our world of justice and of right (!)'

One should likewise ask whether the tiresome controversy over what 'Jewish resistance' or 'resistance by Jews' actually means is not at the same time a pointless one. However, the debate grinds on, and the discord over the 'Jewishness' of Jewish anti-fascist resistance fighters persists.<sup>43</sup> At times, these arguments seem almost like nitpicking. Those of us who were either personally involved in the events or who knew young people in the resistance are well aware that many who initially viewed themselves solely as 'anti-fascists' came, in the face of increasing persecution and above all later, when the deportations and mass murder began, to develop a stronger Jewish identity and a growing feeling of Jewish solidarity.<sup>44</sup> Identity, after all, is never static.

Although this gradual strengthening of their Jewish consciousness must be emphasised,<sup>45</sup> there can be no doubt about where the primary loyalty of Jewish anti-fascists lay: even the youngest among them identified wholeheartedly with the ideology of their particular resistance group and took part in the political battles between the various factions. On a completely different level, this mirrors in miniature the divisions that marked the Jewish community more generally. Communist and non-Communist youth locked horns in controversies that, while justified, were also not seldom both pointless and fruitless. I am referring here not to matters of betrayal or denunciation, but to a political conflict; to a lack of concord that plagued the German anti-fascist resistance as a whole and its Jewish members duly participated in this discord. While this lack of unity might not have seriously impaired the work of the resistance, it certainly served no useful purpose. Yet we also know that, despite their differences, powerful ties of friendship still bound the opposing sides together.

<sup>43</sup> Paucker, *Standhalten und Widerstehen*, pp. 12–13.

<sup>44</sup> See for example Walter Schmidt on the Jewish resistance fighter Karl Kormes, 'Jüdisches Erbe deutscher Geschichte im Erbe- und Traditionsverhältnis der DDR', in *Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft* 37 (1989), p. 714.

<sup>45</sup> The change in Jewish consciousness in illegality is not a subject that can be easily documented. Our conclusions are based on discussions that both Helmut Eschwege and I had with survivors of the *Baum-Gruppe*, such as Richard and Charlotte Holzer (Berlin 1972), as well as other anti-fascists. Even back then, they pointed out, the antisemitic character of the 'Sowjetparadies' exhibition played a role in the *Baum-Gruppe*'s 1942 sabotage action (see the section on 'Jewish Representatives and the Illegal Resistance of Jewish Youth', below). That, before their execution, those boys and girls who had been condemned to death for this action sang both songs of the German workers' movement and Jewish folksongs, was communicated to us in 1963/65 by former inmates at Plötzensee prison — Social Democrats and Communists.

Most of the Jewish Communists, Socialists and Social Democrats who joined the illegal resistance after the crushing of the German workers' movement thus stood, at least initially, on the margins of the Jewish community. The argument is still put forward today that, as many of them had for all intents and purposes broken away from Judaism, they should not be included in discussions of resistance by Jews or the Jewish resistance. Apart from the fact that this approach would fail to take into account such shifts in identity, this strikes me as a particularly unsustainable and untenable manner of calculation. Moreover by this means one could indeed claim that not 3,000 but perhaps only 1,800 Jews were active in the various resistance groups and took part in the various forms of resistance.

According to the standard historiography, at least six million Jews are presumed to have fallen victim to the National-Socialist racist mania. However, I have never heard of any attempt being made to classify the Jewish victims of the mass annihilation in the same manner as is applied to Jews in the resistance; that is, to subtract from their number all the atheists, Communists, secular Jews, converts, Soviet citizens, etc., and so to conclude that 'only' 4,800,000 Jews were murdered in the Shoah. The painfulness of this comparison only underscores the point that this debate about Jewishness should finally be put to rest.

#### Resistance within the Jewish Youth Movement

The Jewish youth movement provided especially fertile soil for the development of an anti-fascist outlook and for active involvement in the resistance. Nonetheless, I do not wish to create the impression that this was the primary aim of this movement. Such a contention would be nonsensical. In any event, by their very nature such activities could not have been very widespread. The mounting threat to the Jewish minority itself set certain limits to such an expansion; for ultimately the situation facing young Jews was no different from that of the community as a whole. If segments of the Jewish youth movement had fallen for the idea of venturing en masse into the business of distributing counter-propaganda against the Nazi regime, all Jewish youth organisations would have been banned immediately and their leaders dragged off to concentration camps. Only individuals or small Jewish cells of activists could be effective in illegality. Scarcely more than one percent were recruited, while the remaining 99% had neither the inclination nor the knowledge required to engage in such activities, despite the strong left-wing tendencies among their ranks.

It followed from the exclusion and isolation of the Jewish community that over 50% of Jewish youth was organised into youth associations,<sup>46</sup> whose educational work naturally lay entirely within the inner-Jewish realm. In their stance, the Jewish youth associations reflected all Jewish political currents, ranging from the German-nationalist (e.g. *Schwarzes Fähnlein* and *Vortrupp*) and right-wing Zionist (e.g. *Betar*<sup>47</sup>) all the way to the extreme Left. Most were either Jewish-liberal or Socialist-Zionist in orientation, with the Zionist youth movement experiencing the faster and steadier rate of growth. The centre-piece of the Zionist agenda increasingly became the preparing of young people to emigrate to Palestine.<sup>48</sup>

The Jewish youth movement had other prominent features, as well. It enjoyed a rather unique place in the Third Reich because, in a Germany that had otherwise been forced into line, the Jewish youth movement provided a space in which the gamut of traditions that had previously existed within the German youth movement could continue to thrive, from the elitist *Pfadfinder* to the Socialist youth leagues. Many young Jews who had been members of now-disbanded German youth associations or of the youth organisations of now-banned left-wing parties joined its ranks. Many found it difficult to shake off their ‘German’ past — some holding fast to the lofty *bündisch* ideals, others continuing to dream the dream of a classless society. Up to the point when they, too, were banned, the Jewish youth associations represented an oasis in which free thinking could flower — in the midst of National-Socialist Germany and despite some lingering authoritarian tendencies which can likewise be traced back to their German environment. The strongly socialist orientation of a core group of the Zionist youth movement, which had already existed during the Weimar Republic, should again be highlighted here. And although this remark may not apply to the Jewish youth movement as a whole, one can state with justification that within the framework it provided,

<sup>46</sup> In *Generation zwischen Furcht und Hoffnung. Jüdische Jugend im Dritten Reich*, Hamburg 1985, p. 27, Werner T. Angress estimates that up to 60% of Jewish youth were involved in the organised Jewish youth movement in 1936.

<sup>47</sup> *Betar* = Brith Trumpeldor, the youth organisation of the right-wing Zionist Revisionists, named after the fallen Zionist leader and pioneer Josef Trumpeldor.

<sup>48</sup> A few selected titles from the voluminous literature on the Jewish youth movement in Germany are: Jehuda Reinharz, ‘Hashomer Hazair in Germany (I), 1928–1933’, in *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book XXXI*, London 1986, pp. 178–208; Jehuda Reinharz, ‘Hashomer Hazair in Germany (II) — Under the Shadow of the Swastika, 1933–1938’, in *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book XXXII*, London 1987, pp. 183–229; Chaim Schatzker, ‘The Jewish Youth Movement in Germany in the Holocaust Period (I) — Youth in Confrontation with a New Reality’, in *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book XXXII*, London 1987, pp. 157–181; Chaim Schatzker, ‘The Jewish Youth Movement in Germany in the Holocaust Period (II) — The Relations between the Youth Movement and Hechaluz’, in *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book XXXIII*, London 1988, pp. 301–325. See also the useful bibliographies contained in volumes I–XLVIX of the *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book*, London 1956–2004, which provide a complete list of the sources published to date.



many thousands of young Jews received a political education that was not merely Jewish and Zionist in orientation but in part even socialist or indeed anti-fascist — and this under the very eyes of the Gestapo.

These tendencies found a particularly lively form of expression in the repertoire of songs — songs that remained both ‘Jewish’ and ‘German’. These included not only the songs of the German *Landsknechte* (mercenaries) and the songs of the peasant rebellions (with strategic alterations to the lyrics, such as replacing the line “auf das Klosterdach den roten Hahn” (“burn the cloisters with red fire”) with “auf die Reichskanzlei die rote Fahne” (“on the Reich chancellery hoist the red flag”, which I can vividly recall) but also the songs of the German workers’ movement, from “Brüder, zur Sonne, zur Freiheit” (“Brothers towards the sun and freedom”) to revolutionary hymns. The ‘Internationale’ was, of course, a standard. In the Zionist youth organisation, it was generally sung in Hebrew. The emotive power of the song should not be underestimated; it fostered a conscious anti-Nazism beyond a reaction to the special fate of the Jews. In 1936 — at the time of the Italian Fascist assault on Abyssinia — we in Berlin, among the *Werkleute*, sang an Abyssinian song in quasi-Italian that included the following verse:

“Adrigat, Dschiputi, Adua  
Ras Nasibu, Graziano<sup>49</sup>  
La vittoria in Addis Abeba  
Morte peste Badoglio.”

Its author, incidentally, was the youth leader Fritz Aronstein, who later became headmaster of a school in Israel. In a rather curious combination, he was also co-publisher of the Zionist *Hechaluz* anthology<sup>50</sup> *Israel – Volk und Land*. Later we would take this song with us to the youth village of Ben Schemen in Palestine, where a much more radical, Hebrew-language version was composed.<sup>51</sup> Just a few months after the outbreak of the Spanish Civil

<sup>49</sup> ‘Graziano’ — as he is called here, for the sake of the rhyme only — refers, of course, to Rodolfo Graziani, commander of the Italian forces employed in the invasion of Abyssinia, Minister of War of Mussolini’s fascist Repubblica di Salò (1943–1945) and leader of the post-war Italian Fascist movement (*Movimento Sociale Italiano*).

<sup>50</sup> *Hechaluz* = ‘The Pioneer’ — Jewish world organisation for the vocational training and preparation of young Jews for a life as workers in Palestine (Israel).

<sup>51</sup> Both versions are in the private archive of this author. The Hebrew version was written by Asriel Blumberg — who died as an RAF pilot in a plane crash during the war against National-Socialist Germany — and Arnold Paucker. In the 1937 Hebrew version, the last verse foretells Mussolini’s violent end ‘on the day of the Revolution’; eight years later, during the ‘days of the Liberation’, the Duce would be executed by order of the Italian partisan forces. Further information on the *Werkleute* was obtained from Günter Engel, of Ludwigshafen, and the late Etan Hakerem (Felix Katz), of Freiburg and Haifa, who were members of my Berlin *Werkleute* group and who were later with me in Ben Schemen.

War and the formation of the International Brigades, young Jews in Germany were strumming guitars and singing, even if in hushed tones, the unforgettable hymn of the Brigadists:

‘Spaniens Himmel breitet seine Sterne  
Über unsere Schützengräben aus.  
Und der Morgen grüsst schon aus der Ferne,  
Bald geht es zum neuen Kampf hinaus.

Die Heimat ist weit  
Doch wir sind bereit  
Wir kämpfen und siegen für dich:  
Freiheit!’

‘Spanish heavens spread their brilliant starlight  
High above our trenches in the plain;  
From the distance morning comes to greet us,  
Calling us to battle once again.

Far off is our land,  
Yet ready we stand.  
We’re fighting and winning for you:  
Freedom!’<sup>52</sup>

And

‘Zu den Waffen, Arbeiter Europas  
Zu den Waffen, Bürger von Madrid!’

‘To arms, workers of Europe,  
To arms, citizens of Madrid!’

So much for the spirit that was afoot in segments of the Jewish youth movement.<sup>53</sup>

<sup>52</sup> I am indebted to Herbert Guttman of my Berlin *Werkleute* group (now James H. Goodman of Cherry Hill, New Jersey) for providing me with the authentic English-language versions of the songs of the International Brigades, as they were sung by the members of the Clement Attlee Battalion of Great Britain and the Abraham Lincoln Brigade of the United States.

<sup>53</sup> I emigrated already in October 1936. In Ben Schemen we sang the songs of the International Brigades in all languages; in the Jewish workers’ movement in Palestine, they were naturally sung in Hebrew. Youths from Germany who joined us in 1937 were already familiar with the German texts. Friends from the Jewish youth movement recently reminded me that already in late 1936, they sang — in a Berlin coal cellar and at an imprudently high volume — the words:

What was true of the Zionist youth leagues – certainly in the case of many members of the *Werkleute*, *Hashomer Hatzza'ir*<sup>54</sup> and *Habonim*<sup>55</sup> – could be described as follows: thus, we were indoctrinated along these lines as soon as the group leaders detected among us any proclivity towards anti-fascist activities. Naturally we sympathised with the illegal anti-fascist struggle of the German working class and believed that the rather flippant slogan “Nach dem Faschismus kommen wir!” (“After fascism our time will come!”) also offered us some support and strength in an international sense. However, involvement in illegal activities concentrated in Germany could no longer be our task; after all, we were no longer ‘Germans’. Rather, our task now was to move on to Palestine and build a socialist Eretz Israel<sup>56</sup> there. Nonetheless, there were some among us who were convinced that it was possible to do both: to strive for a Jewish future and still persist in anti-Nazi activities in Germany.

There is clear evidence that anti-Nazi propaganda was carried out by Jewish youth groups, if only sporadically. It is inexcusable and even somehow odd that the voluminous literature on the Jewish youth movement in Germany contains few if any references to this; it is as if historians would rather not call attention to these illegal activities.<sup>57</sup> Naturally, the bulk of such work was per-

‘Wir, im fernen Vaterland geboren,  
Nahmen nichts als Hass im Herzen mit.  
Doch wir haben die Heimat nicht verloren,  
Unsre Heimat ist heute vor Madrid!  
Spaniens Brüder stehn auf der Barrikade  
Unsere Brüder sind Bauer und Prolet.  
Vorwärts Internationale Brigade!  
Hoch die Fahne der Solidarität!’

‘From far-off fatherlands we’ve come here,  
We took nothing with us but our hate;  
Yet we haven’t ever lost a homeland,  
For our homeland is now outside Madrid,  
With our Spanish brothers in the trenches,  
Fighting in the hot Castilian sun –  
Forward, International Brigaders, forward!  
Raise the banner of solidarity!’

<sup>54</sup> *Hashomer Hatzza'ir* = ‘The Young Watchman’: a Zionist, left-wing socialist youth organisation.

<sup>55</sup> *Habonim* = Socialist-Zionist youth movement

<sup>56</sup> The Land of Israel.

<sup>57</sup> On this, see Kwiet and Eschwege, *Selbstbehauptung and Widerstand*, and Eschwege, *Resistance of German Jews, passim*. As regards these omissions this is certainly true of the most recent studies; see Suska Döpp, *Jüdische Jugendbewegung in Köln, 1906–1938*, Münster 1997; Bernhard Trefz, *Jugendbewegung und Juden in Deutschland. Eine historische Untersuchung mit besondere Berücksichtigung des Deutsch-Jüdischen Wanderbundes “Kameraden”*, Frankfurt am Main 1999. A meritorious exception is the treatment of the youth group *Schwarzer Haufen* by S. Schüler-Springorum (see n. 60, below) and previously also Georg Günther Eckstein, *The Freie Deutsch-Jüdische Jugend (FDJJ)*, 1932–1933, in *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book XXVI*, London 1981, pp. 231–239.

formed by Communists and Socialists within the Jewish youth movement; however, independent actions also took place. I myself, aged fifteen — quite inexperienced and rather foolish to boot — was sent out on a propaganda mission outfitted with stickers and leaflets against Hitler, having evidently been ‘recruited’ for the job<sup>58</sup>. Today I can only attempt to recall what the motives behind this outburst of youthful ardour were. However, I must confess that I still derive a great deal of satisfaction from a leaflet distributed in the autumn of 1936 calling upon the workers of Germany to show solidarity with the Spanish people’s struggle for freedom. In any event, in the majority of Jewish youth organisations, it was possible for Communists and other leftists to operate, provided they were camouflaged.

One problem with regard to German-Jewish anti-fascists engaging in any act of political resistance was that, as Jews, they were especially vulnerable to arrest and persecution. Furthermore, as a function of their overexposure as members of an increasingly isolated Jewish community, they inadvertently placed their German comrades in danger as well. The reasons for this are obvious. For example, after the proclamation of the Nuremberg Laws, the KPD, in a precautionary measure, segregated Jewish resistance cells from the rest; in the Party’s jargon, this was known as the ‘Trojan Horse’ tactic. Young Jewish Communists followed the Party’s orders and joined Jewish organisations while their German colleagues went underground, infiltrating German organisations, primarily the *Hitlerjugend*. Nor were the Communists alone in systematically segregating their ranks. This was particularly true for the Jewish youth movement following the exposure and destruction of so many of the ‘older’ cadre cells.

Joining Jewish organisations served two purposes: it provided cover for and facilitated the recruitment of young Jews for anti-fascist propaganda work. The latter was expedited not least by the close ties that still existed among former members of the *Kameraden*, the important German-Jewish youth organisation that had split in 1932 into three larger leagues<sup>59</sup> and two splinter groups. It was also boosted by the friendships that endured between Jews and non-Jews who had belonged before 1933 to the since-outlawed German *Pfadfinder* leagues or to left-wing youth associations.

<sup>58</sup> The last time I saw my ‘recruiter’ — by then a South African officer (!) — was in Cairo in 1942. For understandable reasons, even after all these years I shall refrain from naming him here.

<sup>59</sup> Specifically among the ranks of the *Werkleute* and *Schwarzes Fähnlein*, ‘infiltration’ must be linked to the splitting up of the *Kameraden*. Communists from the red splinter groups (such as *Rotes Fähnlein*, etc.) often remained friends with former members of the *Kameraden*. This, as I can confirm from my own experience, led to the formation of several cells inside the *Werkleute*.

In any event, there is sufficient evidence to substantiate that a number of Jewish youth groups and sports associations were infiltrated in this way, including the *Ring-Bund Deutsch-Jüdischer Jugend*, the *Schwarzer Haufen*<sup>60</sup>, the *Werkleute*, *Hashomer Hatza'ir*<sup>61</sup>, *Habonim*<sup>62</sup>, the *Makkabi*<sup>63</sup> and *Bar Kochba*<sup>64</sup>, to name but a few.<sup>65</sup> There is also strong evidence to support the thesis that some 'anti-fascist' cells existed in the *Schwarzes Fähnlein*.<sup>66</sup> The non-Zionist *Bund Deutsch-Jüdischer Jugend* in particular was heavily infiltrated; a fact over which the group's former national leader, Henry J. Kellermann — by then a long-time resident of the United States with a prestigious career in his new country — expressed his enduring surprise and indignation to me in an

<sup>60</sup> Here I must correct an error that appeared in the corresponding footnote to the older (1999), German-language edition of this brochure: In the case of the *Schwarzer Haufen* — a short-lived splinter group of the *Kameraden* that disbanded in the same year (1927) — the infiltration took place in the opposite direction. Both before and after 1933, young former members of the group joined, for different reasons, various Jewish youth associations, including the *Werkleute*; not infrequently, they also belonged to German resistance groups. See Stefanie Schüler-Springorum's excellent account: 'Jugendbewegung und Politik. Die jüdische Jugendgruppe Schwarzer Haufen', in *Tel Aviver Jahrbuch für deutsche Geschichte*, vol. XXVIII, Gerlingen 1999, pp. 159–210. Further tribute is paid to the *Schwarzer Haufen* in the section of this brochure entitled 'Examples of Resistance', below.

<sup>61</sup> With respect to the *Hashomer Hatza'ir*, Heinz Primo recalls there having been 'four or five resistance groups' in Berlin alone. See Günther Ginzel, 'Jüdischer Widerstand. Anmerkungen eines Nachgeborenen', in *Die Neue Ordnung* 5, October 1998, p. 349; Günther Ginzel *Jüdischer Alltag in Deutschland, 1933–1945*, Düsseldorf 1984, pp. 240–247, especially n. 37. Gerhard and Alice Zadek and others operated for the *Baum-Gruppe* in the *Hashomer Hatza'ir*. See Alice and Gerhard Zadek, *Mit dem letzten Zug nach England. Opposition, Exil, Heimkehr*, Berlin 1992, p. 71 ff.

<sup>62</sup> Franz Efraim Wagner (1919–2004), of Jerusalem, who in 1938/39 was involved in resistance activities in Frankfurt, related this in a letter dated January 12, 1990 about an anti-fascist underground cell of three members of the *Habonim* and of the *Hechaluz*. Two were students at the 'Philanthropin', the famous Jewish grammar school in Frankfurt. Apart from himself, he named Fred Forchheimer and Ernst Bär.

<sup>63</sup> *Deutscher Makkabikreis*, a member of the Maccabee World Association of Jewish Sport Clubs.

<sup>64</sup> Jewish sport club named after the messianic leader Simon bar Koseba.

<sup>65</sup> See also Kwiet and Eschwege, *Selbstbehauptung und Widerstand*, pp. 114–115.

<sup>66</sup> Although this information was anonymous and confidential, there is no reason to doubt its veracity. The historian Werner T. Angress, a former member of the *Schwarzes Fähnlein*, is convinced of its accuracy. To his knowledge in the two years until this youth league was disbanded at the end of 1934 (in order to forestall it being outlawed by the Nazi authorities), contacts were maintained with organised anti-fascists in several 'Gaue' (districts) of *Schwarzes Fähnlein* (interview with the author, London, September 1988). The former national head of *Schwarzes Fähnlein*, Yogi Mayer, also confirmed that individual members of the league, including Mayer himself, were involved in illegal anti-fascist propaganda work (interview with the author, London, October 1998).

interview conducted in 1988.<sup>67</sup> All in all, some 500 young Jewish men and women led this kind of double life in the Third Reich through their involvement in such illegal activities.

Not all Jewish youth leagues contained anti-fascist cells. The small and quite unrepresentative right-wing Jewish splinter groups are a case in point. The German-nationalist *Vortrupp, Gefolgschaft deutscher Juden*, would gladly have championed a non-antisemitic brand of National Socialism had the option been available.<sup>68</sup> The Jewish-nationalist *Betar* was among the ardent admirers of the Italian dictator Benito Mussolini. Any attempt to sow the seeds of anti-fascism among such organisations would have been doomed to failure. Until recently, historians had assumed that 'atheistic' activists would have been unable to operate within Orthodox-Jewish youth organisations. However, there is now evidence<sup>69</sup> to show that a certain amount of illegal activity was carried out within groups such as *Esra*<sup>70</sup> and *Tse'ire Mizrachi*<sup>71</sup>. These are but a few examples of the progress we have made in unearthing ever more information on resistance among German-Jewish youth.

### Defiance and Self-assertion in Jewish Schools

In a discussion of the topic of self-assertion and defiance among Jewish youth in the Third Reich, a comment on the state of Jewish schools is also in order. After the Nazi seizure of power, most Jewish pupils were gradually removed from German elementary and high schools and transferred to Jewish schools. This process was accelerated by occasional bold and daring actions on the part of Jewish pupils, since 'Jewish impudence' could readily be construed by the authorities as 'disloyalty to the state'.

<sup>67</sup> Henry Kellermann, who was born in Berlin in 1911 and died in Washington, D.C. in 1998, was the national head of the BDJJ, the largest of the Jewish youth organisations, until it was dissolved by the Gestapo. By the end, the organisation included 15,000 members. See Henry J. Kellermann, 'From Imperial to National Socialist Germany. Recollections of a German-Jewish Youth Leader', *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book XXXIX*, London 1994, pp. 305–330. After his emigration to the United States, he embarked on a successful career in the diplomatic service and served as U.S. ambassador to Switzerland, among other posts. In a letter dated November 5, 1990, Kellermann reiterated his argument that, due to the constant regime of surveillance by the Gestapo, it would have been virtually impossible to infiltrate the *Bund Deutsch-Jüdischer Jugend*, which he headed. In response, some survivors from among the approximately 100 anti-fascists who had operated inside the BDJJ countered that they had naturally not informed the head of the organisation of their activities. Teachers often have no idea of what their pupils are up to.

<sup>68</sup> However, it should be noted here that the head of the *Vortrupp*, Hans Joachim Schoeps, was later in contact with the Conservative resistance.

<sup>69</sup> *Esra* ('Assistance') was an Orthodox Jewish youth league.

<sup>70</sup> *Tse'ire Mizrachi* was an Orthodox Zionist youth league.

<sup>71</sup> Communication from Fred Friedmann, of London and Cologne, December 1997, and others.

Otherwise, however, this forced relocation of pupils was entirely in keeping with National-Socialist segregationist policy. In Jewish schools, pupils were ‘among themselves’, so to speak, and were generally not spied upon. Under such circumstances, one could indulge one’s urge towards self-assertion and protest in a variety of ways.<sup>72</sup>

I can still vividly recall how, in 1935, a chorus of us in the Jewish school in Klopstockstraße in Berlin rehearsed the following lines for an upcoming school function:<sup>73</sup>

‘... ängstliches Klagen  
wendet kein Elend,  
macht dich nicht frei.

Allen Gewalten  
zum Trutz sich erhalten,  
nimmer sich beugen,  
kräftig sich zeigen  
rufet die Arme  
der Götter herbei.’

‘... Fearful lamenting,  
Thwarts not the danger  
Avoids not your fate  
In face of all power,  
Never to cower  
Never to bend,  
Manfully fend  
Calling the arms  
of the Gods to your aid.’

After all, Goethe had not yet been banned. The Jewish teachers and pupils understood what all this implied only too well.

Precocious young Jews were quite often more perceptive than most adults regarding the grotesque aspects of the monstrosity of German fascism and thus were better inoculated against the whole insanity of the ‘National Uprising’.<sup>74</sup> In our versions of Nazi spectacles, which featured highly imaginative distortions of the Nazi salute and parodies of Hitler and Goebbels at

<sup>72</sup> Joint recollections of our school years by the author and Günter Engel, of Ludwigshafen.

<sup>73</sup> The rehearsal was supervised by our form master *Studienrat* Alfons Rosenberg, who later, in emigration in London, worked for the German service of the BBC.

<sup>74</sup> Paucker, *Zum Selbstverständnis jüdischer Jugend*, pp. 123–125.

improvised podiums, we excelled ourselves in mocking our enemies.<sup>75</sup> Half the school formed a guard of honour and roared with laughter as the 'leaders of the German people' filed past.<sup>76</sup> In some respects, the various forms of mockery anticipated something of the élan of Charlie Chaplin's cinematic parody 'The Great Dictator'. Cautious teachers were unable to suppress these potentially dangerous shenanigans. Such derisive 'entertainment' was not limited to Berlin, and there is evidence of similar antics taking place in other Jewish schools in the Third Reich.<sup>77</sup> These forms of revolt were quite healthy for us, enabling us to vent our anger – subsequently drawing quite a few of us into more risky adventures and ultimately into the youth resistance.

### Examples of Resistance

At the end of the 1980s, the concrete details of acts of resistance by German Jews began to come increasingly into focus as the topic attracted the interest of both historical researchers and journalists. Here, as well, we have succeeded in recent years in uncovering new material with which to support our findings.

Thus, an extensive body of literature now exists on the largest of the resistance groups, the *Herbert-Baum-Gruppe*, to which the reader can be directed.<sup>78</sup> By now we have learned a great deal of new information: for one thing, that the activities of the *Baum-Gruppe* were not limited to Berlin but extended to other German cities; and for another, that prior to 1939 it must have had

<sup>75</sup> On this see also Paucker, 'Anmerkungen zum Verhalten jüdischer Jugendlicher', companion sheet to the exhibition by Löhnen and Vathke, *Juden im Widerstand*, p. 4

<sup>76</sup> I only hope that Rolf Vitalis ('Hitler') and Dagobert Friedmann ('Goebbels') emigrated in time and so survived.

<sup>77</sup> Similar stories were also reported to the historian Barbara Suchy by contemporary witnesses from the Jewish community in Düsseldorf.

<sup>78</sup> A comprehensive bibliography for the *Baum-Gruppe* alone would certainly be a welcome addition. Here we can refer to only a few studies of note that appeared between 1966 and 1993: Margot Pikarski, *Jugend im Berliner Widerstand. Herbert Baum und Kampfgefährten*, 2nd revised edition, Berlin 1984; Wolfgang Scheffler, 'Der Brandanschlag im Berliner Lustgarten und seine Folgen. Eine quellengeschichtliche Betrachtung', in *Berlin in Geschichte und Gegenwart. Jahrbuch des Landesarchives Berlin*, Berlin 1984, pp. 91–118; Michael Kreutzer, 'Die Suche nach einem Ausweg, der es ermöglicht, in Deutschland als Mensch zu leben. Zur Geschichte der Widerstandsgruppen um Herbert Baum', in Löhken and Vathke, *Juden im Widerstand*, pp. 95–158. The study of Kreutzer belongs to the most penetrating and sympathetic portrayals of the *Baum-Gruppe*. 'Die Herbert-Baum-Gruppe' in Kwiet and Eschwege, *Selbstbehauptung und Widerstand*, pp. 114–139. See *ibid.* also for a complete bibliography up to 1984. For the literature published in the past twenty years, consult the bibliographies contained in volumes XXX–XLIX of the *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book*, London 1985–2004.



up to 150 members. Although communist in orientation, it was never entirely monolithic. Before the outbreak of the war, members expressed their misgivings about the dictatorial character of the Soviet Union. Later, some also had doubts and pangs of conscience about the Hitler-Stalin pact.<sup>79</sup> There is considerable evidence indicating that, in June 1941, in the wake of the German invasion of the Soviet Union, a sigh of relief reverberated through the ranks of the Communist cadres in Germany and indeed throughout Europe in general. The fronts were clear again: the invincible Red Army would doubtless crush Fascism. But throughout it all, the *Baum-Gruppe* remained true to itself. In the years between 1934 and 1938 it carried out an array of very sophisticated and inventive propaganda activities, such as during air-raid drills in Berlin, under cover of darkness.

Previous studies of the *Baum-Gruppe* focussed almost exclusively on the work it did during wartime and particularly on the act of sabotage it performed in 1942 at the anti-communist exhibition in Berlin's Lustgarten. However, already in the early 1980s, Eric Brothers, a young American scholar bent on salvaging the honour of Jewish anti-fascism, set to work tenaciously investigating the activities of this group, which until 1938 had operated within the *Bund Deutsch-Jüdischer Jugend* and other youth leagues. In the process, he managed to unearth much forgotten material. Brothers relied on statements by former *Baum-Gruppe* members who had succeeded, sometimes with Baum's assistance, in emigrating to the United States before the outbreak of the war. Doubtless these former Jewish anti-fascists — now American citizens — would have been quite reluctant to discuss their memories during the McCarthy era. However, by the time Brothers contacted them, they had no more reservations about granting him an interview. In 1987, an article of his appeared in the 32<sup>nd</sup> volume of the *Leo Baeck Year Book* on the life of these young Jewish men and women in the Third Reich, highlighting their originality in distributing leaflets, such as the one entitled 'Hitler: Germany's Gravedigger', in 1934 and 1936. Since that time, numerous other studies by Brothers on this topic have been published.<sup>80</sup>

Another resistance group, *Rotes Sprachrohr*, was arrested by the Gestapo in 1936. While not yet a separately organised Jewish cell of the Communist

<sup>79</sup> There is a great deal of evidence for this. See, for example, the interview with the Berlin anti-fascist Walter Sack (born 1915) in 'Konfliktforschung', *Aktuell*, nos. 3–4 (1998), p. 111. The memoirs of Berlin anti-fascists published in this issue are especially instructive.

<sup>80</sup> Eric Brothers, 'On the Anti-Fascist Resistance of German Jews', in *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book XXXII*, London 1987, pp. 369–382; Eric Brothers, 'Wer war Herbert Baum? Eine Annäherung auf der Grundlage von "oral histories" und schriftlichen Zeugnissen', in Löhken and Vathke, *Juden im Widerstand*, pp. 83–95; Eric Brothers and Michael Kreutzer, 'Die Widerstandsgruppe um Herbert Baum' in Heuberger, *Im Kampf gegen Besatzung und 'Endlösung'*, pp. 23–43.

underground movement, it nevertheless deserves the label 'Jewish' as it had evolved from a KPD agitprop group during the Weimar Republic that was composed primarily of Jews. Together with chorus groups *Kolonne Links* and *Roter Wedding*, *Rotes Sprachrohr* was among the most famous mouth-pieces of the KPD. Immediately after the party was banned, its members reorganised illegally around Jonny Hüttner, alias Nathan Hirschtritt, son of a family of Berlin working-class Jews of Eastern European origin. He joined the *Werkleute* for purposes of concealment, survived internment in a concentration camp and was also known as one of the instigators of a revolt in the Sachsenhausen camp. His sister, Helene Hüttner, who was interned at the same time but managed to escape Germany earlier, married an Englishman who served as a doctor in the Attlee Battalion of the International Brigades. It was this Len Crome who would later go on to write a history of the group.<sup>81</sup>

One study has rekindled memories for me of how, in 1935, rumours began to circulate in my Jewish school and youth league, the *Werkleute*, that the small Berlin-based Socialist-Zionist *Borochov-Jugend*<sup>82</sup> was engaged in some sort of adventurous escapades. At the time we did not have an inkling of what went on and it did not cause us much concern. It was not until 1993 that a detailed report on this particular, astonishing illegal activity was finally published (by the Leo Baeck Institute in Jerusalem).<sup>83</sup> It turns out that the group was busy putting out a polemical underground newspaper, the *Anti-Stürmer*, directed against Julius Streicher's notorious *Stürmer*. Adopting a Marxist tone, it sought to convince German workers that antisemitism was in fact a soporific opiate being offered to the masses. The Gestapo suspected that the paper stemmed from a communist source, although at this point the

<sup>81</sup> Len Crome, *Unbroken. Resistance and Survival in the Concentration Camps*, London 1988. Further information — also on German Jews in the Spanish Civil War — was provided by Patience Edney, of London, who had been a nurse in the Attlee Battalion of the International Brigades. Edney died in 1996 at the age of 85 in the midst of festivities in Madrid held to celebrate the bestowal of Spanish citizenship on former members of the International Brigades. Patience Edney was married to a doctor who served in the International Brigades, whose father was Norwegian and mother a German Jew. He was killed in battle in 1937. In 1996, young Spaniards greeted the veterans of the International Brigades (among whom were many Germans and Jews) with shouts of 'Muchas, muchas gracias!' as they paraded through the streets of Madrid.

<sup>82</sup> Youth group named after the Zionist-Socialist politician and theoretician Beer (Dov) Borochov.

<sup>83</sup> Israel Getzler, "'Der Antistürmer", Kampfblatt gegen Antisemitismus und Rassenhass', *Jüdischer Almanach 1994 des Leo Baeck Instituts*, Frankfurt am Main 1993, pp. 44–48. In 1987, even such an experienced expert on the question of the KPD and antisemitism as the Israeli historian David Bankier still accepted the view articulated by the Gestapo that the *Antistürmer* was of Communist origin and was therefore to be seen as a propaganda organ of the KPD against antisemitism. See David Bankier, 'The German Communist Party and Antisemitism', in *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book XXXII*, London 1987, p. 331.

KPD was not exactly engaged in an intensive struggle against antisemitism. The Gestapo never did discover the actual source of the paper. This alone was an impressive achievement on the part of the dauntless members of the *Borochov-Jugend* and can indeed be regarded as a manifest example of Jewish resistance.

In these episodic fragments, one of the great number of Jewish youth groups and youth movements deserves particular mention. Although the Königsberg-based *Schwarzer Haufen* was already founded in the middle years of the Weimar Republic and disbanded as early as 1927, it represents an early step in the struggle against the Nazi dictatorship, as so many of its former members would go on to join the resistance. Through the dedication and scholarly precision of Stefanie Schüler-Springorum and Knut Bergbauer, our memories of this group were revived;<sup>84</sup> memories that are pricked with melancholy, as some of its members were not entirely unfamiliar to me. In 1927, the *Schwarzer Haufen* was ejected from the *Kameraden* and, although its followers did not necessarily hold uniform political positions, one can speak of a tendency towards class struggle as well as towards the 'red assimilation' so dreaded by the Jewish community — not to mention anti-Zionism. Many of them went over to the *Jungkommunisten*, but some joined other German youth movements as well. After 1933 the majority could be found in the Communist resistance, while others were operating in the ISK, among the Trotskyites and in the KPO. The endurance of links across the various splinter groups of the *Kameraden* has been referred to elsewhere. We in the *Werkleute* were well informed about our predecessors. The brochure for an exhibition mounted at the Haus der Wannsee-Konferenz testifies to a life of heroism, tragedy and contradictions.<sup>85</sup> Of the Communist resistance fighters, Gerhard Holzer was executed in 1937 at Plötzensee prison, Rudi Arndt murdered in Buchenwald in 1940 and Lothar Cohn shot to death in Sachsenhausen. Former members of the *Schwarzer Haufen* fought in the International Brigades in Spain and later in the French Maquis. Of those who fled to the Soviet Union, some fell victim to the Stalinist purges. These were Jewish people who had always believed in a free socialist society.

In Breslau a Jewish subgroup of the *Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands – Opposition* (KPO) existed until 1937, whose membership stemmed from the German-Jewish *Wanderbund*, the *Kameraden*. When the *Kameraden* split into Zionist, non-Zionist and Communist fractions, one segment of the *Breslauer Freie Deutsch-Jüdische Jugend* did not go over to the Stalinist KPD but spent the next four years engaging in illegal activities within the KPO,

<sup>84</sup> Knut Bergbauer and Stefanie Schüler-Springorum, *'Wir sind jung, die Welt ist offen'. Eine jüdische Jugendgruppe im 20. Jahrhundert*, Berlin 2002.

<sup>85</sup> Bergbauer and Schüler-Springorum, *'Wir sind jung, die Welt ist offen'*.

until the latter was crushed by the Gestapo in 1937. Another group operated in Hamburg.<sup>86</sup> The harrowing story of the young Breslau anti-fascist Helga Beyer — who served as a courier in the underground between the ages of thirteen and seventeen, was arrested at a border-crossing in 1937 and died in Ravensbrück in 1942 — was not published until the 1980s. The sacrifice of this young Jewish girl in the German resistance should serve as a further example of the numerous Jewish resistance groups that operated outside of the KPD.<sup>87</sup>

Helmut Hirsch, a true loner, was one of the first Jews to be executed as an active anti-fascist in the early years of the Nazi regime for an attempted act of sabotage. In 1967, the *Bund deutscher Jugendschaften* honoured his memory in a publication, and Andrew Roth, who is based in Berlin, is currently working on a monograph on Hirsch. Before 1933, Hirsch had belonged to the *Deutsche Jungenschaft 1. November* (D.J. 1/11), a youth league that had many Jewish members. After it was banned, Jewish as well as non-Jewish former members of the organisation participated in the German resistance, some of whom would later join the ranks of the French partisans. As an émigré in Prague, Hirsch made contact with Otto Strasser's *Schwarze Front* (with which the *Centralverein deutscher Staatsbürger jüdischen Glaubens* had also sustained relations before 1933) and agreed to smuggle *Schwarze Front* leaflets into Germany. Once there, he became implicated in a failed bomb attack in Nuremberg, in connection with which he was arrested and sentenced to death for high treason — and executed despite the fact that he was an American citizen and despite the repeated interventions on his behalf by the American ambassador William E. Dodd.<sup>88</sup> The sentence was carried out in Plötzensee prison on June 4, 1937. Many of the details regarding this case remain unclear. In contrast to the majority of young Jews in the resistance, Helmut Hirsch acted out of self-consciously Jewish motives,<sup>89</sup> and his fate shows us how diffuse the political connections and allegiances were among Jewish resistance fighters, who risked their lives to fight the Nazi dictatorship based on a diverse range of convictions.

<sup>86</sup> Letter from former member Kurt Wolfgang van der Walde to the author, dated October 25, 1994.

<sup>87</sup> Antje Dertinger, *Weißer Mlöwe, gelber Stern. Das kurze Leben der Helga Beyer. Ein Bericht*, Berlin and Bonn 1987.

<sup>88</sup> See Helmut Hirsch, 'Erlebte Geschichte', lecture delivered on March 26, 2000, pp. 6–7 (manuscript copies in the private archives of Hirsch and of this author). Hirsch furnishes further details and provides the relevant sources for the fate of his namesake Helmut 'Helle' Hirsch.

<sup>89</sup> On this see David Bankier, 'Otto Strasser und die Judenfrage', in *Bulletin des Leo Baeck Instituts* 60, 1981, pp. 3–20.

Furthermore, I would like to honour the memory of another illegal group, which, as far as one can judge from their names, may be described as a Berlin anti-fascist Jewish girls' group. It, as well, originated from the *Bund Deutsch-Jüdischer Jugend*; however, for ideological reasons it did not join in the move towards the *Baum-Gruppe* as its members disagreed with the latter's Communist aims. Already before the war, the group's leader, Eva Mamlok, had been caught distributing anti-fascist propaganda. From 1939 to 1941 (at a time — the era of the Hitler-Stalin pact — when the Communists were comparatively inactive and more or less limited themselves to consolidating their underground network<sup>90</sup>) the group's members, working as forced labour in Berlin, concentrated their efforts on anti-war propaganda. In September 1941, the girls were denounced, accused of subverting the defensive will of the German people ("Zersetzung der Wehrkraft des deutschen Volkes") and sentenced to death. The payment of a bribe succeeded in having the death sentences commuted to deportation to Riga. All but one of these upright people died in concentration camps in the East. That the names of Eva Mamlok and Inge Levinson have not been entirely forgotten is thanks to the sole survivor of the group, Inge Gerson-Berner of New York City, who, in 1971, wrote a detailed account of the fate of this group for the Leo Baeck Institute.<sup>91</sup>

Only recently have researchers demonstrated just how significant the proportion of Jewish women and girls was in the ambit of illegal activity. For the European context, this has been described in great detail.<sup>92</sup> One might argue that women are especially well-suited to work in the underground. It has been clearly demonstrated for Germany that, as forced labourers in factories, Jewish women, such as those around Eva Mamlok, had more scope to perform illegal work than did non-Jewish women. They often gave resistance

<sup>90</sup> On the substantial decline in KPD propaganda between August 1939 and June 1941, see the following: Alan Merson, *Communist Resistance in Nazi Germany*, London 1985, p. 235 and *passim*; Jeremy Noakes (ed.), *Nazism 1919–1944*, vol. 4, *The German Home Front in World War II. A Documentary Reader*, Exeter 1998, pp. 584–585; Detlev Peukert, *Die KPD im Widerstand. Verfolgung und Untergrundarbeit an Rhein und Ruhr, 1933–1945*, Wuppertal 1980, p. 333.

<sup>91</sup> Arnold Paucker, 'Some Notes on Resistance', in *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book XVI*, London 1971, pp. 239–247.

<sup>92</sup> See, among others, Ingrid Strobl, 'Sag nie, Du gehst allein den letzten Weg'. *Frauen im bewaffneten Widerstand gegen Faschismus und deutsche Besatzung*, Frankfurt am Main, 1989; Ingrid Strobl, 'Vergessene Heldinnen. Jüdische Frauen im Widerstand', in Ingrid Strobl, *Das Feld des Vergessens. Jüdischer Widerstand und deutsche 'Vergangenheitsbewältigung'*, Berlin and Amsterdam, 1994, pp. 45–63; Ingrid Strobl, *Die Angst kam erst danach. Jüdische Frauen im Widerstand in Europa 1939–1945*, Frankfurt am Main 1998. On Jewish women from Germany in the Spanish Civil War, see Irma Schaber's biography of the photographer/journalist Gerta Taro, who died in Spain in 1937: *Gerta Taro. Fotoreporterin im spanischen Bürgerkrieg. Eine Biographie*, Marburg 1995.

groups moral strength and constituted their core precisely when such groups were being hunted down and uncovered.<sup>93</sup> Under interrogation and when facing torture at the hands of the Gestapo, they showed admirable strength. Perhaps surprisingly, many of them stemmed from wealthy or middle-class backgrounds. Although one might not have expected such inventive and dedicated female anti-fascist fighters to have sprung from this milieu, these 'young ladies from good homes' proved themselves to be extremely reliable and adroit.<sup>94</sup>

One further example of resistance by German Jews worth mentioning here is that of the *Gemeinschaft für Frieden und Aufbau*, a small group including some 30 members that operated in Berlin between 1943 and 1945. It consisted of Jews and non-Jews from various backgrounds who had come together to assist those trying to flee the country and to spread anti-war propaganda. In their leaflets, they called upon the German people to put an end to the senseless, criminal war being waged by the Hitler regime, encouraging people to engage in both passive and active forms of resistance. The group was uncovered in October 1944 and most of its members were arrested. A brief account of their activities was published in 1971 in the 16<sup>th</sup> volume of the *Year Book of the Leo Baeck Institute*.<sup>95</sup> Since then, extensive research has been done on this group, including Barbara Schieb-Samizadeh's splendid 1993 study.<sup>96</sup> Most of the members of this group were saved from almost certain death by the rapid advance of the Red Army. However, Werner Scharff and Gerhard Grün were murdered in the Sachsenhausen concentration camp on March 16, 1945. These were probably the last two Jewish resistance fighters to die for the freedom of the deluded German people.

### Jewish Representatives and the Illegal Resistance of Jewish Youth

The official representatives of the Jewish community were always emphatically opposed to any Jewish involvement in anti-fascist underground work or political actions against the state. As to the 'older', main segment of the left-wing resistance, their activity was in any event viewed by Jewish com-

<sup>93</sup> See, among others: Simone Erpel, 'Struggle and Survival. Jewish Women in the Anti-Fascist Resistance in Germany', in *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book XXXVII*, London 1992, pp. 397–414; Marion A. Kaplan, *Between Dignity and Despair. Jewish Life in Nazi Germany*, New York and Oxford 1998, pp. 212–216.

<sup>94</sup> A characteristic example is that of Lilli Segal, *Vom Widerspruch zum Widerstand. Erinnerungen einer Tochter aus gutem Hause*, Berlin 1991.

<sup>95</sup> Arnold Paucker with Lucien Steinberg, 'Some Notes on Resistance', in *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book XVI*, London 1971, pp. 244–245.

<sup>96</sup> Barbara Schieb-Samizadeh, 'Die "Gemeinschaft für Frieden und Aufbau"', in Löhken and Vathke, *Juden im Widerstand*, pp. 37–82.

munal leaders as lying entirely outside the ambit of the religious community. In general, community officials, if they were at all aware of any illegal actions, either failed to acknowledge, ignored or actively distanced themselves from such 'leftist' activism, which they regarded as inappropriate and as alien to their concerns.

Furthermore, to the best of my knowledge there is no documentary evidence to suggest that either Nazi officials or the Gestapo held the *Reichsvertretung der deutschen Juden* responsible for the anti-state activities of Jewish anti-fascists — despite the numerous arrests, trials and executions that took place. On the other hand, it should be noted that the *Reichsvertretung* and the Jewish Agency later succeeded in securing the release of many Jewish political prisoners from concentration camps by helping them to emigrate. After all, immediate emigration was a basic precondition for release, at least until the outbreak of the war. In this way, many Socialist and Communist activists were able to reach Palestine via legal channels, although their position within the Jewish community had been marginal.

The situation was quite different when it came to young people, who were under the tutelage of the *Reichsvertretung* and for whom — until the banning of the last still-operating Jewish youth leagues in the wake of the 1938 November pogrom — the *Reichsausschuss jüdischer Jugendverbände* bore ultimate responsibility. Officially the *Reichsvertretung* was in no position to issue warnings to avoid political activities it felt should be curbed or halted; and yet such messages trickled through, and even the youngest among us understood them quite clearly. Recently discovered documentation includes the draft of a statement issued by the *Reichsvereinigung* on June 10, 1942, warning Jews still in Germany not to engage in any irresponsible acts at their 'places of work' (read: forced labour) or elsewhere, as these would only put the entire Jewish community at risk.<sup>97</sup> While in peacetime the Jewish leaders might have worried about the distribution of anti-Nazi leaflets, now it was anti-war propaganda and sabotage that had to be prevented. It is well known that Jewish functionaries appealed to the *Baum-Gruppe* to refrain from all acts of sabotage — unsuccessfully, of course. The declaration that has been preserved clearly points to the motives behind this.

In retribution for the attack launched by the *Baum-Gruppe* on the Nazi propaganda exhibition 'The Soviet Paradise' mounted in the Berlin Lustgarten, some 500 Jews were arrested, half of whom were immediately shot to death by the SS in Sachsenhausen on May 28, 1942. The remaining 250 were later

<sup>97</sup> Esiel Hildesheimer, *Jüdische Selbstverwaltung unter dem NS Regime. Der Existenzkampf der Reichsvertretung und Reichsvereinigung der Juden in Deutschland*, Tübingen 1994 (Schriftenreihe wissenschaftlicher Abhandlungen des Leo Baeck Instituts 50), p. 228.

'liquidated' in the same camp or were transferred to Auschwitz. One could argue that this action, with its coupling of 'Jewish' and 'Communist' features, might not have been such a brilliant idea, and that in retrospect a different Nazi installation might have been a better target.<sup>98</sup> Even some of the group's members had opposed it: They backed out at just the right moment and are among the few of their ranks to have survived.<sup>99</sup>

As in 1942 the remaining Jewish leaders could not yet know with certainty that a death sentence had already been passed on all the Jews, one can understand the critical position they took. However, this does nothing to diminish our admiration for the heroic courage displayed by these young Jews.

It was altogether not so uncommon for young Jews to sneer at the ideological contortions and political gaffes made by their fathers' generation. This was doubtless in line with the generational conflict between them. Among active Jewish anti-fascists, however, this tension went much deeper. They felt a decided disdain for the Jewish representatives. In their opinion, the 'Jewish leaders' had no right to order them around. The young anti-fascists couldn't care less what their 'elders' thought but unswervingly did what they felt was right.

Twenty years later, the views of those Jewish functionaries who had survived the Shoah remained unchanged. They dismissed the resistance by young Jews, condemning it as a series of childish and irresponsible antics that had achieved nothing other than to harm and further imperil the lives of what was ultimately a community of hostages. This opinion was conveyed to me in various interviews I conducted with former functionaries.<sup>100</sup>

<sup>98</sup> The Lustgarten act of sabotage was likewise a clumsy tactical blunder when viewed from the perspective of general anti-fascist strategy. German comrades in the illegal KPD ought to have sabotaged this exhibition, whereas a Jewish group would have been better advised to blow up a display of antisemitic propaganda or a Gestapo installation. Every resistance fighter was well aware of the dangers of getting caught — here with the added result of inadvertently helping to provide ammunition for absurd 'Jewish-Bolshevik' world conspiracy theories. However, in a letter dated December 19, 1989, my friend Helmut Eschwege expressed the opinion that the Lustgarten exhibition had quite distinct antisemitic undertones, which roused the ire of the *Baum-Gruppe* even further. On the *Reichsvereinigung* and the *Baum-Gruppe* see now also Avraham Barkai, 'Im Schatten der Verfolgung und Vernichtung. Leo Baeck in den Jahren des NS-Regimes', in Georg Heuberger and Fritz Backhaus (eds.), *Leo Baeck 1873–1956. Aus dem Stamme von Rabbinern*, Frankfurt am Main 2001, p. 93.

<sup>99</sup> Charlotte and Richard Holzer in a conversation with the author, Berlin 1972.

<sup>100</sup> Several conversations in the late 1960s with Siegfried Moses, former President of the Zionist Association for Germany and later International President of the Leo Baeck Institute (1956–1974); as well as in the early 1960s and 1970s with Eva Reichmann and with Hans Reichmann before his untimely death, leading functionaries of the *Centralverein* and with Robert Weltsch.



Similarly, surviving members of Jewish resistance groups did not change their opinions. Some I spoke to only recently stated that they had no regrets whatsoever. Not only had they acted out of deep anti-fascist convictions, but the frustration they had felt under the weight of oppression was so great that they simply had to strike out against the Nazis.<sup>101</sup>

What is certain is that one cannot concur with a general and sweeping condemnation of the resistance of Jewish youth, even if some of their actions might have been overzealous, foolhardy and/or useless. It is only right that our sympathies should lie with those who chose to defend themselves and fight back. And yet I believe that one cannot entirely ignore the misgivings of those who bore official responsibility for the defenceless and subjugated Jewish community under the heel of a merciless dictatorship.

### The Jewish Community and the German Resistance

The Jewish community had its problems with the German resistance. At the time, any tensions and reservations might have been sensed only vaguely. For today's historians, however, the signs are quite clear. In general, the difficulties between them were of two kinds: One involved the importance attributed to the persecution of the Jews in the published programmatic statements of the German resistance against National Socialism, while the other concerned the policies of its principal protagonists with regard to the so-called 'Jewish Question'.

One can examine the whole array of anti-Nazi statements and texts, ranging from ephemera such as leaflets and stickers to programmes, manifestos and statements sampled from the broad spectrum of resistance forces, from Communists and Trotskyites, the KPO, the SAP, the *Internationaler Sozialistischer Kampfbund* and *Neu-Beginnen*, at one end, to the Liberals, the *Weißer Rose* and the Conservatives, at the other. With but a few exceptions, the persecution of the Jews was regarded as a marginal topic; in the case of some movements, receiving no mention whatsoever. One notable exception is the *Weißer Rose*, in whose leaflets the criminal murder of Jews in the East is expressly denounced. This brave act warrants the highest praise, even if the group's use of language in this context underlines the striking degree to which even these indomitable young people, who had after all grown up under the Nazi regime, in their comments on the "Jewish Question" were infected by the vocabulary and parlance of the ruling ideology. Otherwise, however, one can irrefutably show that, as an issue, the persecution of the

<sup>101</sup> Conversations with Alice and Gerhard Zadek, Günter Nobel and others in the 1990s.

Jews was broadly neglected. Even in the final months of the war, when illegal underground appeals were issued to the war-weary population to rise up against the prolongation of the already-lost war, it was considered inadvisable to even mention the murder of the Jews.<sup>102</sup>

However, it is important here to keep certain tactical considerations in mind. The resistance had to take into account the concerns of those segments of the German population that it was essential to address and, to them, the fate of the Jews was of quite minor importance at the time. Jews who belonged to the resistance were also not particularly perturbed by this 'gap' in the argumentation. The National Conservatives do not signify here, since Jews were unable to operate there, and in any event — with the exception of the liberal camp — Jewish resistance fighters were for the most part active on the left. In general they adhered loyally to the teachings and principles of their respective movements. They were convinced that defeat of fascism would be followed by the birth of a socialist society, and that the liberation of humanity would also necessarily lead to a resolution of the Jewish Question. The rest was immaterial...

For the most part, the major resistance movements stemmed from two primary camps: the National Conservatives and the Communists. It would go beyond the scope of the present essay to delve deeply into the general character of the Conservative opposition or to take up any of the still-smouldering controversies surrounding it. Nevertheless, it is obvious that a very ambivalent attitude towards Jews prevailed within the Conservative camp. The German Conservatives had never distinguished themselves as harbouring any particular affection for their Jewish fellow citizens. One need but glance at the 'Jewish policies' and at the Party programmes of the Conservative parties in Wilhelmine Germany and the Weimar Republic to substantiate this. It is therefore not surprising that former Nazis and antisemites could be found among the ranks of the Conservative opposition. In any event, the Conservative and military opposition consisted of many separate groupings. Altogether it was a very mixed bag, and the majority certainly lacked any real democratic credentials. The Jews knew only too well that many of those who later joined the upright 'first-flush' of Conservative anti-Nazis had previously helped to undermine and destroy the Weimar Republic — fired up by a fear of 'Bolshevism' — and had recognised only too late that they had fallen into the hands of criminals. As far as attitudes towards Jews were concerned, they ran the gamut from dignified benevolence or commensurate philosemitism via brusque neutrality to unvarnished dislike or even outright hatred. There were even several war criminals among their ranks. I would neither accept nor expect that the mass murder of the Jews served as a prime motive behind the Conservative opposition to the Hitler regime. Their

<sup>102</sup> Schieb-Samizadeh, 'Die "Gemeinschaft für Freunden und Aufbau"', pp. 53–54.

overriding concern was, of course, to save Germany from destruction through a catastrophic military defeat. One has only to study the available documentary evidence on the rebels' cease-fire plans — plans that spelled out conditions for a still substantial and territorially extensive German Reich which, given the disastrous situation on the battlefield, were really quite naïve — to understand what their primary interest was. However, we also know that, right from the beginning, there were decent Conservatives who condemned Hitler's *Judenpolitik*. It has been unambiguously demonstrated that even antisemitic Conservatives were horrified by the mass murder — above all some military commanders, who experienced the outrages first-hand in the field. This was certainly a contributing motive behind their actions; and there were even some in the Conservative camp who were so upset by the mass annihilation that it was the main factor that drove them into the resistance.<sup>103</sup>

There can be no question that, had it succeeded in staging a coup, a Conservative government would have brought an immediate halt to the mass killings. But whether such a government would have completely restored the civil rights of the remaining German Jews is highly questionable.<sup>104</sup> Be that as it may, Jewish leaders at the time placed their trust in precisely these Conservative circles. They saw clearly that no one else in Germany had the means at their disposal to do away with the regime.<sup>105</sup>

<sup>103</sup> Peter Steinbach, 'Der deutsche Widerstand und die Judenverfolgung', in Jüdisches Museum der Stadt Wien (ed.), *Die Macht der Bilder. Antisemitische Vorurteile und Mythen*, Vienna 1995, pp. 305–320; Steinbach is correct in contending that although the German resistance failed when it came to the mass murder of the Jews, it did not sanction the 'Final Solution'. An excellent assessment of the general character of the conservative resistance, with which this author wholly concurs, was recently provided by Ekkehard Klaus, 'Ehrung ohne Beschönigung. Der 22. Juli 1944', in *Mut, Forum für Kultur, Politik und Geschichte*, no. 443, July 2004, pp. 14–22/3

<sup>104</sup> The best documentation of this is in Christof Dipper, 'Der deutsche Widerstand und die Juden', in Reinhard Rürup (ed.), *Sondernummer von Geschichte und Gesellschaft, Juden in Deutschland zwischen Assimilation und Verfolgung*, vol. 9, no. 3 (1983), pp. 349–380. All subsequent attempts to disprove or water down Dipper's thesis have been unconvincing.

<sup>105</sup> Specifically in circles with which Jewish representatives had contacts, such as those connected with Carl Goerdeler and Johannes Popitz, there were highly dubious pronouncements about the future of the remnants of the Jewish community in a 'liberated' post-Hitlerian Germany. The Kreisau circle had a better record in this respect. However, a detailed description of the attitudes towards the 'Jewish Question' in the various Conservative circles is beyond the scope of the present work. See Ekkehard Klaus, "'Ganz normale Menschen". Das Judenbild des konservativen Widerstandes', in Tobias Korenke (ed.), *Der deutsche Widerstand gegen Hitler war von einer antisemitischen Grundhaltung getragen*, vol. 1 (1999) (Schriftenreihe der Forschungsgemeinschaft 20. Juli) as well as other essays in this volume. See also Hans Mommsen, 'The Legacy of the Holocaust and German National Identity', Leo Baeck Memorial Lecture 42 (New York 1999); Hans Mommsen, 'Die moralische Wiederherstellung der Nation. Der Widerstand gegen Hitler war von einer antisemitischen Grundhaltung getragen', abbreviated version of a talk given on July 20, 1999 in Elmau, in *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, July 21, 1999; Theodore S. Hamerow, *Die Attentäter. Der 20. Juli — von der Kollaboration zum Widerstand*, trans. Martin Grässlin, Munich 1999.

As to the Communists, some 95% of the Jewish community in the Weimar Republic rejected the KPD with its anti-religious ideology, and they also opposed any revolutionary transformation of the existing social order.<sup>106</sup> And it was the Communists, after all, who in the Third Reich sought to infiltrate Jewish youth associations in order to instrumentalise them for their own political ends. To the extent that this was known, it was highly displeasing to most Jews.

To this were added the 'ideological' ingredients of the illegal KPD propaganda. Unfortunately, the simpleminded templates inherited from the Weimar period with respect to the 'Jewish Question' remained in place — at least until the pogrom of November 1938.<sup>107</sup> Later on the situation improved. Quite apart from this, both the Jewish and non-Jewish comrades had to obediently swallow the party line dictated by Moscow, all the way through to the Hitler-Stalin pact. For many Jewish communists, this represented a serious problem. Nevertheless, for six years KPD propaganda refused to divest itself of stereotypes from the Weimar period. That in the process both Jews and non-Jews would have anti-Zionism drummed into them was self-evident. At times the anti-Zionist invective of the KPD could be quite brutal. But this does not appear to have bothered the Party's Jewish members; either that or they chose, for comfort's sake, to overlook such things. And in any case, they weren't Zionists! But we should not lend this too much weight, as the majority of German Jews did not become Zionists, even under the Nazi dictatorship. Furthermore, the anti-Zionism of a League of German-Nationalist Jews (*Verband nationaldeutscher Juden*) or a Reich Association of Jewish Front-line Soldiers (*Reichsbund jüdischer Frontsoldaten*) was not exactly to be outdone by the Communists. More distressing is the constant anti-capitalist propaganda, which even after 1933 continued to excoriate Jewish capitalists in a heartless and at times even dangerous manner. For years the awkward and spiteful verse 'Ob Christian oder Itzig, das Geschäft bringt's mal so mit sich' (Whether Christian or Kike, businessmen are all alike) or its variation 'Ob Jude oder Christ, Kapitalist ist Kapitalist' (Whether Jewish or Christian, capitalism is capitalism) was energetically exploited for propagandistic purposes, until the day when all the Jewish capitalists in Germany had finally disappeared.

<sup>106</sup> The voting patterns and political orientations of German Jews cannot be discussed in detail here. The authoritative study on the subject is Martin Liepach, *Das Wahlverhalten der jüdischen Bevölkerung. Zur politischen Orientierung der Juden in der Weimarer Republik*, Tübingen 1996 (Schriftenreihe wissenschaftlicher Abhandlungen des Leo Baeck Instituts 53). In the Weimar Republic, some 60% of Jews voted for the liberal DDP and 25% for the SPD. After the collapse of the liberal centre, there was a sizeable shift towards democratic socialism; however, one should be careful not to make a virtue out of a necessity.

<sup>107</sup> Here see especially Bankier, 'The German Communist Party and Nazi Antisemitism', pp. 325–340. This volume includes an extended analysis of KPD policy with regard to the 'Jewish Question' before the outbreak of the war, a topic that likewise cannot be treated here.

My comments here are intended to illuminate the problem this posed for the Jewish community more generally. They could not ignore the political instruction and indoctrination of the KPD, if only for the appallingly bad taste with which it was done. While such argumentation may, from a tactical point of view, have been understandable during the Weimar Republic, and it has to be regrettably acknowledged that in these earlier times the Social Democrats and even the Jewish *Centralverein* had resorted to some of these distasteful slogans, it was simply no longer acceptable under National-Socialist rule. In a population subjected to systematic incitement, such tactics could produce unintended consequences. This has to be stated loud and clear, even if it puts something of a damper on our appreciation of the Communist fighters for their steadfast underground activity. On the other hand, the KPD can in no way be called an antisemitic party. It is absolute nonsense to accuse the Party *post festum* of having 'applied' the Nuremberg Laws in its subsequent segregation of Jewish and non-Jewish cadres and cells. At the time, these were legitimate precautionary measures.

Furthermore, we must and will never forget that, in the wake of *Kristallnacht*, the Communist underground press expressed its full solidarity with the oppressed Jewish population. 'Gegen die Schmach der Judenpogrome!' (Against the disgrace of the anti-Jewish pogroms!) read the headline of the *Rote Fahne* in November 1938.<sup>108</sup> Despite all the necessary criticism, it is not my intention here to play down the anti-fascist achievements of a 'non-democratic' KPD.<sup>109</sup> The Party's conspiratorial nature and its willingness at times to deploy activists recklessly and without concern for the consequences made them particularly well equipped for operations within a totalitarian dictatorship. There is also no doubt that it was precisely the devotion and bravery of Communist activists that inspired the admiration of

<sup>108</sup> Jeffrey Herf, 'East German Communists and the Jewish Question. The Case of Paul Merker', *Journal of Contemporary History* 29, no. 4 (1994), pp. 627–666. Herf puts convincingly forward that this proclamation in the *Rote Fahne* remained the sole case in the entire period from 1933 to 1945 in which the Politburo of the KPD issued such a statement condemning antisemitism.

<sup>109</sup> One could readily assemble an entire catalogue of the convulsed and desperate adaptations to the constantly changing party line of the KPD and its strategic mistakes. See, for example, Wolfgang Benz and Walter H. Pehle (eds.), *Lexikon der deutschen Widerstandes*, Frankfurt am Main 1994, *passim*. However, this does not excuse the unfair way in which the Communist resistance has so often been treated in the West. The cadres operating in Germany, the rank-and-file party members, deserve the greatest respect for their exemplary behaviour towards their Jewish comrades and Jews more generally, and for their outstanding contribution to the resistance. On this see Paucker, *Standhalten und Widerstehen*, pp. 54–55. On the humane and compassionate attitude of the Communist functionaries imprisoned in the Sachsenhausen concentration camp towards the Jews incarcerated there after the November 1938 pogrom, see the moving memoirs of Hans Reichmann, *Deutscher Bürger und verfolgter Jude. Novemberpogrome und KZ Sachsenhausen, 1937–1939*, published and edited by Michael Wildt, Munich 1998, pp. 123 ff.

a considerable number of Jewish youths, nor that the Communist resistance in general exerted a special attraction for them.<sup>110</sup> Alone due to the enormous sacrifices that they made, the Communists remain the great heroes of the German resistance.

The crucial point in all these reflections is to show that the post-war goals of the two main protagonists of the German resistance were simply not commensurate with the hopes of a liberal, moderate, middle-class Jewish community. That forces which had previously been disloyal to Weimar democracy became eventually the major factors in the German resistance remains a curious historical fact. And neither a form of Conservative corporative state of the German right, nor the proletarian paradise of the Communists offered the remnant of the beleaguered Jewish community any real prospects for the future. The Jews would have liked to see the restoration of the previous status quo, i.e. the good old Weimar Republic, or the creation of a system like the one that would ultimately evolve in the Federal Republic.

#### Leo Baeck and the Conservative Resistance

Fifteen years ago, when we outlined the history of the Jewish resistance here in the Gedenkstätte Deutscher Widerstand, no mention was even made of any links between the Jewish representatives and the National-Conservative resistance. Three years later, in the English-language version of our brochure, these relations were dismissed in one brief sentence as problematic. This was a crude sin of omission. Since that time, both German and Jewish historians have investigated this topic intensely, and in the Gedenkstätte, as well, the facts of the case have been laid out. We will now turn to the question of how Jewish historians currently see the connections between the Jewish leadership and the National-Conservative resistance in the light of the latest research. The evidence is indeed complex and contradictory, and we have continually been obliged to revise our conclusions.

That the Jewish 'leaders' — in as far as this still remained possible — cultivated contacts with a conservative stratum of society, was entirely in line with their general practice and mindset. As liberal as German Jewry was, politically and otherwise — doubtless as a consequence of its historical experience as a minority group — the leading Jewish functionaries tended

<sup>110</sup> Already between 1927 and 1932 various Jewish youth groups joined the *Jungkommunisten* — and in the last free elections large numbers of young Jewish voters opted for the KPD. Therefore, the fear and concern many Jews felt over the previously discussed spectre of a 'dangerous red assimilation' was certainly understandable and from their liberal point of view not without justification.

to be more conservative in their orientation, and the Jewish elites had precious little time to spare for the aspirations of the working class. Baeck and his close associates had no sympathy at all for or real understanding of the working-class resistance. It is telling that Baeck, when later referring broadly to his relations with the German 'resistance', thought only of liberal-industrial and National-Conservative circles and certainly not of the illegal workers' movement. On the other hand, one does not have to be a genius to comprehend that only those groups that had remained in a position of relative power were capable of toppling the Nazi regime. We know that even before the outbreak of the war, Baeck had harboured hopes that a successful military putsch would also put an end to the persecution of Jews in the Third Reich.

There is no dispute that contacts had already existed between Jewish and Conservative circles under the Nazi dictatorship before the war, and that these contacts were maintained during the first few years of the conflict.<sup>111</sup> Once again: this is not mere conjecture but an established fact. That the representatives of the remaining Jews in Germany must have had their misgivings about these 'confederates' has already been mentioned. One is tempted to describe them as the natural and unnatural partners of a conservative Jewish leadership. These contacts had developed out of interactions between Jewish representatives and government officials who were either opponents of the regime or disappointed champions of the so-called National Revolution. However, to say that the conservative Jewish leadership put out feelers in this direction does not imply that they had any direct involvement in plans to overthrow the government. This would have been both beyond the abilities of and out of character for those Jewish functionaries who still remained in Germany during the war. Nor would the remnants of the isolated Jewish community have possessed the practical means of making contact with the military opposition. By July 1944, when the unsuccessful coup attempt took place, both the Jewish leadership and the community they had led had long since been deported. By that point, Germany had indeed become virtually "*judenrein*".

Thus, down to the end of 1942, what existed was a kind of marginal involvement, best characterised by the connective 'Jews *and* the German resistance'. Doubtless there were also certain Conservative humanitarian or financial services provided in return. What services Leo Baeck was expected to render remains unclear, and future inquiry will have to examine the entire affair with great care and precision.

<sup>111</sup> There is proof of contacts to Carl Goerdeler (initially via the industrialist Robert Bosch) and to Johannes Popitz already before the war. Both men were executed in the aftermath of July 20, 1944. On the cooperation between Jewish figures and the early German right-wing resistance also see Paucker, *Der jüdische Abwehrkampf*, pp. 125, 280.

It has also been impossible to prove definitively how long Jewish functionaries, with the exception of Leo Baeck, actually managed to keep up their contact with these Conservative circles under wartime conditions, although evidence exists for the period up to 1940. Thereafter it looks as if the connections were maintained only by Leo Baeck himself, who does not appear to have shared this knowledge with his colleagues. In any event, there is no evidence of any Jewish-Conservative contacts beyond 1942. (Baeck himself was deported in January 1943.) While one should not dismiss out of hand the possibility that such contacts existed, in all probability this is very unlikely.

Baeck had promised to write down everything he could remember about his contacts with the German resistance; however, he never did. If we wish to rely on the veracity of oral statements he made shortly before his death,<sup>112</sup> this involvement would seem to have taken the following form: He, Leo Baeck, was commissioned by the Conservative resistance to participate in a supremely bizarre undertaking: a kind of Conservative contest to write a manifesto to be read to the German people after its liberation from Hitler. According to Baeck's own statements on the matter, his version of the manifesto was preferred above all others. I have told this story of the manifesto on several occasions, always garnishing it with a sprig of irony. The incident supposedly took place in 1941, and the name of Carl Goerdeler, the former lord mayor of Leipzig, was mentioned in connection with it. No further information or documentation regarding the matter exists. No copy of the manifesto has ever surfaced.

<sup>112</sup> Our description is based mainly on Baeck's own statements as passed on orally or in writing by his interlocutors and personal friends. The first conversation took place on August 6, 1955 in Baeck's house in London. See Hans Reichmann, 'Excerpts from Leo Baeck's Writing. Foreword: The Fate of a Manuscript', *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book III*, London 1958, pp. 361–363; Hans Reichmann, 'Aufzeichnung über eine Unterredung', in Eva G. Reichmann (ed.), *Worte des Gedenkens für Leo Baeck*, Heidelberg 1959, pp. 237–241, especially pp. 238–239; the late Albert H. Friedlander (a pupil of Baeck's who died in 2004 and who was an authority on Leo Baeck) was often consulted by this author, and we were generally in accord as to our findings. See among others Friedlander's 'A Muted Protest in War-Time Berlin. Writing on the Legal Position of German Jewry throughout the Centuries. Leo Baeck — Leopold Lucas — Hilde Ottenheimer', *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book XXXVII*, London 1992, pp. 363–380; Arnold Paucker, 'Preface/Introduction', *ibid.*, pp. xii–xiv, and several earlier introductions in the Year Books. My presentation is also based on interviews I conducted in the early 1960s with Hans Liebeschütz, Hans Reichmann and Robert Weltsch, who provided me with detailed accounts of their conversations with Leo Baeck in 1955; and later on I had many conversations with Eva Reichmann, the last of which took place in 1995. Aside from the terse 'notes' by Hans Reichmann (1955), evidently jotted down after conversations with Baeck, there is no other written documentation of these exchanges. An examination of their editorial material for *Year Book III* (1958) also yielded nothing; nor did I myself, to my regret, subsequently make any notes of my conversations. However, it should be emphasised here that, while in his introduction to *Year Book III* (pp. xxviii–xxix) Robert Weltsch refers uncritically to Baeck's statements, a year earlier, in a recently discovered confidential circular to the three Leo Baeck Institutes (in London, Jerusalem and New York) dated April 25, 1957, he expresses great scepticism about Baeck's account of the circumstances in which the *Rechtsstellung* manuscript came to be written.



While I have found it sufficient to cast doubt on the whole story with a few sarcastic asides, other historians have gone much further. Avraham Barkai recently stressed just how illogical it would have been for the Conservative opposition to assign such a major task to a Jewish rabbi, of all people.<sup>113</sup> Hans Mommsen and others have questioned the veracity of the entire episode and the very existence of the alleged proclamation.<sup>114</sup> I remain convinced that this matter should not be relegated entirely to the realm of legend; nonetheless, in the absence of any proof, it should best be left in the context of the aforementioned reservations.<sup>115</sup>

In addition, the story has often been told of how a voluminous text — purportedly conceived of by Baeck and then written together with two of his associates, Rabbi Leopold Lucas and the sociologist Hilde Ottenheimer — came into being during the war. It was entitled *Die Entwicklung der Rechtsstellung der Juden in Europa, vornehmlich in Deutschland* (The Development of the Legal Status of Jews in Europe, Principally in Germany) and, according to Baeck, it, too, was commissioned by the National-Conservative opposition and was composed amidst great secrecy between 1939 and 1941. It was intended as a kind of contribution to the regeneration of the German people after Hitler's overthrow. Baeck stated that he handed over a copy to an emissary of the Conservative resistance at the end of 1941. As it happens, three original copies of this document have survived: one in the Leo Baeck Institute in New York, another in the Stuttgarter Bibliothek für Zeitgeschichte and the third in the military archive in Prague. Yet already here we encounter some confusion: According to Baeck, there were four original copies, two of which were destroyed. The copy currently preserved in New York was the one retained by Baeck himself, while the specimen in the Stuttgart Library had come into the possession of the historian H. G. Adler after the war by way of Himmler's former statistician, SS-Obersturmbannführer Richard Korherr. The Prague copy, meanwhile, apparently stems from the Gestapo archives. Therefore, some confusion remains as to the actual number of copies originally made.<sup>116</sup>

<sup>113</sup> Avraham Barkai, *Hoffnung und Untergang. Studien zur deutsch-jüdischen Geschichte des 19. und 20. Jahrhunderts*, Hamburg 1998, p. 159 (of general importance on Baeck and the resistance: pp. 157–161)

<sup>114</sup> Personal correspondence with Hans Mommsen, 1994.

<sup>115</sup> It is in any event telling that Carl Goerdeler's own daughter is of the firm opinion that it is possible that the circle around her father could have commissioned such a work from Baeck. Correspondence with Dr. Marianne Meyer-Krahmer (née Goerdeler), of Heidelberg, in October 2001.

<sup>116</sup> For more on the whereabouts of the various original versions of the manuscript see Paucker, *Standhalten und Widerstehen*, pp. 52–53; the data it contains is no longer entirely up-to-date. Oddly, Korherr, with whom I was in close contact for years through the London Leo Baeck Institute, never mentioned a word to me about the manuscript given by him to H. G. Adler. Robert Weltsch once informed me of the fact that Adler was in possession of a second copy. However, back in the mid-1960s I did not attach much significance to this, although Baeck's 'original' manuscript had been (and remained) in my safekeeping for nearly twenty years.

It has never been explained how Korherr had originally obtained his copy, but it is plausible that it was sent to his office by the Gestapo after the dissolution of the *Reichsvereinigung*. In the mid-1950s, a year before his death, Baeck spoke in detail about the ‘task’ with which he had been entrusted. His interlocutors at the time were the former *Centralverein* functionaries Hans and Eva Reichmann, the historian Hans Liebeschütz and the former editor-in-chief of the *Jüdische Rundschau*, Robert Weltsch. I spoke to them all on a number of occasions regarding this matter many years ago. None of them had the slightest doubt about the veracity of Baeck’s statements. Eva Reichmann, who died some years ago at nearly 102 years of age and who had been very close to Baeck, once again underlined this emphatically in remarks she made in 1995. As a result, historians of German Jewry have given this story their seal of approval.

Other historians, however, began early on to raise questions about this ‘task’ allegedly assigned to Baeck by the National Conservatives. It seemed to them that a freshly ‘liberated’ German public would not have provided an appropriate audience for such a difficult work; nor could the text itself be regarded as ideal reading material for a bombed-out, hungry German population. Several years ago, a substantial collection of documents was discovered clearly proving that Baeck was only given these instructions on March 5, 1942 and that he received them straight from the Gestapo. It is furthermore documented that he had completed the manuscript and delivered it to its commissioners in the *Reichssicherheitshauptamt* (RSHA) by December 1942, a month before his deportation to Theresienstadt.<sup>117</sup> Furthermore, the documents name not Hilde Ottenheimer but a Lucie Dresel as an associate. As there can be no doubt as to the authenticity of these sources, it is clear that Baeck kept silent about this commission and was not entirely truthful to those with whom he spoke about it. If we accept this version without reservations, then we are faced with a riddle or confronted with yet another legend.

<sup>117</sup> I was first alerted to the fact that the *Reichsvereinigung* — and naturally that meant that its head Leo Baeck personally — had received a commission from the Nazi authorities to prepare a ‘scholarly work on the history of the Jews in Europe’ by Dr. Hermann Simon, Director of the foundation ‘Neue Synagoge Berlin — Centrum Judaicum’ in a communication from him dated April 25, 1996. He then allowed me to look at several of these documents in Berlin in July 1996, together with Prof. Wolfgang Scheffler (formerly of the Zentrum für Antisemitismusforschung, Technische Universität Berlin). Simon only published the relevant documents five years later; see Hermann Simon, ‘Bislang unbekannte Quellen zur Entstehungsgeschichte des Werkes “Die Entwicklung der Rechtsstellung der Juden in Europa, vornehmlich in Deutschland”’, in Georg Heuberger and Fritz Backhaus (eds.), *Leo Baeck 1873–1956*, pp. 103–110. The literature on the debate this publication unleashed is far too extensive to be listed here. I will limit myself to mentioning one outstanding analysis: Fritz Backhaus and Martin Liepach, ‘Leo Baecks Manuskript über die ‘Rechtsstellung der Juden in Europa’. Neue Funde und ungeklärte Fragen’, *Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft* 50, no. 1 (2001), pp. 55–71. I have published my own, somewhat differing views elsewhere (see the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, August 14, August 27 and September 12, 2001).

The publication of these documents in May 2001 sparked a controversy in the German press and in scholarly journals that continues to smoulder today. The entire episode deserves a comprehensive re-evaluation, which would vastly exceed the limited scope of this brochure. We can only note here that most historians today believe that the only version of the events with any claim to validity is the fact-based thesis of the Nazi commission. However, when attempting to reconstruct the history of an ostracised and persecuted group under a merciless dictatorship such as that of the Jews in Nazi Germany, one cannot proceed exclusively on a basis of so-called proven facts, “reliable” sources and other available documentation.<sup>118</sup> Together with other German, English and Israeli historians, I hold to the view that the indisputable Nazi order notwithstanding various — and, for that matter, not necessarily mutually exclusive — interpretations of the genesis of the manuscript are still possible. For one thing, it is impossible for me to imagine how so voluminous a work could have been written in just the few short months prior to Baeck’s deportation. Furthermore, the obvious dedication and the meticulousness of the writing would suggest both a lengthy gestation period and independent conditions of work. There is no question that the document is based on much previous research. It is known that as far back as 1933 Baeck had begun to investigate the history the legal status of the Jews in Germany from medieval times.

Five years ago, Konrad Kwiet (Sydney) and I studied this episode and its various interpretations, and our findings were published in 1999 in a conference volume produced by Yad Vashem. In our study, we took the internal evidence of the work into consideration and were probably the first to subject the entire text to a deeper and closer analysis.<sup>119</sup> We reached the conclusion that there is no solid evidence that compromises were made with the Nazi officials who commissioned the work. Recent and far more detailed analyses, particularly of the last section of the manuscript, show that at most only minor compromises were forced on the author by the aforementioned officials. However it

<sup>118</sup> William Weaver, writing in *The New York Review of Books*, March 14, 2002, p. 36, comments in a discussion of two books by Ignazio Silone among others that [...] “For all their professions of scholarly detachment, these historians tend to be judgmental. They line up their documents like a card player laying out a game of solitaire [...] But [...] letters, reports, dispatches can be misleading. There is a space between one document and the next and the historian must read that space with imagination and compassion.” I know of no better description of the perils of limiting oneself exclusively to the available documentary sources when the subject involved is the fate of German Jews under the Nazi dictatorship.

<sup>119</sup> Arnold Paucker and Konrad Kwiet, ‘Jewish Leadership and Jewish Resistance’, in David Bankier (ed.), *Probing the Depths of German Antisemitism. German Society and the Persecution of the Jews, 1933–1941*, New York, Oxford and Jerusalem 2000, pp. 371–394, esp. p. 389. For a German-language account of this, see Konrad Kwiet, ‘Leo Baeck und der deutsch-jüdische Widerstand’, in Michael Brocke, Aubrey Pomerance and Andrea Schatz (eds.), *Neuer Anbruch, Zur deutsch-jüdischen Geschichte und Kultur*, Berlin 2002, pp. 77–94.

is interpreted, Baeck's work remains a bold piece of scholarship considering the conditions under which it was written. In this sense, it must also be seen as an act of Jewish self-assertion and endurance — indeed of 'Amidah' — performed in Nazi Germany. One can with some justification surmise that the treatise originally sprang from Baeck's own initiative; that in the course of his work he received a 'retroactive' mandate to write it from the National-Conservative resistance; and that finally, after the Gestapo had got wind of the project, it was imposed upon him as a 'commission' out of a different set of motives. Of course, this is all speculation. However, should we reject this hypothesis entirely, then one has to dismiss the evidence contained in the conversations between Baeck and his four interlocutors in 1955 (and which extended over several days) and accept that his detailed account was a complete fiction; indeed, a fantasy. And this would contradict everything we know about Leo Baeck's personality and clash with the memories and experiences of those of his friends and former pupils who until very recently were still alive.<sup>120</sup>

None of the previous attempts to solve this 'riddle' have done so satisfactorily. All in all, strong doubts persist, and we will probably never learn the whole truth. Nor is it likely that the entire complex of problems surrounding the issue of 'Jewish representatives and the German resistance', however long we will ponder on it, will ever be resolved. Nevertheless, I feel that it is my duty to emphasise (and I am supported in this by most historians who investigated these fateful years) that, when criticising Baeck, one must always attempt to view the behavioural patterns and certain misdemeanours of the Jewish functionaries in relation to the awful pressures they were under. Younger generations living in a peaceful democratic Germany or in free societies elsewhere cannot conceive of the terrible harassment to which the representatives of German Jewry were subjected, of their constant fear for their lives or the psychological barriers they faced. We should not presume to sit in judgement over them.

## German Jews in the Spanish Civil War and in the Partisan Struggle

Thus far, we have spoken of self-assertion, defiance and endurance; of illegal political work carried out in Germany. However, the resistance of German Jews also had an impressive European dimension. In the European context,

<sup>120</sup> The late historian Herbert Strauss, who knew Baeck well in the years 1941/42 and had many talks with him at that time, also shared the view that Baeck's statements could not simply be pushed aside and that it is also conceivable that the *Rechtsstellung* was commissioned by other parties. See Volker Resing, 'Der Streit um die K-Akten, Neue Quellen lösen Debatte über ein ungewöhnliches Werk von Leo Baeck aus', in *Aufbau*, July 19, 2001, no. 15. The late Albert H. Friedlander, who studied under Baeck in Cincinnati and was personally close to him, was also in complete agreement with our assessment.

'la résistance' or 'la resistenza' meant armed resistance against the German occupiers and the Fascists. In this connection, one cannot ignore the now fashionable tendency to disparage the partisan struggle. Often it is written off as inconsequential for the Allied victory; as a fraternal feud, a civil conflict or as a resistance struggle with exclusively Communist aims. In this mendacious evaluation, the *Spanienkämpfer*, the International Brigadists who had rushed to Spain to aid the Spanish people in their freedom struggle and who were the precursors of the European partisans, have received their share of the mud-slinging. This entire line of argumentation is associated with a rising tide of historical revisionism;<sup>121</sup> with a polemic that attempts to blur the moral distinctions between the Anti-Fascist Alliance and National-Socialist Germany. This is an outrageous misinterpretation of history, which also exploits the collapse of the Soviet Union for its own ends. For us Jews who were so strongly committed to it,<sup>122</sup> such denigration of the European partisan struggle is particularly painful. We were long accused of not having defended ourselves, and when we demonstrated the contrary, smart or supercilious military historians inform us that this self-defence was pointless and useless anyway.

Was there an armed resistance of German Jews? There most certainly was!<sup>123</sup> Naturally it is a waste of time to search for evidence of such resistance within the Jewish community in Germany itself. Indeed, one would not even mention this lunatic notion of the possibility of an armed Jewish struggle in Nazi Germany proper if even today the most bizarre ideas were not still swimming around in certain people's heads. For example, the report of a *Kristallnacht* skirmish in Baden between the SS and Jewish youths attempting to defend a synagogue is both unprovable and extremely unlikely.<sup>124</sup> In Nazi Germany there was no armed resistance, by Jews or anyone else. Only a maniac or a political innocent could blame the Jews in Nazi Germany in hindsight for not having thrown themselves into any military adventures, on top of all the other threats they faced. It was only beyond Germany's borders that Jews could take up arms in the fight against their oppressors.

<sup>121</sup> Even in Great Britain there are some historians today who, too clever by half, make claims such as that it would have been acceptable and indeed more in the interest of the preservation of the British Empire had a peace treaty been signed with Germany in 1940 or 1941 and Britain become a sort of 'junior partner' of the Third Reich. For a role such as this 'cronyism' is the only word that comes to mind, and any further commentary, last but not least as regards the likely fate of the British Jews as well, we might spare ourselves here. And one can imagine the ultimate fate of such a British satellite of the Nazis.

<sup>122</sup> Arno Lustiger, *Zum Kampf auf Leben und Tod. Das Buch vom Widerstand der Juden 1933–1945*, Cologne 1994 (reprinted in subsequent editions up to 2002); Bauer, *Rethinking the Holocaust*, pp. 119–166; Michman, *Die Historiographie der Shoah*, pp. 154–183.

<sup>123</sup> This section is borrowed in part from Paucker, *Standhalten und Widerstehen*, pp. 34–38; 63–65; see *ibid.* for further source references.

<sup>124</sup> Julius Keller, *German Jews Fight Back*, New York and Washington 1975, pp. 89–109. Presented by the author as 'fiction based on fact'.

The armed resistance of German Jews began in Spain in 1936. Just as German workers went to Spain because they saw that only there was a military resistance to fascism possible, German Jews of all political hues, from political refugees to young Jews fresh from Germany, flocked to Spain to fight for the Spanish Republic in the International Brigades. Among them were members of a group of Jewish youths who already in Germany had resolved to volunteer but first had had to proceed to the Netherlands and then singly managed to slip across the French border into Spain.<sup>125</sup> The greatest respect is also due to those Jews from all over the world who, wherever possible, supported the legitimate Spanish government officially, in the firm conviction that the preservation of the freedom of the Spanish people and the defeat of the Spanish Fascists (with their revolting antisemitic propaganda) was also in the interest of the Jews. Only in National-Socialist Germany and Fascist Italy was it impossible for the Jewish community to officially take such a position. Quite apart from the fact that both countries were virtually at war with the Spanish Republic, there was the added difficulty that among Jews in Italy, an ambivalent attitude towards Fascism prevailed — at least until Mussolini implemented the Nuremberg laws in 1938.<sup>126</sup> In any event, the point — about which many a historian has ventured an opinion<sup>127</sup> — is that no one knows what the effect might have been on the subsequent war if, in 1939/40, a democratic Spain had been able to lend its support to France.

In recent years, a considerable amount of research has been devoted to estimating the proportion of Jews in the International Brigades and their share in the battles.<sup>128</sup> This attention is not undue, seeing that the Jewish contingent,

<sup>125</sup> Described — without much sympathy — by Gertrude van Tijn, 'Werkdorp Nieuwesluis', in *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book XIV*, London 1969, pp. 182–199; here p. 194.

<sup>126</sup> A majority of the middle-class Jewish community supported Italian Fascism until 1938, studiously overlooking its strong antisemitic and racist undercurrents as these were not anchored in the party platform. See Centro Furio Jesi (ed.), *La menzogna della razza. Documenti e immagini del razzismo e dell'antisemitismo fascista*, Bologna 1994. The honour of Italian Jewry was saved by the numerous Jewish intellectuals who, from the early 1920s, played an important role in the resistance against the Fascist regime — among the Socialists and the Communists but above all in *Giustizia e Libertà*. The heads of this movement, the Jewish brothers Carlo and Nello Roselli, were murdered in Paris on the orders of Ciano and Mussolini. The percentage of Jews who took part in the partisan struggle between 1943 and 1945 was also considerable.

<sup>127</sup> See Paul Preston, who, in his introduction to *Imperial War Museum, The Spanish Civil War. Dreams and Nightmares*, London 2001, p. 16, demonstrates convincingly how much the defeat of Franco would have helped the Allied cause and, above all, how greatly it would have reinforced France's ability to resist the *Wehrmacht*.

<sup>128</sup> The acknowledged expert on this subject is Lustiger, *Schalom Libertad!*, pp. 223–259 (Germany and Austria) and additional German and French editions. See also Arno Lustiger, 'German and Austrian Jews in the International Brigades', in *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book XXXV*, London 1990, pp. 175–215.

including some 500 German Jews, constituted the largest single group.<sup>129</sup> Beyond this, Jews were represented in other Republican units, as well, such as the Spanish air force. The tendency to disparage the Brigades as ‘communistic’ — which one still encounters in statements made today — is a testimony to superficiality and ignorance, and is a leftover from the Cold War. That 15 percent of all Brigadists — some 7,000 individuals from all over the world — were Jews represents, in the words of the former Israeli president Chaim Herzog, a glorious page in the annals of the Jewish people.<sup>130</sup>

And there is still another reason why we should turn our attention to Spain: Because from 1939 and then again from 1941, battle-ried Brigadists played a central role in the European resistance. At times, former Brigadists — both Jews and non-Jews — formed the core and represented the organisers of resistance units. Jewish emigrants, often fleeing deportation, swelled their ranks. Many middle-class Jews from Germany, who in normal conditions would never have considered engaging in illegal activities, took up arms and fought against the German occupiers. Jews were present in the whole range of European resistance groups.<sup>131</sup> In France, they commanded sections of the Maquis,<sup>132</sup> and the conspicuous part played by anti-Nazi Germans and German Jews in the French resistance has been convincingly demonstrated in the more recent German historiography.<sup>133</sup> Furthermore the presence of active German-Jewish women’s groups has also been documented for France and Belgium.<sup>134</sup>

<sup>129</sup> This is especially true of the Thälmann Brigade. However, former German Jews were also among the volunteers from Palestine. See also the special issue on Spain of *Informationen. Studienkreis: Deutscher Widerstand*, vol. 24, no. 49, May 1999.

<sup>130</sup> In Israel, efforts are being made to gather information about all anti-fascists of Jewish origin who fought for the Spanish Republic in the International Brigades, and plans are in place for a complete documentation involving biographies. It was initiated by Salman Salzman, a former Brigadist and President of the Israeli Association of Former Members of the International Brigades in Spain (1936–1939). A comprehensive documentation of the 120 Austrian-Jewish veterans of the Brigades already exists in the Dokumentationsarchiv des österreichischen Widerstands in Vienna.

<sup>131</sup> The literature on the participation of German Jews in the European resistance is already too vast to be gone into in any depth in the present context. We must limit ourselves to a few brief references.

<sup>132</sup> For France, see especially Lustiger, ‘German and Austrian Jews in the International Brigades’, p. 314 and *passim*. My cousin Eugen (Jenica) Strassberg, for example, was awarded the French Legion of Honour after the Liberation for acts of heroism in the Maquis. My younger brother, Kurt Paucker, having escaped when his Jewish school in southern France was being deported, undertook a mission from the Maquis to lead a group of Jewish women and children over the Swiss border. He was 18 years old at the time.

<sup>133</sup> See esp. the detailed and authoritative study of Klaus-Michael Mallmann, ‘Frankreichs fremde Patrioten. Deutsche in der Résistance’, in *Exilforschung. Ein internationales Jahrbuch* 15 (1997), pp. 33–65.

<sup>134</sup> See also Juliane Lepsius, *Widerstand in Südfrankreich*. Charlotte Löwenthal, 1992, Recha Rothschild, LBI 131–132 ff.; manuscripts in the archive of the Leo Baeck Institute, New York; Segal, *Vom Widerspruch zum Widerstand*.

A comprehensive body of literature in Holland testifies to the deployment of Jewish emigrants from Germany in military actions of the Dutch resistance as well as to their participation in the areas of propaganda and sabotage.<sup>135</sup> The participation of German Jews in the Garibaldi and Matteotti Brigades and in the Giustizia e Libertà in 1943/1944 in Northern Italy has been fully documented. Many died in battle or were summarily executed.<sup>136</sup>

After the collapse of the Italian armies in the Balkans, their commanders refused to turn over the large number of Jews under their protection (who had been interned under humanitarian conditions) to the Germans. Through skilful delaying tactics, constantly circumventing the *Wehrmacht*, the Italian military succeeded in saving these Jews from deportation and thereby contributed decisively to their eventual liberation by Yugoslav partisans. Many of the Jewish men then joined the ranks of Tito's partisans and initially formed their own Jewish brigade, which was later absorbed into a larger partisan unit.<sup>137</sup> Just as Jewish refugees had swelled the ranks of partisan units before them, a great many German Jews were among their number. Austrian Jews had already been fighting in the Slovenian brigades for quite some time. (Altogether over 2,000 Jews fought with Tito's partisans.) Even on the Eastern front there is evidence that, where the terrain was not impassable, German Jews managed to find their way into partisan units.

And in distant Shanghai, as well, Jewish emigrants from Germany engaged in secret activities directed against the Japanese occupation, such as radio interception and sabotage attempts. Anti-fascist German emigrants to Shanghai — most of whom had already been active in the Communist resistance in Germany — immediately organised new circles or cells, disseminated propaganda materials and established contact with the Communist Party and its

<sup>135</sup> I would like to thank Dr. Dörte Nicolaisen of the Katholieke Universiteit Nijmegen for providing me with much important information on the noteworthy participation of Jewish emigrants from Germany in the resistance in the occupied Netherlands. Dutch resistance literature documents many such cases; on this see especially Ben Braber, *Zelfs als wij zullen verliezen. Joden in verzet en illegaliteit in Nederland, 1940–1945*, Amsterdam 1990.

<sup>136</sup> Klaus Voigt, *Zuflucht auf Widerruf. Exil in Italien, 1933–1945*, vol. II, Stuttgart 1993, pp. 377–401, lists the names of 30 German and Austrian Jewish refugees who joined the Italian partisans; in the meantime he has collected several more. After the liberation of Milan, I myself came across two German Jews who had fought first in the International Brigades and later with the Garibaldini.

<sup>137</sup> Voigt, *Zuflucht und Widerruf*, p. 239 and *passim*; Jonathan Steinberg, *All or Nothing. The Axis and the Holocaust, 1941–1943*, London and New York 1990, pp. 131–133; Lucien Steinberg, 'Le bataillon juif de l'île Rab', in *Le Monde Juif*, vol. XXV, no. 54 (1969), pp. 43–47.



Red Army. Finally, some young Jews were also among those who managed to register for British military service before the Japanese invasion.<sup>138</sup>

This very brief overview will have to suffice here, and readers are encouraged to consult the extensive literature on European resistance movements for further information. In Eastern Europe, the fatalism of the doomed ghetto-fighters could only be articulated in the expression 'We cannot do anything, but we must do something!' In the West, as well, German Jews might have fought for bare survival in the French Maquis, but in 1943 they knew that victory and liberation were drawing closer all the time.

### Military Service in the Allied Armies

No one who engages in the broadest sense with the self-assertion, endurance and resistance of German Jews against fascism can ignore the military service in the Allied armies performed by men and women who had emigrated from or fled Germany, for it was significant indeed.

Fifteen years ago we barely touched on this military service in the armies of the Anti-Fascist Alliance. Since that time, it has also been duly honoured in the Gedenkstätte Deutscher Widerstand. How does my generation of soldiers look back upon their military service, and how does it relate to the resistance? We have only been able to briefly indicate how strongly German Jews were represented in all of the partisan units in Europe; there, they were naturally resistance fighters. However, in the case of military service among the Allies the situation would seem to be rather different.

In 1996 the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* devoted several columns to the '10,000 Germans who registered for military service in Great Britain' and held this up as greatest act of the German resistance.<sup>139</sup> No doubt this glorification

<sup>138</sup> James R. Ross, *Escape to Shanghai. A Jewish Community in China*, New York and Toronto 1994, p. 215 and *passim*, mentions details about the underground activities (e.g. espionage for the Allies, etc.) against the Japanese occupation for which Jewish refugees were recruited. Jewish Communists from Germany also resumed their political activities after arriving in Shanghai. See Günter and Genia Nobel, 'Life is Luck. 45 Years after Exile in Shanghai', in *Jewish Culture Club. Visitor's Letter*, Berlin autumn 1993, p. 3. In Shanghai, a centre for research on the subject of Jewish exile in China has existed for several years; I would like to thank its director, Prof. Pan Guang, for additional information (correspondence 1994–1997). For a somewhat more extensive treatment, see now Georg Armbrüster, Michael Kohlstruck and Sonja Mühlberger, 'Exil Shanghai. Facetten eines Themas', in *ibid.* (eds.), *Exil Shanghai, 1938–1947. Jüdisches Leben in der Emigration*, Berlin 2000, pp. 16–17.

<sup>139</sup> 'Unter den ersten in der Normandie. Im Zweiten Weltkrieg dienten zehntausend Deutsche in der britischen Armee', in *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, no. 239, October 14, 1996.

was well intentioned, but there are quite a few holes in the argument — not the least of which being that this was not, in my opinion, an act of German resistance, nor was it in fact an act of resistance at all.

Furthermore, the figure cited in the article is far too low. Indeed, if Palestine and the British Empire are included in the reckoning, then some 12,000 to 13,000 German Jews fought in the British Army alone.<sup>140</sup> If one counts only those serving in Great Britain, however, they barely total 6,000. Only if we add the 1,000 non-Jewish German anti-fascists and the 3,000 Austrians, who might not have appreciated being counted as part of the resistance of a 'Großdeutschland', do we arrive at this figure of some 10,000 so-called Germans.

All told, however, well over 20,000 German-Jewish men and women served in the Allied armies, with the second-largest contingent in the American Army. The Free French and the Red Army are not to be forgotten, nor are the fighting forces of the British dominions and others.<sup>141</sup> One is sometimes asked how this impressive number of German-Jewish volunteers was even possible. The answer, however, is simple. It is terrible to have to say this, but in one respect we German Jews were actually quite lucky in that Hitler came for us first. This meant that the majority was able to flee or to emigrate in time, and among this number the younger generation was heavily represented. When war broke out, there were many of military age who had only been waiting for an opportunity to fight against Nazi Germany.

Was this therefore an act of German resistance? Most certainly not! That the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* has restored to us our Germanness is doubtless a noble act of moral restitution. Back then, the British authorities in the United Kingdom classified us as 'Germans'. In Palestine, on the other hand, we counted as 'natives' and were furnished with the customary brown,

<sup>140</sup> These estimates are actually too low if we include the many German-Jewish women who served in the women's services (ATS, WAF, WRNS).

<sup>141</sup> Among the vast literature on the military service of Jewish emigrants, I shall only mention here: Gerhard Hirschfeld, 'Deutsche Emigranten in Großbritannien und ihr Widerstand gegen den Nationalsozialismus', in Klaus-Jürgen Müller and David N. Dilks (eds.), *Großbritannien und der deutsche Widerstand, 1933–1944*, Paderborn and Munich 1994, pp. 107–121. In general I would advise the reader to consult the works of the Israeli military historian Yoav Gelber, e.g. in *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book XXXV*, London 1990; as well as the four essays by John R. Fox and Guy Stern in *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book XXXVII*, London 1992, and *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book XL*, London 1995. See also Erik Lindner, 'Von deutsch-jüdischen Emigranten im Militär der Alliierten', in *Frankfurter Jüdische Nachrichten*, Passover Issue 1999, p. 18; Andreas Klugescheid, 'His Majesty's Most Loyal Enemy Aliens'. *Deutsch-jüdische Emigranten nach Großbritannien zwischen Internierung und Dienst in den britischen Streitkräften, 1939–1947*, M.A. dissertation, Göttingen 1998; and now also for Great Britain Peter Leighton-Langer; *X steht für unbekannt*, Berlin 2000; previously, among others, Stefan Doernberg (ed.), *Im Bunde mit dem Feind. Deutsche auf alliierter Seite*, Berlin 1995.

third-class British passports. However, by 1941/1942, much had transpired, and apart from the minority that had already been naturalised and called up as British citizens, all of us had already forfeited our German citizenship. However, self-perception is the decisive factor here. Most who volunteered saw themselves quite simply as Jews or as anti-fascists. In Palestine, they fought as Zionists for the Jewish people, already anticipating a future Jewish army. One must understand that among former German Jews, a powerful shift in consciousness had taken place, a process in which the *Kristallnacht* pogroms had represented a major turning point. Other motives also played a role. Thus, the desire to take revenge for what had been done to us was understandably very pronounced — particularly among young Jews, who had only recently been dragged through and abused in the concentration camps of Germany. And who would deny that there were also those who wanted to liberate from the National-Socialist reign of terror the land that had rejected them, and who therefore — objectively speaking — furthered the cause of German democracy? Indeed, who among us did not!

So much for the German armed resistance. But was it, in fact, resistance at all? I believe that one cannot place the Allied military service of German Jews under the rubric of 'resistance'. For the most part, these volunteers served as ordinary soldiers and shared the lot of their fellow combatants. However, a few qualifications are in order here. After 1942, for example, new arrivals to the United States could not simply be inducted into the Army. Initially, the American authorities had regarded with scepticism those German Jews who wished to volunteer immediately; thus, most had to bide their time until they were called up. As such, one cannot really call them 'volunteers'. As far as the Soviet Army was concerned, both Jewish and non-Jewish anti-fascists, most of whom were Communists, were exposed to Party discipline and were often obliged to render important war-related services. There is no doubt in my mind that they acted out of conviction and that what they did in the ranks of the Red Army was right. However, I would not regard them as 'volunteers' either.

In all the other Allied armies, however, we were volunteers. No pressure whatsoever was applied, either in Great Britain or in Palestine, not even when one thinks of the absurd internment of 'friendly' enemy aliens in Great Britain, and the consequences thereof, or of the Zionist strategy in Palestine.<sup>142</sup> Naturally, certain limitations would in any case be in order. After all, no one could predict what fate might be meted out to a German Jew who was captured by the *Wehrmacht*. Volunteers to the British Army were expressly warned of this

<sup>142</sup> A small qualification here is that, in Great Britain, registration for military service facilitated the early release of internees from internment camps. Likewise, Jewish organisations in Palestine particularly after 1943 vigorously and with a certain amount of pressure encouraged all able-bodied Jews to join the British Army.

risk.<sup>143</sup> As a result, volunteers and recruits with explicitly German or Jewish-sounding names were often advised by the military authorities to anglicize them — especially if they were serving in especially vulnerable units such as those transferred to the commandos or the special services.<sup>144</sup> Over the course of the war — initially in Greece and on Crete — it would prove, however, to be the case that, following consultations with Berlin, it was decided that no distinction should be made by the German military between Jewish and non-Jewish soldiers. Thus, some German-Jewish prisoners of war survived the conflict, alongside their British comrades, in POW camps that were often not far from the places where their parents, brothers and sisters were being murdered. However, it is not difficult to imagine what would finally have happened to them had it been the Germans who won the war.

As regards those German Jews who fought behind the lines, e.g. as members of the British Special Forces — and here mention must be made of the many highly motivated, model soldiers who had come out of the German or the German-Jewish youth movements such as the *Schwarzes Fähnlein*, and who deliberately volunteered for such dangerous missions — they would certainly have faced execution in the event of capture. Yet here, as well, their treatment would have differed only marginally from that received by their comrades.

These qualifications aside, most German Jews simply saw it as their duty to volunteer in the fight against Nazi Germany, and they fulfilled this duty just as other soldiers did. We, too, did our bit to defeat National Socialist Germany and can look back with pride upon our military service in the Allied armies. Yet resistance fighters we were not!

#### Excursus: Austria

Within the present framework, a comparison of the resistance of German Jews with that of Austrian Jews would be both appropriate and instructive. After all, Austria was ‘annexed’ eighteen months before the outbreak of the war and therefore formed part of the ‘Großdeutsche Reich’. Of course, there were close ties between Jewish anti-fascists in Germany and Austria. Their resistance bears certain similarities but also some striking differences.<sup>145</sup>

<sup>143</sup> Hence the telling title of the first account of the military service of so-called ‘enemy aliens’: Norman Bentwich, *‘I Understand the Risks’*. *The Story of Refugees from Nazi Oppression Who Fought in the British Forces in the World War*, London 1953.

<sup>144</sup> Thus my cousin Klaus Urbach (a commando) became Peter Aubrey.

<sup>145</sup> On this see also Arnold Paucker, ‘German/Austrian Jewish Resistance — European Resistance: A Comparison’, in Ladislau Gyémánt (ed.), *The Resistance of Jews against the Totalitarian Forces in the Time of the Holocaust*, *Studia Judaica X*, Cluj-Napoca 2001, pp. 43–57.

In Jewish historiography, the resistance of Austrian Jews has been almost entirely neglected. Historians are therefore obliged to turn primarily to the excellent resource of the Dokumentationsarchiv des österreichischen Widerstands (DÖW) in Vienna.<sup>146</sup>

Austrian Jewry did not experience the gradual deprivation of rights and social exclusion that so characterised the history of German Jewry. Humiliation and expropriation hit Austrian Jews in one fell swoop, and the complete confusion and despondency that resulted are also reflected in their resistance activities. In Germany, for example, the outlawing and dissolution of youth leagues was a process drawn out over a matter of years, and it took quite some time for youth organisations to be infiltrated and resistance groups formed. In Austria, there was no chance for this to take place, and although we know of some isolated individuals who, having started out in the *Hashomer Hatzair*, were later to be found among the ranks of the general Austrian resistance,<sup>147</sup> there is no indication of the existence in Austria of organised Jewish groups along the lines of the *Baum-Gruppe*, the *Mamluk-Gruppe*, the *Borochov-Jugend* and others.

Although a striking difference is apparent here, as well, the fact remains that, as in Germany, a remarkable number of Jews were represented in all areas of the Austrian resistance. Considering the pace at which the Jewish population in Austria was shrinking, the level of Jewish participation in the struggle against the National-Socialist dictatorship once again appears quite remarkable in scale. In addition, as in Germany, other forms of Jewish self-assertion and defiance were practised in Austria, as well.

One should furthermore stress that, between 1934 and 1938, Austria was subjected to a phase of semi-fascist or authoritarian 'twilight', during which many Jews became involved in the clandestine activities of the outlawed Socialist and Communist parties. This harmonised well with the political sympathies of many Jewish intellectuals and young workers, who were per-

<sup>146</sup> The following, shortened account, which was likewise borrowed from Paucker: *Standhalten und Widerstehen*, pp. 38–44; 65–69, is based primarily on the material made available to me by the Dokumentationsarchiv des österreichischen Widerstandes (DÖW). I would like to express my gratitude to the staff of the DÖW for their generous assistance.

<sup>147</sup> It is telling that Angelika Jensen, in her book *Sei stark und mutig — Chasak we'emaz. 40 Jahre jüdische Jugend in Österreich am Beispiel der Bewegung Haschomer Hazair, 1903 bis 1943*, Vienna 1995, says nothing about individual resistance fighters ('official' histories of *Hashomer Hatzair* in Germany have thus far avoided the question, although there were resistance cells within its ranks). However, Jensen does emphasise that the *Hashomer Hatzair* was extremely well represented in the resistance in the East (p. 190); that individual Austrian Jews were active there is self-evident.

secuted for their beliefs under the new, undemocratic regime.<sup>148</sup> These illegal activities continued after the *Anschluss*, only coming gradually more or less to an end when the mass emigrations and deportations began.

As in the case of Germany, the proportion of Jews among the Austrian contingent of International Brigadists was high. The fates of those Austrian Jews who served in the International Brigades (and there were numerous Jewish volunteers of all political hues) have been painstakingly recorded.<sup>149</sup> We also know a good deal about the magnificent role they subsequently played in the Belgian and French resistance movements in which they participated from day one.<sup>150</sup> Austrian Communists — Jews as well as non-Jews — distanced themselves from the despicable policies that the French Communist Party pursued during the twelve months between the fall of France and the German invasion of the Soviet Union.<sup>151</sup>

A *Travail Anti-Allemand* group, active in both Belgium and France, was formed by political refugees from Austria very shortly after the German occupation. It had ties to the resistance in both countries, and in France became affiliated with the *Front National pour la Libération*. Here Jews played a formi-

<sup>148</sup> Jonny Moser, 'Die Juden Österreichs und der Widerstand gegen das NS-Regime', in *DÖW Jahrbuch* (1993), p. 103.

<sup>149</sup> Moser, 'Die Juden Österreichs', p. 103, comes up with a figure of 80 volunteers. Hans Landauer (to whom the author would like to extend his special thanks), together with the Jewish former Brigadists Leopold (Poldi) Spira and Josef (Pepi) Meisel, compiled two lists of almost 120 Jewish volunteers; see 'Die österreichischen jüdischen Spanienkämpfer', *DÖW*, E 19.715. In the longer of the two manuscripts, information is also provided, where available, on the subsequent fates of the Jewish Brigadists who were not killed in Spain. See also Hans Landauer, 'Österreichische Juden als Spanienkämpfer', in *Das Jüdische Echo* (1991), pp. 110–114; *ibid.*, 'Weg und Blutzoll der österreichischen Spanienkämpfer in den Jahren 1936–1939', in *DÖW Jahrbuch* (1987), pp. 90–97; *ibid.*, 'Weg und Blutzoll der österreichischen Spanienkämpfer in den Jahren 1939–1945', in *DÖW Jahrbuch* (1988), pp. 148–162; Leopold Spira, 'Spanische Erinnerungen. Als Interbrigadist gegen Franco', in *Das Jüdische Echo* (1991), pp. 107–110.

<sup>150</sup> See Ulrich Weinzierl (ed.), *Österreicher im Exil. Belgien. Eine Dokumentation*, Vienna 1987, especially pp. 110–131; Tilly Spiegel, *Österreicher in der belgischen und französischen Résistance*, Vienna 1969; Moser, *Die Juden Österreichs*, p. 109 ff. See also Ulrich Weinzierl (ed.), *Österreicher im Exil. Frankreich 1938–1945*, Vienna 1984, especially pp. 177–239; F. R. Reiter (ed.), *Unser Kampf. In Frankreich für Österreich. Interviews mit Widerstandskämpfern*, Vienna and Cologne 1984.

<sup>151</sup> In this connection it must also be underlined, however, that Austrian Communists were not alone here. Together with other Spanish exiles who had fled to France after Franco's victory, Spanish Communists also immediately joined the struggle against the German occupiers. It is also appropriate to recall that the official party line of the French Communist Party between 1939 and 1941 was by no means adhered to by all of its members. The party directives were criticised at all levels within the party cadres, and not just by Jewish comrades. It was an unnatural situation, as has already been commented upon in connection with the German resistance. On June 22, 1941, many felt that finally things had come 'right' again.

dable role.<sup>152</sup> Anti-war propaganda was directed towards Austrian soldiers in the *Wehrmacht*; Jewish and non-Jewish women went to military bases to try to persuade Austrian soldiers to desert.<sup>153</sup> From 1943, both Jewish and non-Jewish Austrian emigrants were involved in a broad swath of military actions against the German occupation.<sup>154</sup> The part they played in the liberation of France has been well documented and officially recognised.<sup>155</sup>

In Austria itself, Jews were active after 1938 in the monarchist-legitimist *Österreichische Kampffront*, which was quickly liquidated by the Gestapo.<sup>156</sup> Some of their names are known to us from the court proceedings. However, in light of the political orientation of most Austrian Jews, one would not expect to find many Jews among the ranks of the traditionalist resistance groups.

Perhaps the most curious manifestation of partly Jewish anti-fascist activity in Austria itself is the story of the *Sonderabteilung 'NN'*, the *Mischlingsliga* in Vienna and the *Antifaschistische Partei Österreichs*. First founded in 1938, the so-called *Mischlingsliga* — a collective term must in this instance suffice for a group whose complete history is too complicated to be unravelled here — was reformed in 1943 after the Allies had promised to restore Austrian independence.<sup>157</sup> It consisted of so-called 'half-Jews' but also of couples living in mixed Jewish-Christian marriages. It is important to note that, here

<sup>152</sup> Moser, *Die Juden Österreichs*, pp. 109–112.

<sup>153</sup> See Tilly Spiegel, *Frauen und Mädchen im österreichischen Widerstand*, Vienna 1967, p. 39, on women who returned to Austria in order to resume illegal activities there. See also Strobl, *Das Feld des Vergessens*, p. 46 ff.

<sup>154</sup> Moser, *Die Juden Österreichs*, pp. 109–112; Weinzierl, *Österreicher im Exil*. Frankreich, pp. 177–239; Spiegel, *Österreicher in der belgischen und französischen Résistance*.

<sup>155</sup> On this see also Albert Sternfeld, *Betrifft: Österreich. Von Österreich betroffen*, Vienna 1990, passim, who draws a connection between the resistance of Austrian Jews and their service in the Allied armies before the collapse of France in 1940 and after the liberation in 1944. For Austria, Sternfeld cautiously suggests a total figure of 15,000 to 16,000 volunteers in the Allied armies — an impressive number that in percentage terms even exceeds the proportion of Jewish volunteers from Germany. DÖW (ed.), *Österreicher im Exil. USA 1938–1945. Eine Dokumentation*, vol. II, Vienna 1995, p. 5, mentions 4,500 volunteers and conscripts for the USA alone. However, it must be emphasized that all of these figures include non-Jewish anti-fascists in the affected countries. Among more recent literature must be mentioned: Peter Pirker (ed.), Patrick Martin-Smith, *Widerstand vom Himmel. Österreicheinsätze des britischen Geheimdienstes SOE 1944*, Vienna 2004; Peter Pirker, 'Agents in Field. Zur Rekrutierung der "Austrian Section" im britischen Geheimdienst "Special Operations executive" 1942–1944', in *Zeitgeschichte*, 31, nr. 2, March/April 2004, pp. 88–120. The number of Jewish Austrians involved in these operations was considerable.

<sup>156</sup> DÖW, A. no. 15643.

<sup>157</sup> DÖW, A. no. 987, 988, 7162, the 'Sonderabteilung ... Festschrift', etc. (18.03.1913); record from memory of the questioning of Otto Horn (17.02.1971); pamphlets, proclamations, etc. Otto Franz Max Horn was one of the leaders. The very fascinating story of the *Mischlingsliga* warrants a separate study.

as in Germany, partners in mixed marriages played a special role in the resistance, although as far as the organisation and specific activities of this group are concerned, Vienna appears to have had a very particular status.<sup>158</sup> Although it also indulged in a great deal of Austrian patriotic rhetoric, the *Mischlingsliga* was nevertheless left leaning; and while ostensibly politically neutral, the Communist influence predominated. (This tactic of playing the nationalistic card and engaging in patriotic tirades was, incidentally, entirely in accordance with Communist wartime strategy.) After the deportation of nearly the entire remaining Jewish population, the *Mischlingsliga* was the only organised 'Jewish' resistance group left in Vienna. It cooperated with the Czech underground and with Tito's partisans, for whom it organised both medical and other supplies. Together with Yugoslav and French prisoners of war, it engaged in industrial sabotage in Austrian factories. The *Mischlingsliga* had its own *Führer*,<sup>159</sup> who barked out military instructions and whose 'troops' ultimately fought in the battle of Vienna in 1945. They had spent a long time preparing for that day: With 100 to 200 activists, they had the strength of a battalion, and after the liberation they were entrusted by the Soviet occupiers with policing duties.<sup>160</sup>

The return to Austria of Jewish anti-fascists disguised as French volunteer labourers (*Fremdarbeiter*) is another heroic and tragic chapter in the history of the Austrian resistance. Already in 1940, after the occupation of France, the *Kommunistische Partei Österreichs* (KPO) ordered Austrian Communists to 'go back home' to bolster illegal work against the Nazi regime. This order applied only to comrades for whom the level of risk was regarded as low (although, as things turned out, the majority were betrayed and executed anyway.) On these grounds, Jewish Party members would naturally have been excluded from consideration as candidates for return. However in 1943 quite a few Austrian Jews, bearing false papers, set out for home to join their non-Jewish comrades.<sup>161</sup> The majority also met their death.<sup>162</sup> (As we

<sup>158</sup> The connection between mixed marriage and resistance is yet another, so far neglected theme. In Austria, this factor appears to have played a much stronger role than in Germany, if we restrict the phenomenon to political resistance. Thus, the famous protest of German women against the deportation of their Jewish husbands in Berlin in 1943 lies on the margins of an 'anti-fascist resistance'. On this see, among others, Nathan Stoltzfus, *Resistance from the Heart. Intermarriage and the Rosenstrasse Protest in Germany*, New York 1996. This is a heartwarming episode but of course cannot be classified as Jewish resistance.

<sup>159</sup> Otto Ernst Andreasch (Monti). He was arrested in February 1944 and died during an Allied bombing in November of that year.

<sup>160</sup> DÖW, A. no. 7162, p. 9.

<sup>161</sup> Moser, *Die Juden Österreichs*, pp. 110, 112; Spiegel, *Frauen und Mädchen*, p. 39.

<sup>162</sup> Their fates have been recorded in various ways. One should refer especially to the unpublished papers of Hans Landauer, 'Österreichische Spanienkämpfer in der Résistance' and 'Zurück nach Österreich um Widerstand zu leisten' (both manuscripts are housed in the DÖW). The protagonists were almost all Austrian Jews. Nine men and one woman lost their lives during the action.



have seen, such infiltration was also common practice among members of the German resistance. However, after 1939, this was considered out of the question for Jewish anti-fascists.) Within months of the liberation of France, quite a few Austrian Jews who had been fighting in the maquis managed to cross into Yugoslavia to join the Austrian battalions of Tito's partisan armies. And the very last days of the war saw Austrian Jews fighting on Austrian soil in the *Freie Österreichische Kampftruppe Steiermark*, alongside Soviet troops.<sup>163</sup> Viennese Jews from the anti-fascist underground stormed SS barracks together with units of the Red Army.<sup>164</sup>

There is no evidence to suggest that anything comparable took place in the German context, i.e. in the battle of Berlin. Nor would one expect such behaviour from those Jews who had survived in the German underground. In Austria, one can speak of a kind of liberation struggle being waged by a tiny minority — with the support of the Allies, of course. In the *Altreich*, on the other hand, such preconditions and possibilities did not exist, either for Jews or for non-Jews in the resistance.

## Conclusion

This account has endeavoured to provide an overview of the self-assertion and active resistance by German Jews, which, given the constraints of space, must necessarily remain incomplete. For example, although the Liberal resistance was an area in which in particular older Jews were active, in accordance with the political outlook of German Jewry, I was scarcely able to touch upon it. Horst Sassin, however, has written excellent studies of their activities.<sup>165</sup> Furthermore, there were individuals who acted on their own, including some rather odd characters. Finally, there were Jewish officers and soldiers, veterans of the First World War, who operated according

<sup>163</sup> Moser, *Die Juden Österreichs*, pp. 112–113. The most detailed study of the *Kampfgruppe Steiermark* is by Christian Fleck, *Koralmpartisanen. Über abweichende Karrieren politisch motivierter Widerstandskämpfer*, Vienna and Cologne 1986. However, he does not give prominence to any Jewish figures. One of them, Leo Engelmann, was arrested and executed just weeks before the end of the war. Radomir Luza: 'The Resistance in Austria, 1938–1945', in *Politics and Society in Germany, Austria and Switzerland*, vol. 1, nr. 2 (Winter 1988), p. 22, which is based on his book of the same title (Minneapolis 1984) features a photograph of the *Österreichische Freiheitsbataillon* with Friedl Fürstenberg and Franz Hunner (*sic.*, actually Honner!), Jewish members of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Austria, in the front row.

<sup>164</sup> DÖW, A. no. 7162, p. 9.

<sup>165</sup> The Liberal Jewish option is described in detail in Horst Sassin, *Liberale im Widerstand. Die Robinsohn-Strassmann-Gruppe, 1934–1942, Hamburger Beiträge zur Sozial- und Zeitgeschichte*, 30, Hamburg, 1933; and Horst Sassin, 'Liberals of Jewish Background in the Anti-Nazi Resistance', *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book XXXVII*, London, 1992, pp. 381–389.

to their decidedly German-nationalist orientation, and who often undertook individual actions out of sheer rage.<sup>166</sup>

There is also no space here to discuss the countless other forms of Jewish resistance in Germany, including committing acts of sabotage in factories, engaging in espionage, involvement in assassination attempts, providing escape aid to Allied soldiers,<sup>167</sup> continuing the struggle in the concentration camps and participating in uprisings within the camps.

One could doubtless say a good deal more about the specific contribution made by German Jews in exile and emigration to the Allied victory.<sup>168</sup> Their linguistic skills alone, which frequently extended far beyond their perfect fluency in German, meant that volunteers could be deployed in many areas. This included work in the 'Intelligence units', work in radio and telephone surveillance, acting as liaisons to partisan units, interrogating prisoners of war, helping in the rapid production during battle of leaflets addressed to the *Wehrmacht* and the like. It should also be mentioned that German Jews penned German political antifascist chansons and even wrote sarcastic parodies of the songs of the Nazi regime and of the *Wehrmacht* during their British military service. These were intended not just for the radio programmes of the western Allies but also for *Sender Freies Deutschland* (Radio Free Germany) in the Soviet Union and for the Radio of the Red Army. They were transmitted via a Cairo 'progressive' bookshop, with no certainty however that they were ever broadcast.<sup>169</sup> German Jews were also extremely active in producing counter-propaganda for Allied radio programmes. In Britain, this included participation in the often highly inventive 'Black Propaganda' broadcasts from London, and strong involvement in the BBC's very successful German-language programming.<sup>170</sup>

Let us return to the Reich. Fleeing deportation should also not go unmentioned, since, in a certain broad sense — although it lies outside the realm of political activity — this can be regarded as resistance, as well. After all,

<sup>166</sup> On individuals and their actions see Kwiet and Eschwege, *Selbstbehauptung und Widerstand*, pp. 240-246; Dieter Corbach, 'Ich kann nicht schweigen!' Richard Stern (Cologne), Marsilstein 20, Cologne 1988; Erich Leyens and Lotte Andor, *Die fremden Jahre. Erinnerungen an Deutschland*, Frankfurt am Main, 1991, esp. pp. 15-53.

<sup>167</sup> See the memoirs of my cousin Iselotte Thernal, 'Mother and Child', in Murray Mindlin and Chaim Bermant (eds.), *Explorations*, London, 1967, pp. 191-192. Having gone underground in order to avoid deportation, she served for a time as a link in a chain of people who helped smuggle British prisoners of war to neutral territory. There are other examples as well.

<sup>168</sup> See the literature in n. 141 above.

<sup>169</sup> I have preserved a few of the original documents in my private archive.

<sup>170</sup> See Charmian Brinson and Richard Dove (eds.), 'Stimme der Wahrheit. The German-language Broadcasting of the BBC', *Yearbook of the Research Centre for German and Austrian Exile Studies*, 5 (2003).

it involved the refusal to follow the orders of an all-powerful dictatorship. A Zionist youth group that succeeded in 'disappearing' in time and which thereby managed to survive certainly regarded this illegal existence as an act of resistance against Hitler's plan to exterminate the entire Jewish people.<sup>171</sup> In addition, the fact that so many thousands of German Jews tried to go underground in order to evade the deportations<sup>172</sup> does not exactly conform to the prevailing image some people entertain of a timid and fearful German Jewry obediently following the dictates of the State.

Many years ago, Bruno Bettelheim wrote on a number of occasions that German Jews had no backbone and persisted in a passive ghetto mentality of suffering. In his great works on the Holocaust, Raul Hilberg constantly emphasised that, in the face of mass extermination, resistance had been so minimal as to be practically insignificant.<sup>173</sup> Arno Lustiger and others have rightly refuted this thesis for the European context.<sup>174</sup> And although we have not always treated certain Jewish behaviours (or the German resistance as a whole) uncritically, we have tried to show that the thesis of German Jewry's failure to resist is simply incorrect.

All representations of the resistance are open to criticism. Resistance groups generally did not keep minutes or written records. Where their members succeeded in avoiding arrest, no trial records or death sentences exist. In many areas, we are dependent upon the memories of the participants, which doubtless presents an historiographical problem. Historians quite correctly have misgivings when, in the absence of written sources, we are forced to rely on undocumented accounts, which we occasionally have to carefully tone down. On the other hand, we can check witness testimonies

<sup>171</sup> Among the works that have been written on this Zionist youth group that went underground, a new and particularly thorough study deserves mention: Christine Zahn's "Nicht mitgehen sondern weggehen!" – eine jüdische Jugendgruppe im Untergrund', in Löhken and Vathke, *Juden im Widerstand*, pp. 159–205. This group's story has become quite well known in Germany, since it has been frequently told on radio and television by a surviving member, Gad Beck.

<sup>172</sup> No reliable figures exist. It has been estimated that 10,000 people tried to flee, and that 3,000 evaded capture and lived illegally. Quite high figures are cited in Avraham Seligmann, 'An Illegal Way of Life in Nazi Germany', *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book XXXII*, London, 1987, pp. 327–361. The total number of those who were saved remains controversial. Many courageous Germans helped them, often hiding them at risk to their own lives.

<sup>173</sup> Raul Hilberg has never seen fit to take back the criticisms he makes in his otherwise highly commendable works. Cf. the German edition, *Täter, Opfer, Zuschauer. Die Vernichtung der Juden, 1933–1945*, Frankfurt am Main, 1992.

<sup>174</sup> Lustiger's *Zum Kampf auf Leben und Tod* serves as an excellent example of the many attempts to refute the thesis of the absence of resistance. Lustiger treats not just resistance by Jews in Germany, but also and particularly their commitment to the European partisan struggle.

against one other, and in general we have found them to be quite reliable. Our estimates of the approximate extent of the Jewish resistance could also be subjected to some criticism. Numbers and percentages can rarely be documented with absolute certainty. Nevertheless, our findings are based on extensively documented legal proceedings of the Nazi period, post-war trials, precise lists of Jewish political prisoners in concentration camps and records of their release, lists of Jewish volunteers in the International Brigades (which are complete for Germany and Austria) and comparable information of surviving anti-fascists. Anyone who wishes to take the trouble to calculate, on the basis of the current state of research on the resistance and its source references, the number of German Jews involved in the resistance in Germany and throughout Europe would certainly come up with over 2,000 names. It goes without saying that others will remain forever nameless.

My account here bears an unmistakable personal note. This is simply unavoidable. Historians of my generation were also eyewitnesses, and speak from their own experience. Were we to attempt to set our experiences aside in order to write purely sober and passionless history, many things that only we know would sink into oblivion. It must be equally understandable that, from my perspective, and in keeping with my strong personal involvement – for I am commemorating some of my own friends here, my own age group, including two girls executed for their resistance activities who had been with me at school and whom I continue to mourn – the Jewish men and women of the political, anti-fascist resistance deserve a place of honour in the history of Germany and of the German Jews. On the other hand, the brave conduct of so many representatives and functionaries of the Jewish community cannot be praised highly enough; it has been elevated, and rightly so, to the status of a ‘Bewährung im Untergang’ (proof of mettle in a time of destruction).<sup>175</sup>

It is precisely when talking about this aspect of Jewish life in Germany that we have constantly had to emphasise that neither membership of the Jewish religious community nor even an overt expression of allegiance to the Jewish nation can serve as a benchmark for an investigation. In the course of our account, we have repeatedly underlined the fact that the motivation of most militant German-Jewish anti-fascists was clearly rooted in their socialist and communist convictions. We have also attempted, however, to show that, for many, the confrontation with the murderous persecution of the Jews later led them to reflect on their Jewish identity, led to an increased Jewish consciousness. This notwithstanding, even today some Jewish historians still stubbornly cling to the attitude that only an emphatically ‘Jewish’ resistance that took up arms against the extermination of Jews can be considered as a

<sup>175</sup> Ernst G. Lowenthal (ed.), *Bewährung im Untergang. Ein Gedenkbuch*, published on behalf of the Council of Jews from Germany, London and Stuttgart 1965.

'Jewish resistance'. Such a point of view appears to me neither tenable nor advisable, leading to needless isolation. After all, any resistance was ultimately also resistance to the Holocaust. Fortunately, such a restricted notion of Jewish resistance is on the wane, and is shared by only few authors.<sup>176</sup> Apart from this, as Jewish historians, almost all of us have arrived – some hesitantly, others even rather reluctantly – at the position that the scholarly study of the history of German Jewry must include all those who were of Jewish parentage or descent, who shared the Jewish fate or who were regarded as Jews by the outside world. Thus the self-perceptions of the actors in this terrible drama cannot serve as the sole yardstick of inclusion and of our esteem. Official Jewish representatives who tried to prevent or sabotage measures by the Gestapo naturally did not define themselves as anti-fascists. The boys and girls of the *Baum-Gruppe* and many other Jewish cells of the anti-fascist resistance felt a deep affinity for the German working class and did not see themselves in national Jewish terms.

Today, more than sixty years on, we can include all of them and can rightfully say that the Zionist functionary who voluntarily continued his work in the Hechaluz after the outbreak of war and shared the dreadful fate of his comrades;<sup>177</sup> the rabbi who refused to emigrate and took the harsh path to the extermination camps along with the remainder of his flock;<sup>178</sup> the Liberal Jewish representative Otto Hirsch, Director of the *Reichsvertretung*, who resisted the first deportations and perished at Mauthausen;<sup>179</sup> the German-Jewish parachutists and pilots who never returned from their missions; the Communist activist Herbert Baum, martyr of both the German and Jewish resistance, who was tortured to death in prison<sup>180</sup> — they all died for the Jewish people; they all fell in the struggle against Nazism.

<sup>176</sup> For more on this, see Paucker, *Changing Perceptions*.

<sup>177</sup> Jizchak Schwersenz, *Alfred Selbiger (1940-1942). Sein Leben, seine Arbeit*, Ann Arbor, Mich. 1962; Anneliese-Ora Borinski, *Erinnerungen 1940-1942*, Ann Arbor, Mich. n.d.. On the underground activities of the Hechaluz, see especially Ferdinand Kroh, *David kämpft. Vom jüdischen Widerstand gegen Hitler*, Reinbek, 1988.

<sup>178</sup> I am thinking here, for example, of the Chief Rabbi of Hamburg, Dr. Joseph Carlebach, the father of my late friend, Julius Carlebach (died 2001), who served from 1989 to 1997 as *Rektor* of the Hochschule für Jüdische Studien in Heidelberg.

<sup>179</sup> Sauer, *Otto Hirsch*; Kulka, *The Central Organisation of German Jews*.

<sup>180</sup> Herbert Baum either died under torture or committed suicide in order to escape further torture. Cf. Löhken and Vathke, *Juden im Widerstand*, p. 150.

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#### Publications:

*Der jüdische Abwehrkampf gegen Antisemitismus und Nationalsozialismus in den letzten Jahren der Weimarer Republik* (1968), as well as other studies in the field of German-Jewish history. The most recent book by Arnold Paucker is entitled *Deutsche Juden im Kampf um Recht und Freiheit. Studien zu Abwehr, Selbstbehauptung und Widerstand der deutschen Juden seit dem Ende des 19. Jahrhunderts*, Teetz 2003, 2004<sup>2</sup>.

Editor and co-editor of nine symposium volumes on the history of German Jewry, including *Die Juden im Nationalsozialistischen Deutschland, 1933–1943* (1986) and *Juden und deutsche Arbeiterbewegung bis 1933* (1992), 1970–1992 Editor of the *Year Book of the Leo Baeck Institute*, London.



