

JERUSALEM ON THE MAIN: JEWISH INTEGRATION IN FRANKFURT, 1914-1938

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ABSTRACT

Max Lazar: Jerusalem on the Main: Jewish Integration in Frankfurt, 1914-1938
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The First World War has generally been seen as a negative turning point for Jewish integration in Germany before the Holocaust. This dissertation challenges this “master narrative” of German-Jewish history through a local study of Jewish integration in Frankfurt am Main between 1914 and the *Kristallnacht* pogrom in 1938. A closer look at local politics, cultural life, public education, and social relations reveals that Jewish integration remained strong and, in some cases, grew stronger in Frankfurt up until the end of the Weimar Republic. To a large degree, this was the result of deliberate efforts by officials in Frankfurt’s city government to enact policies which would support Jewish integration and promote a culture of “confessional peace” between the city’s Jewish, Catholic, and Protestant citizens. These policies included projects as varied as public-school curricula, street names, and local literature about the history and culture of the city. The dissertation also considers how factors such as gender, class, age, and religious observance impacted social integration.

As strong as Jewish integration was in Frankfurt before 1933, the Nazi Party’s seizure of local and national power revealed the fragility of the foundation upon which this integration had rested. Nevertheless, the Nazis proved more adept at eliminating Jewish integration in certain areas than in others. While Jews were almost immediately removed from the realm of politics, it took time before the Nazis were able to end Jewish integration in public education or completely sunder the many friendships and professional relations between Jews and gentiles. The continued

presence of Jewish street names until 1938 also reveals the longer lifespan of spatial markers which highlighted the rich history of Jewish integration and belonging in the city.

Finally, and with an eye to the present, this dissertation argues that the story of Jewish integration in Frankfurt speaks to the important roles that local governments can play to enact policies that reinforce ideas of minority integration and belonging in the United States and other democratic societies.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CAHJP	Central Archives for the History of the Jewish People
DDP	Deutsche Demokratische Partei
DNVP	Deutschnational Volkspartei
DRC	Goldstein-Goren Diaspora Research Center
DVP	Deutsche Volkspartei
HHstA	Hessisches Hauptstaatsarchiv
IFS	Institut für Stadtgeschichte
IG	Israelitische Gemeinde
IRG	Israelitische Gesellschaft
JMB	Jüdisches Museum Berlin
JMF	Jüdisches Museum Frankfurt
LBI	Leo Baeck Institute
SO	Stadtarchiv Offenbach
UAF	Universitätsarchiv Frankfurt am Main
UB	Universitätsbibliothek Johann Christian Senckenberg Frankfurt am Main
VHA	University of Southern California Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive
ZfA	Zentrum für Antisemitismusforschung

INTRODUCTION

David Friedrich Weill left Germany for the last time on 19 October 1938, crossing the Rhine River into Strasbourg with ten *Reichsmark* in his pocket. This was the first stop on a journey that would bring Weill to the start of a new life in exile in the United States. Before 1933, Weill was prominent Jewish wine merchant and exporter and had lived a placid middle-class life in the *Westend* neighborhood of Frankfurt am Main. The Nazi Party's rise to national and local power in 1933 eventually led to the complete disruption of Weill's once comfortable and carefree lifestyle. In the span of five years, Weill had been forced to resign from prominent posts in Frankfurt's Chamber of Commerce, spent nearly a year in jail for a trumped-up customs offense, made the bitter decision to close his family business so it would not be "Aryanized," and, shortly before his first attempt to emigrate in June 1938, was incarcerated at the Buchenwald concentration camp after the Gestapo labeled him as an "asocial element" because of his prior imprisonment. However, during the same period, Weill had somehow managed to maintain a number of relationships with many non-Jewish friends and customers, including some men that still occupied important roles in the economic and political life of Frankfurt.¹

Weill's concurrent experiences of racial persecution and interconfessional friendship raise important questions about the nature of Jewish integration in Germany. How integrated were Jews in Frankfurt before the Nazis came to power? How uniform was this integration across the different spheres of society in the city? Did integration vary based upon factors such

¹ From David Friedrich Weill's essay "My Life in Germany Before and After January 30, 1933." Central Archives of the History of the History of the Jewish People (CAHJP) P241/9.

as class, age, gender, or levels of religious observance? To what degree did Jewish integration turn into disintegration once the Nazis came to power? What elements, if any, of Jewish integration survived beyond 30 January 1933?

The nature and extent of Jewish integration has long played a central role in the study of Jewish life in Germany before the Holocaust. Over time, a consensus developed that German-Jewish integration reached its zenith in the years before 1914 and that the First World marked a negative turning point of what, until then, had been an upward arc of integration that had begun at the end of the eighteenth century. According to this master narrative of German-Jewish history, the adversarial mentality of life in the trenches bled into German society over the course of the war, enhancing the perception that German Jews were irredeemably different from their non-Jewish neighbors.² Reacting to widespread rumors that Jewish men were intentionally avoiding military service in 1916, the Prussian War Ministry ordered the so-called “Jew Count” (*Juden-zählung*),” a census to determine the percentage of eligible German Jews that were serving at the front.³ The “Jew Count” not only symbolized an insulting affront to a community that had already lost thousands of its sons to the war effort, it also echoed antisemitic tropes regarding supposed Jewish disloyalty to the nation-state and made “clear that the barriers between Jewish and non-Jewish Germans would remain, and, indeed, would in the course of the war be strengthened, deepening the Jew’s sense of isolation.” Thus, long before Germany

² George L. Mosse, “The Jews and the German War Experience, 1914-1918,” in *German Jewry Between Hope and Despair*, ed. Nils Roemer (Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2013), 167-190

³ Werner T. Angress, “The German Army’s ‘Juden-zählung’ of 1916: Genesis – Consequences – Significance, *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book* (23) 1978: 117-137; Egmont Zechlin, *Die deutsche Politik und die Juden im ersten Weltkrieg* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1969), 527-541; Jacob Rosenthal, ‘*Die Ehre des jüdischen Soldaten*’. *Die Juden-zählung im Ersten Weltkrieg und ihre Folgen* (Frankfurt: Campus Verlag, 2007); Jonathan Karp and Marsha L. Rozenblit, “Introduction: On the Significance of World War I and the Jews,” in *World War I and the Jews: Conflict and Transformation in Europe, The Middle East, and America*, ed. Jonathan Karp and Marsha L. Rozenblit (New York: Berghahn Books, 2017), 5.

surrendered in November 1918 “it was apparent that full social integration without the loss of Jewish identity had remained an unfulfilled hope.”⁴

The same narrative holds that after the war, many non-Jews openly speculated about whether or not Germany’s defeat and the creation of the Weimar Republic were the result of a Judeo-Bolshevist conspiracy and, despite a period of intense Jewish cultural renewal during the 1920s, German-Jewish isolation and political Antisemitism continually increased during the twilight years of Jewish emancipation.⁵ By the start of the 1930s, German Jews increasingly lived in an economic ghetto due to the persistent threat of antisemitic boycotts.⁶ Once the Nazi Party came to power in 1933, German Jews experienced legal persecution from the German government and further ostracization from their non-Jewish peers, thus ending a long process of dis-integration that had begun nearly two decades earlier.

⁴ Avraham Barkai and Paul Mendes-Flohr, *German-Jewish History in Modern Times Volume 4: Renewal and Destruction 1918-1945* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 11; Steven M. Lowenstein, Paul Mendes-Flohr, Peter Pulzer, and Monika Richarz, *German Jewish History in Modern Times Volume 3: Integration in Dispute 1871-1918* (New York: Columbia University press, 1997), 388. Similar arguments about the negative consequences of World War I can be found in Amos Elon, *The Pity of it All: A History of Jews in Germany, 1743-1933* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2002), 297-354; Marion Kaplan, “Friendship on the Margins: Jewish Social Relations in Imperial Germany,” in *Central European History* Vol. 34, No. 4 (2001), 495-496; Jacob Katz, *From Prejudice to Destruction: Anti-Semitism, 1700-1933* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1980), 311; Werner Jochmann “Die Ausbreitung des Antisemitismus” in *Deutsches Judentum in Krieg und Revolution*, ed. Werner E. Mosse (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1971), 409-510; Saul Friedländer “Die politischen Veränderungen der Kriegszeit und ihre Auswirkungen auf die Judenfrage,” in *Deutsches Judentum in Krieg und Revolution*, edited by Werner E. Mosse (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1971), 27-65. In his essay on the importance of the concept of victimhood for understanding war and Genocide in the twentieth century, Omer Bartov goes so far as to suggest that the antisemitism and mentality in the trenches as well as the “Jew Count” served as a catalyst for transforming the German populace into an exclusionary racial community (*Volksgemeinschaft*). Omer Bartov, “Defining Enemies, Making Victims: Germans, Jews, and the Holocaust,” in *American Historical Review* 103, 3 (June, 1998):771-816, 777.

⁵ Donald L. Niewyk, *The Jews in Weimar Germany* (Baton Rouge, 1980); Michael Brenner, *The Renaissance of Jewish Culture in Weimar Germany* (New Haven, 1996); Anthony Kauders, “Legally Citizens: Jewish Exclusion from the Weimar Polity,” in *Jüdisches Leben in der Weimarer Republik/Jews in the Weimar Republic*, ed. Wolfgang Benz, Arnold Paucker, and Peter Pulzer (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1998), 159-172; Wolfgang Benz, *Bilder vom Juden. Studien zum alltäglichen Antisemitismus* (Munich: C.H. Beck, 2001), 53.

⁶ Barkai and Mendes-Flohr, 124.

Although there are no national studies on Jewish integration in Germany during either the First World War or the Weimar Republic, this master narrative has largely been affirmed by three local studies of Jewish minorities in large German cities. In her monograph on the Jews of Königsberg, Stefanie Schüler-Springorum argues that despite the prominence of the port city's Jewish minority in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, Germany's defeat in World War I brought about swift and drastic changes to the city's pre-existing social climate. Postwar inflation damaged the city's old professional structure and the transformation of Königsberg into the capital of East Prussia, an isolated German island in the middle of Eastern Europe, turned the once liberal city into fertile ground for right-wing radicalism. Antisemitism. During the Weimar Republic, antisemitism was an ever present reality in the city's social life and right-wing groups felt emboldened enough to carry out attacks against Jewish leaders, students, and synagogues during the latter half of the 1920s.⁷

A similar argument can be found in Till van Rahden's work on Jewish integration in Breslau. Van Rahden positions the *Juden-zählung* of 1916 as a caesura in the history of peaceful relations between "Jews and other Germans" in Breslau. The Treaty of Versailles transformed Breslau into a border city and it soon became a base of operations for members of *Freikorps* militias and other revanchist groups. Despite having achieved a high level of integration before the war, Breslau's Jewish community suffered a series of setbacks during the early years of the Weimar Republic that erased much of the progress that had made since the culmination of Jewish emancipation in the 1860s. Hyperinflation and recurring economic crises during the early

⁷ Stefanie Schüler-Springorum, *Die Jüdische Minderheit in Königsberg/Preussen, 1871-1945* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1996), 225-28, 364. See also: Stefanie Schüler-Springorum, "Assimilation and Community Reconsidered: The Jewish Community in Königsberg, 1871-1914," in *Jewish Social Studies*, Vol.5, No. 3 (Spring-Summer 1999), 104-131.

1920s hurt the economic status of the city's Jewish bourgeoisie. The abolition of Prussia's three-tiered system of enfranchisement eroded the political power of wealthy elites wealthy Jewish elites who until then had successfully managed to promote a liberal hegemony in municipal politics. By 1925, the year that marks the end of van Rahden's study and eight years before the National Socialist Party came to power, the local press casually reacted to the increased presence of antisemitism in public schools, the decision of civic associations such as the city's *Alpenverein* to pass statutes banning Jewish members, and physical violence carried out against Jews on the city's streets.⁸

The most recent study to further this master narrative of disintegration as a consequence of the First World War is Nicola Wenge's book on relations between Jews and non-Jews in Cologne during the Weimar Republic. Wenge acknowledges that the degree of Jewish integration varied among different areas of society such as politics, culture, economics, and academia and was affected by factors including age, gender, and class. Although the Jews of Cologne remained well-integrated into different parts of the city's cultural life throughout the course of the Weimar Republic, the withdrawal of occupying British troops from the city in the mid-1920s gave right-wing parties more freedom to engage in municipal politics, thus unleashing a wave of antisemitism that could be felt in almost every area of everyday life. Thus, the final demise of Jewish integration in 1933 should be seen as "the result of a process of disintegration and disassociation that began in the middle of the 1920s and then increasingly accelerated."⁹

⁸ Till van Rahden, *Jews and Other Germans: Civil Society, Religious Diversity, and Urban Politics in Breslau, 1860-1925*, translated by Marcus Brainard (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2008), 231-38.

⁹ Nicola Wenge, *Integration und Ausgrenzung in der städtischen Gesellschaft. Eine jüdisch-nichtjüdische Beziehungsgeschichte Kölns 1918-1933* (Mainz: Verlag Philipp von Zabern, 2005), 3.

This dissertation challenges this master narrative of German-Jewish history by examining Jewish integration in Frankfurt am Main between the start of the First World War and *Kristallnacht* from 7-10 November 1938. It also stands in conversation with a growing number of recent works which seek to reassess the Jewish experience during and after the First World War.¹⁰ Despite the upheaval of war, revolution, and economic turmoil brought about by the war and the foundation of the Weimar Republic, the Jews of Frankfurt continued to remain remarkably well integrated into the social, political, cultural, and economic fabric of their city. Indeed, Jewish integration grew stronger in areas such as local politics. Although the Nazi Party's seizure of national and local power in early 1933 catalyzed a legally sanctioned campaign of segregation and discrimination that significantly eroded or ended the ability of Frankfurt's Jews to equally participate in different spheres of everyday life and drastically changed their relationships with the city's non-Jewish citizens, certain elements of Jewish integration continued to exist, albeit in varying forms, during the first five years of Nazi rule in the metropolis on the Main.

Integration as a concept in German-Jewish History

Reflecting on the state of German-Jewish historiography at the end of the twentieth century, Stephen Aschheim argued that an “emancipation-assimilation-integration model” had

¹⁰ Examples of these new works are *Beyond Inclusion and Exclusion: Jewish Experiences of the First World War in Central Europe*, ed. Jason Crouthamel, Michael Geheran, Tim Grady, and Julia Barbara Köhne (New York: Berghahn, 2018); Tim Grady, *The German-Jewish Soldiers of the First World War in History and Memory* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2012); *Ibid.*, *A Deadly Legacy: German Jews and the Great War* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2017); David J. Fine, *Jewish Integration in the German Army in the First World War* (Boston: De Gruyter, 2012); Derek J. Penslar, “The German-Jewish Soldier: From Participant to Victim,” *German History* 29 (2011): 225-238; Martina Steer, “Nation Religion, Gender: The Triple Challenge of Middle-Class German-Jewish Women in World War I,” *Central European History* 48, no. 2 (2015): 176-198; Anna Ulrich, “‘Nun sind wir gezeichnet’: jüdische Soldaten und die ‘Juden­zählung’ im Ersten Weltkrieg,” in *Krieg! Juden zwischen den Fronten 1914-1918*, ed. Ulrike Heikaus and Julia B Köhne, 215-238 (Berlin: Hentrich & Hentrich, 2014); Sarah Panter, *Jüdische Erfahrungen und Loyalitätskonflikte im Ersten Weltkrieg* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2014).

served as the organizing principle for much of the post-Holocaust writing on the history of Jewish life in the German-speaking lands of Europe.¹¹ Indeed, a quick search through the titles of articles in early and later editions of *The Leo Baeck Institute Year Book*, the preeminent journal for German-Jewish Studies, reinforces the continued relevance of these terms for both the initial generation of postwar historians engaged in what David Sorkin termed “the Émigré synthesis” and subsequent cohorts of scholars in Germany, Israel, and the United States.¹² Whereas the definition of emancipation is relatively straightforward and much ink has been spilled over the advantages of using the American sociologist Milton Gordon’s concept of “acculturation” rather than the value-laden term “assimilation,”¹³ the meaning of integration has far too frequently been taken to be self-evident. Indeed, many works that that have prominently used the term do not define what it looks like in practice.¹⁴

¹¹ Steven E. Aschheim, *In Times of Crisis: Essays on European Culture, Germans, and Jews* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2001), 86. The quote comes from an essay that was initially presented at a 1997 conference in Jerusalem on “Verities in Modern European History: The Case of the Jews” and originally published as: *Ibid.*, “German History and German Jewry: Boundaries, Junctions, and Interdependence,” in *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book* 43 (1998): 315-22. In the broader realm of Jewish Studies, Benjamin Nathans relies on a similar model in his pioneering first book on Russian Jews living beyond the Pale of Settlement: Benjamin Nathans, *Beyond the Pale: The Jewish Encounter with late Imperial Russia* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001).

¹² David Sorkin, “Beyond the *Emigré* Synthesis,” in *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book* 45 (2000), 209-210; David Sorkin, “The Émigré Synthesis: *German-Jewish History in Modern Time*,” in *Central European History* vol 34, no. 4 (2001), 531-559.

¹³ Gordon defines acculturation as the process by which minority groups adapt to the cultural patterns of the “host society” they live in. Milton M. Gordon, *Assimilation in American Life: The Role of Race, Religion, and National Origins* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), 71. For effective methodological uses of Gordon’s theory and the definitive arguments for why scholars should employ acculturation rather than assimilation see: Marsha L. Rozenblit, *The Jews of Vienna, 1867-1914: Assimilation and Identity* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1983); Marion A. Kaplan, *The Making of the Jewish Middle Class: Women, Family and Identity in Imperial Germany* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991).

¹⁴ A telling example is the third volume of *German-Jewish History in Modern Times*, which, despite being entitled *Integration in Dispute, 1871-1918*, offers no definition and does not even have an index entry for integration! The same can be said of the fourth volume, *Renewal and Destruction, 1918-1945*. Reflecting on the work of Werner E. Mosse, Trude Maurer separately concluded that “Integration is rarely measurable, and there exist indeed few agreed criteria by which the term can even be defined” and that “the sources contain only few, moreover contradictory references to it.” Werner E. Mosse, *The German-Jewish Economic Élite, 1820–1935: A Socio-Cultural Profile* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 337-38; Trude Maurer, *Die Entwicklung der jüdischen Minderheit in Deutschland 1780-1933* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1992), 164.

Over time, several different historians have developed a clearer framework for defining and employing the term. Inspired by the sociological works of Max Weber and Niklas Luhmann, Till van Rahden succinctly defines integration as, “the result of a multitude of processes of inclusion in the central functional spheres of modern society (economy, politics, science, education, and law), as well as in everyday life.” In a similar fashion, Nicola Wenge broadens the definition to include the realm of cultural life, focusing on institutions such as the theater, radio, and the adult education (*Volksbildung*) movement.¹⁵ Both scholars agree that levels of integration and inclusion varied according to the nature and quality of relations between Jews and non-Jews within each individual sphere. Thus, although intimate relations and friendships between adult Jews and Gentiles may have been rare, the children of these individuals may have enjoyed close relationships in the realm of education. Van Rahden and Wenge also stress that although assimilation and integration are related to each other, they are not one and the same. Integration was not simply predicated on the idea that Jews would adapt to some kind of stable majority culture in Germany. In fact, the continued and real existence of differences between Protestants and Catholics in Germany challenges previous assumptions about the homogeneity of the German culture that German Jews acculturated to.¹⁶

Despite the clarity and continued usefulness of such definitions, my own research on relations between Jews and Gentiles in Frankfurt am Main between 1914 and 1938 suggests that these and other scholars have neglected a number of other categories of inquiry that are vital for understanding the nature, evolution, and eventual end of Jewish integration in Germany before

¹⁵ Van Rahden, 7; Wenge.

¹⁶ Till van Rahden, “Mingling, Marrying, and Distancing Jewish integration in Wilhelmian Breslau and its Erosion in Early Weimar Germany,” in *Jüdisches Leben in der Weimarer Republik*, ed. Wolfgang Benz, Arnold Paucker, and Peter Pulzer (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1998), 197.

the Final Solution. Until now, integration has primarily been gauged by factors that fit within the realm of political and social history. While these areas are important, they often elide the ways in which cultural factors often influenced or laid the bedrock for the continued existence of tolerance and Jewish integration. It stands to reason, then, that a turn towards a more cultural historical mode of analysis would add further nuance to our understanding of the term. Furthermore, a greater focus on the cultural elements of integration would serve to further complicate and challenge prevailing master narratives of German-Jewish history that have often neglected the continuities of integration before and after Adolf Hitler became the Chancellor of Germany on 30 January 1933.

One such approach would be to focus on the intersection of integration with the construction and representation of urban space. Since the start of the twenty-first century, spatial theory has increasingly played a prominent role in the field of Jewish studies allowing scholars to examine issues such as Jewish sociability, identity formation, and everyday life in secular spaces such as Parisian cafes, Central European spas, Tel Aviv, and Warsaw under communism.¹⁷ Scholars of German Jewry have similarly begun to take a greater interest in spatial theory. In the introduction to a recent edited volume on *Space and Spatiality in Modern German-Jewish History*, Simone Lässig and Miriam Rürup state that “The construction and depiction of spaces inevitably go along with negotiating and establishing real or imaginary boundaries; to create and interpret social and cultural space always means defining who is included or excluded. Further, the way that groups occupy, form, and rework space indicates the

¹⁷ Sarah E. Wobick-Segev, *Home away from Home: Jewish Belonging in Twentieth Century Paris, Berlin, and Saint Petersburg* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2018); Mirjam Triendl-Zadoff, *Next Year in Marienbad: the Lost World of Jewish Spa Culture* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012), translated by William Templer; Barbara Mann, *A Place in History: Modernism, Tel Aviv and the Creation of Jewish Urban Space*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006); Karen Auerbach, *The House at Ujazdowskie 16: Jewish Families in Warsaw After the Holocaust* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013).

form and the extent to which certain ethnic or religious groups became part of the majority society; these spatial processes can point, for instance, to the perception of these groups as permanent or temporary.”¹⁸ It follows then that examinations of Jewish integration in Germany and elsewhere should consider the ways in which Jews and Jewishness were physically integrated into the fabric of the societies and cities in which they lived. Thus, in addition to utilizing the tools of political and social history, this dissertation focuses on how spatial markers such as street names, memorials, public facilities, promotional materials, local histories, and local literature reflected an reinforced Jewish integration in Frankfurt.

Why Frankfurt?

There are many reasons why a local study of Frankfurt am Main would be a worthy addition to the existing historiography on Jewish integration in Germany. Writing in the *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book* in the middle of the 1980s, the émigré Rabbi and scholar Jakob J. Petuchowski described Frankfurt as veritable “laboratory...[for] the major trends of modern Judaism.”¹⁹ Although Petuchowski was primarily focused on theological developments in Frankfurt during the decades preceding German unification – at one point during the 1860s both Abraham Geiger, widely considered to be the father of Reform Judaism, and Samson Raphael Hirsch, the father of Neo-Orthodox Judaism, respectively served as Rabbis at the city’s *Israelitische Gemeinde* (IG), the city’s main Jewish community *Einheitsgemeinde*, and the *Israelitische Religionsgesellschaft* (IRG), a separatist Orthodox community that managed to gain official recognition in 1876 – there is ample evidence to suggest that Frankfurt provides a good

¹⁸ Simone Lässig and Miriam Rürup, “Introduction: What Made a Space ‘Jewish?’ Reconsidering a Category of Modern German History,” in *Space and Spatiality in Modern German-Jewish History*, edited by Simone Lässig and Miriam Rürup (New York: Berghahn, 2017), 2.

¹⁹ Jakob J. Petuchowski, “Frankfurt Jewry: A Model Transition to Modernity,” in *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book* 29 (1984), 405.

model for the study of Jewish life in Germany well into the twentieth century.²⁰

Demographically, Frankfurt had the second-largest Jewish community in pre-Holocaust Germany. In 1925, the approximately 29,000 members of the IG and the IRG comprised roughly six percent of the city's total population.²¹ Jewish Frankfurters reflected the plurality of experiences within the larger German-Jewish community. Segments of this population ranged from being totally acculturated to strictly observant. Furthermore, one-fifth of this population consisted of Jewish migrants and refugees from Eastern Europe.²² Regarding the rest of the city's population, although the majority belonged to the Lutheran Church, Frankfurt also possessed a sizeable Catholic minority.²³

The high level of Jewish integration before 1914 makes the city an ideal case for studying the degree to which the First World War did or did not impact the course of Jewish integration. Antisemitic political groups such as the *Deutscher Reformverein* and the *Deutscher Verein* never managed to firmly establish a foothold in Frankfurt's political life throughout the duration of the *Kaiserreich*.²⁴ Jews played an active role in the city's rich associational life, belonging to and holding high positions in organizations such as the *Senckenbergische naturforschende Gesellschaft*. Frankfurt was also home to a strong cohort of wealthy and influential Jewish

²⁰ Ibid., 410-12. For more information on the origins of the IRG and the often bitter squabbles between the IRG and the IG see: Robert Liberles, *Religious Conflict in Social Context: The Resurgence of Orthodox Judaism in Frankfurt am Main, 1838-1877* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1985); Jakob Katz, *A House Divided: Orthodoxy and Schism in Nineteenth-Century Central European Jewry* (Hanover: Brandeis University Press, 1998), 23-28.

²¹ In comparison, Jews made up less than one percent of the total population of Germany during this era. Trude Maurer, *Ostjuden in Deutschland 1918-1933* (Hamburg, 1986), 76.

²² Ibid.

²³ The official figures for religious affiliation in Frankfurt are as follows: 272,567 Lutheran (58%), 145,570 Catholic (31%), 29,385 Jewish (6%), and 19,998 other (4%). *Statistisches Handbuch der Stadt Frankfurt a.M. Zweite Ausgabe. Enthaltend die Statistik der Jahre 1906/07 bis 1926/07* (Frankfurt: 1928), 68-70.

²⁴ Inge Schlotzhauer, *Ideologie und Organisation des politischen Antisemitismus in Frankfurt am Main 1880-1914* (Frankfurt: Verlag Waldemar Kramer, 1989).

philanthropists who generously provided funds for the creation of numerous municipal institutions and housing projects.²⁵ Much of their work coalesced in 1914 with the opening of the University of Frankfurt, which was founded thanks to a mixture of private and municipal capital and organized around a number of pre-existing academic institutes, several of which had been created by Jews. Furthermore, the University's charter included a bylaw expressly stating that neither religion nor confession could be taken into account when hiring individuals for professorships or other academic positions.²⁶ Most importantly, though, Frankfurt was widely recognized as a city with a rich Jewish past and present by both Jews, who sometimes referred to it as "the Little Jerusalem of the Jewish world – a *Muttergemeinde* in Israel,"²⁷ as well as several generations of antisemites who derisively labeled it "New Jerusalem on the Franconian Jordan."²⁸

Historiography of Jews in Frankfurt

Frankfurt's Jewish community has generally been present in histories of the city dating back to the medieval and early modern eras, but the first attempt to provide a grand overview of the Jewish life in Frankfurt did not appear until the posthumous publication of Isidor Kracauer's

²⁵ An excellent overview of their work and numerous short biographical sketches can be found in: Hans-Otto Schembs, *Jüdische Mäzene und Stifter in Frankfurt am Main* (Frankfurt: Waldemar Kramer, 2007).

²⁶ Ludwig Heilbrunn, *Die Gründung der Universität Frankfurt a.M.* (Frankfurt: Joseph Baer, 1915), 210.

²⁷ Paul Arnsberg, *Bilder aus dem jüdischen Leben im alten Frankfurt* (Frankfurt: Waldemar Kramer, 1970), 9, 35; Johannes Kübel, "Religiöses und kirchliches Leben im heutigen Frankfurt," in *Frankfurt. Das Buch der Stadt*, ed. Otto Ruppertsberg, 211-219 (Frankfurt: A.Schulze & Co., 1927), 217; Julius Blau, "Geleitwort," *Gemeindeblatt der Israelitischen Gemeinde Frankfurt am Main*, September 1922.

²⁸ Leo Baeck Institut (LBI) ME 611. MM73, Selmar Spier, "Anfang-Mitte-Ende. Versuch der Kulturgeschichte eines gewöhnlichen Lebens," 34; LBI MS 729, Selmar Spier "Before 1914: Memories of Frankfurt Written in Israel," 62; "Die Synagogen brennen...!" *Die Zerstörung Frankfurts als jüdische Lebenswelt*, ed. Jürgen Steen (Frankfurt: Historisches Museum Frankfurt am Main, 1988), 10; Lowenstein et al., 239; Matthias Andrich and Guido Martin, *Schule im 3. Reich. Die Musterschule, Ein Frankfurter Gymnasium 1933-39* (Frankfurt: Arbeiterwohlfahrt Frankfurt/M., 1983), 141.

two-volume *Geschichte der Juden in Frankfurt A.M.* in the middle of the 1920s. After spending the bulk of his career working as a history teacher at the *Philanthropin*, a renowned Jewish private school in Frankfurt, and publishing many articles on the city's Jewish past, Kracauer began his magnum opus after receiving a commission from the IG. Despite numerous setbacks including interruptions caused by the First World War, the hyperinflation of the early 1920s wiping out most of the IG's financial reserves, and the death of the author, the IG managed to print the work after soliciting subscriptions from members of the Jewish community and acquiring a generous loan from one of Kracauer's former students.²⁹ Published in 1925, volume one of Kracauer's work begins with the first known mention of Jews in Frankfurt in 1150 and ends with the *Fettmilch Aufstand*, an anti-patrician rebellion between 1612 and 1614 during which an angry mob plundered the *Judengasse* – Frankfurt's ghetto – and expelled Jews from the city. The second volume ends in 1824, the year that the Frankfurt Senate voted to abolish the *Judenstätigkeit*, a draconian set of rights and prohibitions regarding the city's Jews.³⁰

Since 1945, perhaps no other historian has produced more works on the Jews of Frankfurt than Paul Arnsberg, who was born in Frankfurt a few days before the start of the twentieth century. During the early years of his adulthood, Arnsberg was an active player in the city's Jewish life, working to found a Jewish fraternity at the University of Frankfurt and serving as a member of the elected governing body of the IG. A committed and often dogmatic Zionist, Arnsberg emigrated to Palestine in May 1933 after being fired from his civil service position as a

²⁹ Isidor Kracauer, *Geschichte der Juden in Frankfurt A.M. (1150-1824) Erster Band* (Frankfurt am Main: Kauffmann Verlag, 1925), III.

³⁰ Isidor Kracauer, *Geschichte der Jude in Frankfurt A.M. (1150-1824) Zweiter Band* (Frankfurt: Kauffmann Verlag, 1927), 519.

lawyer.³¹ Despite establishing a successful second career and becoming a member of the Board of the Bank of Israel, Arnsberg decided to return to Frankfurt in 1958.³² During the final twenty years of his life, he produced several books and wrote numerous articles in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* newspaper as part of his personal mission to keep alive the memory and history of the Jewish community before 1933.³³ Arnsberg's oeuvre culminated in a massive, three-volume history of Jewish life in Frankfurt since the French Revolution. Like Kracauer, Arnsberg did not live to see the publication of his own *magnum opus*. Although the first volume of the work provides an excellent overview of Frankfurt's Jewish community in the era of emancipation, it is primarily an institutional history of organized Jewish life in the city until the end of the Wilhelmine era and is generally more concerned with examining intra-Jewish developments rather than interactions between Jews and other Frankfurters. The volume concludes with a short epilogue that provides limited commentary on the ways in which the First World War and the early years of the Weimar Republic impacted relations between the city's Jewish and Gentile populations.³⁴

Several other postwar scholars have written valuable works on the Jewish community in Frankfurt during the first half of the twentieth century. Many of these works were produced with

³¹ Regarding Arnsberg's dogmatism, his uncle Wilhelm Hertzfeld wrote in his memoirs "How often did it occur that Arnsberg, even when there was no reason to, observed friends as gullible sheep, made them the bellwether of their herd, and in short order drove them into the deep desert as a black scapegoat." Wilhelm Herzfeld, "Lebenserinnerungen," Leo Baeck Institute (*LBI*) ME 1095, 162.

³² Paul Arnsberg, *Zivilcourage zu Widerstand. Beiträge zum Verhältnis von Deutschen, Juden, Israelis* (Frankfurt: Societäts-Verlag, 1998), 347-50.

³³ A small sampling of these works includes Arnsberg, *Bilder*; *Ibid.*, *Neunhundert Jahre 'Muttergemeinde in Israel': FFM 1074-1974 Chronik der Rabbiner* (Frankfurt: Joseph Knecht, 1974); *Ibid.*, *Henry Budge – der geliebten Vaterstadt gesegnet* (Frankfurt: Waldemar Kramer, 1972); *Ibid.*, *Jakob H. Schiff. Von der Frankfurter Judengasse zur Wall Street* (Frankfurt: Waldemar Kramer, 1969).

³⁴ Paul Arnsberg, *Die Geschichte der frankfurter Juden seit der Französischen Revolution* (Darmstadt: Eduard Roether Verlag, 1983), 892-913.

the support of or in tandem with exhibitions at the Frankfurt's Jewish Museum, which first opened in 1988. These include an overview of an exhibit on Jewish life in Frankfurt from 1800 until 1950, an exhibit on the more Orthodox and Eastern European Jewish populations that once lived in city's *Ostend* neighborhood, and a volume on Jewish life in Frankfurt after the *Kristallnacht* in 1938.³⁵

To date, Jonathan C. Friedman is the only author to have explicitly looked at Jewish integration in Frankfurt within the framework of his monograph *The Lion and the Star*, which also examines relations between Jews and Gentiles in two other parts of the German state of Hesse between 1919 and 1945: Gießen, a medium-sized university town 40 miles north of Frankfurt that was predominantly Protestant, and Geisenheim, a small, largely Catholic town along the banks of the Rhine River. While Friedman's work provides many illuminating details about the nature of integration in each of these three communities, the chronological limits of his study exclude the First World War and his comparative approach prevents him from a deeper investigation of Jewish integration in areas such as education, politics, and cultural life in Frankfurt. The larger issue with Friedman's work is that he conflates his definition of integration with earlier assumptions about the processes of Jewish assimilation into a more homogenous, majority German culture before the Holocaust.³⁶

Scope and Chapter Structure

Contrary to the dominant belief that the First World War irrevocably altered the nature of relationships between Jews and other Germans and halted the progress of Jewish integration in

³⁵ Rachel Heuberger and Helga Krohn, *Hinaus aus dem Ghetto. Juden in Frankfurt am Main 1800-1950* (Frankfurt: S. Fischer, 1988); *Ostend. Blick in ein jüdisches Viertel*, edited by Helga Krohn and Ernst Benz (Frankfurt: Societäts Verlag, 2000); "Nach der Kristallnacht." *Jüdisches Leben und antijüdische Politik in Frankfurt am Main 1938-1945*. Edited by Monica Kingreen (Frankfurt: Campus, 1999).

³⁶ Jonathan C. Friedman, *The Lion and the Star: Gentile-Jewish Relations in Three Hessian Communities, 1919-1945* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1998).

Germany, this dissertation argues that the deleterious effects of the war and the *Juden­zählung* did little to alter the high level of Jewish integration in Frankfurt. Thus, writing a century after the end of the First World War, I hope to reinsert contingency into a master narrative that all too often assumes “that the Jews in Germany lived under the sign of the apocalypse.”³⁷ That being said, the quality and depth of integration was not uniform for the entire Jewish population. Although the concept of integration hinges on matters of inclusion and the possibility of equal access to the political, education, and cultural spheres, this dissertation seriously asks to what degree factors such as gender, class, nationality, age, and urban space affected integration. It also will show that although the Nazi seizure of power in 1933 eventually led to a systematic campaign of segregation and terror, there were continuities in Jewish integration that stretched until the end of the 1930s.

Chapter one begins with a brief history of Jewish life in Frankfurt am Main before 1914. Despite an inauspicious start, the Jewish community in Frankfurt developed into one of the most prominent and economically important Jewish enclaves in Central Europe. The *Judengasse*, the city’s ghetto, served as a launching pad for the Rothschild family’s banking ventures, fascinated a young Goethe, and was an incubator for ideas of religious and political reform that spread across Europe during the course of the nineteenth century. Jews were able to enter the realm of local political power due to a strong current of liberalism that took hold in the aftermath of Prussia’s annexation of the city in 1866. Jewish industrialists soon began to play a major role in the development of local academic and cultural institutions which shaped much of the city’s local identity as a thriving metropolis. The chapter concludes with a walking tour of the city

³⁷ Samuel Moyn, “German Jewry and the Question of Identity: Historiography and Theory,” in *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book* 41(1996): 292.

during the 1920s which highlights the ways in which Jewish integration, belonging, and influence were coded into the physical environment of the city.

The next chapter looks at integration in the realm of municipal politics between start the First World War until the spring of 1933. On one level, the chapter provides an overview of the influential role that Jewish bureaucrats and politicians played in almost every one of the city's main political parties. The chapter further examines the degree to which the municipal government was willing to support the interests of the local Jewish community and promote continued tolerance and peaceful coexistence between the city's main religious groups. A look at a series of controversies and non-controversies related to antisemitism during this era reveals that this commitment to promoting "confessional peace" remained strong until the breakdown of coalition politics during the final years of the Weimar Republic. Despite having a Jewish mayor until March of 1933, Jewish integration in the city's political life unraveled almost immediately once the Nazis took control of local power.

Chapter 3 turns to Jewish integration in Frankfurt's cultural life. On one level, it looks closely at the careers of Jewish actors and actresses at the city's municipal opera and stage companies such as Mathilde Einzig, who was beloved for her iconic ability to perform and direct plays in Frankfurt' local dialect. This in turn meant that a Jewish woman was widely seen as the authentic embodiment of the city on the stage. The chapter also considers Jewish influence on cultural politics in the city and their outsized role as consumers of culture. Although the city's stages were quickly Nazified after 1933, the vagaries of laws aimed at purging Jews and leftists from the civil service allowed a small cohort of Jews to continue to play smaller roles in the realm of the arts until the passage of the Nuremberg Laws in the fall of 1935.

From there, the dissertation moves on to an examination of public education at municipal schools and the University of Frankfurt. This two-pronged approach allows for a trans-generational look at the experiences of students, undergraduates, teachers, and professors in the city's many educational spaces. Focusing on the University during the Weimar Republic reveals one of this project's more important findings: although Nazi students seized control of the university's student council in the late 1920s, it had little overall impact on the life of Jewish students and faculty members at the institution. Thus, the presence of antisemitism did not rule out the potential or existence of integration. Indeed, these two phenomena could easily occur at the same time. Moving beyond 1933, the chapter considers the pressures that forced Jews to exit from public education and the university, while also acknowledging that the city government still felt compelled to provide public educational option to Jewish students until the start of 1939.

Chapter five looks at the issues of social relations between Jews and other Germans in Frankfurt. It considers the degree to which factors such as age, class, and religious observance impacted the depths of Jewish social integration. Although interconfessional social relations usually occurred in the realm of the public sphere, many Jews and gentiles formed and maintained close friendships in spaces such as their places of work, cafes, professional associations, sports clubs, neighborhood streets, and the cozy interiors of Jewish apartments and homes. Although many of these relationships were torn asunder over the course of 1933, the private sphere of Jewish homes increasingly became the one remaining space where some social relations could still occur between Jews and other Germans in Frankfurt.

The final two chapters take a more explicitly spatial and cultural approach to the study of Jewish integration by looking at the depiction of Jews in local literature about the city and the history and peculiar fate of Jewish street names in Frankfurt. Publications such as local histories,

promotional materials, and travel guides from before 1933 emphasized the Jewish community's role in Frankfurt's evolution into flourishing and globally connected metropolis by the start of the twentieth century. In particular, local histories put forward an argument that the advent of Jewish emancipation and integration were important signs of the city's transition to the modern era. It was no accident that these works promoted this vision because many had been sponsored by a city government that was interested in advocating tolerance and, in most cases, the interests of the local Jewish community. By this same token, the city government's decision to name streets after local, national, and global Jewish notables was undertaken in connection with plans to physically integrate the spirit of a tolerant and liberal local patriotism into the geography of the city.

A look at what happened to these two trends after 1933 reveals the unexpected continuity and perseverance of spatial markers of Jewish integration during the first five years of Nazi rule. For example, local histories like Hans Drüner's study of Frankfurt between 1914 and 1924 evince a degree of cognitive dissonance: Nazi ideology is intermingled with a historical record that still praises the important role that Jews played in the development of the city and local culture. Additionally, city officials resisted a wholesale "aryanization" of Frankfurt's street grid because, among other reasons, they felt it would be wrong to deny the contributions that Jews such as Paul Ehrlich, a Nobel Laureate and Frankfurt native, had made to Germany and the world. Ultimately, it took an order from the central government in Berlin to bring about a final push to get rid of the city's Jewish street names during the fall of 1938.

Sources

This dissertation draws on an array of archival, printed, and digital sources. Unfortunately, very few of the records belonging to either of Frankfurt's two Jewish

communities managed to survive the war. Although some sources claim that the archives were destroyed during the *Kristallnacht* pogrom in November 1938³⁸, the fate of this rich collection of documents dating back to the thirteenth century is a bit more complicated. During the course of the pogrom, the city's mayor, Friedrich Krebs, sent out an order to secure files belonging to the *Israelitische Gemeinde*. On the afternoon of 10 November, 5 men including a representative of the city archive and the directors of the City Library and the City History Museum arrived at the IG's headquarters, which was housed on *Fahrgasse* in the original bank house of the Rothschild family's banking dynasty. Despite encountering what one of the members of the party referred to as "the most extreme shambles: broken [window] panes...slit paintings, smashed display cases, files and books spread out in wild heaps on the ground," the city officials discovered 23,000 registration cards for members of the IG.³⁹ Shortly after removing the items to the City History Museum, members of the Gestapo confiscated nearly all the files that had been salvaged. Over the next year, representatives of Frankfurt's government labored to get the Gestapo to return these valuable documents. By the end of 1939 they had managed to reclaim large amounts of the IG archives up until 1930 and registers from the *Philanthropin*.⁴⁰ Given the present-day absence of most of the IG's files, it can safely be assumed that the same Royal Air Force bombs that destroyed much of the city's medieval center on 22 March 1944 also destroyed countless documents that detailed the minutiae and richness of Frankfurt's Jewish history before and after the rise of the Third Reich.

³⁸ See: Eugen Mayer, *Die Frankfurter Juden. Blicke in der Vergangenheit* (Frankfurt: Waldemar Kramer, 1966), 5.

³⁹ Institut für Stadtgeschichte (IFS) Stadtarchiv 30 Bl. 1-3.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, Bl 11-13, 41, 49, 63-67, 76, 93-94, 143-144, 151, 153-54. At one point in September 1939, a worker from the City Archive informed the city's *Kulturamt* that they thus far received from the Gestapo only 17 boxes containing files from the Jewish community in the small Hessian town of Gelnhausen that were totally unrelated to anything that had been housed in the IG's former headquarters at *Fahrgasse* 140.

However, despite this particular setback, this is but one of many possible source bases that can be used for a study of Jewish life and integration in Frankfurt. Frankfurt's main city archive, the *Institut für Stadtgeschichte* contains a diverse array of files with relevant information for studying the city's political, economic, cultural, and social history. These include files produced by various branches of the city bureaucracy, the protocols of almost every session of the Frankfurt City Council until 1933, records from many of the city's public schools, correspondence between the city government and both the IG and the IRG, as well as a wide array of local newspapers with viewpoints as diametrically opposed as the Liberal *Frankfurter Zeitung* and the National Socialist *Frankfurter Volksblatt*. Further archival records from the *Universitätsarchiv Frankfurt am Main*, the Central Archives for the History of the Jewish People, the National Library of Israel, the Diaspora Research Center also provided helpful information.

Other source bases for this dissertation include the German-Jewish press, local literature, and a wide array of ego documents in the form of published and unpublished memoirs and autobiographies. While many of these sources could only be found and read in archives and libraries, the vast majority are available thanks to the digitization revolution that has taken place in the field of Jewish Studies over the past two decades.⁴¹ One incredibly useful tool was [*Compact Memory*](#), an online newspaper database supported by the Goethe University Frankfurt am Main that includes the complete runs of the Frankfurt edition of the *Neue Jüdische Presse*, the *Gemeindeblatt der israelitischen Gemeinde Frankfurt am Main*, and the *C.V. Zeitung* as well as hundreds of other Jewish newspapers from Central Europe.⁴² Although the editorial content of

⁴¹ For an early examination of the growing importance of digitization in German-Jewish studies see: Jonathan M. Hess, "Studying Print Culture in the Digital Age: Some Thoughts on Future Directions in German-Jewish Studies," in *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book* 54 (2009), 33-36.

most of these newspapers was often more concerned with issues of national and international Jewish politics, Jewish culture, and instances of antisemitism, smaller articles, announcements, and even advertisements that consistently appeared in these newspapers contain a wealth of information on Jewish integration and the evolving nature of Jewish-Gentile relations in Frankfurt. Similarly, the Leo Baeck Institute's online platform *DigiBaeck* included many memoirs, family collections, and at least one entry from the 1939-1940 Harvard University essay contest "My Life in Germany Before and After January 30, 1933."⁴³

Finally, this dissertation also draws upon the collections of the Visual History Archive (VHA) of the USC Shoah Foundation, whose many thousands of video-recorded testimonials with survivors of the Holocaust and other genocides include a number of interviews with Holocaust survivors from Frankfurt who were born between the early years of the twentieth century and the middle of the 1930s.⁴⁴ Surprisingly, few works of German-Jewish history have availed themselves of this rich source base. Although some historians have previously avoided working with oral testimonies because there are potentially too many issues of factual inaccuracy in the accounts of survivors many decades after the Holocaust, I follow the lead of Christopher Browning, who argued that historians can and should apply the same level of scholarly scrutiny to testimony that they do to their other sources. Ultimately, all sources are problematic to some

⁴² Compact Memory, (Frankfurt: Universitätsbibliothek der Goethe-Universität Frankfurt am Main, 2004), <http://sammlungen.ub.uni-frankfurt.de/cm/nav/index/title> (accessed February 2, 2015).

⁴³ DigiBaeck. German-Jewish History Online, (New York: Leo Baeck Institute), <https://www.lbi.org/digibaeck/> (accessed February 2, 2015); Harry Liebersohn and Dorothee Schneider, *"My Life in Germany Before and After January 30, 1933": A Guide to a Manuscript Collection at Houghton Library, Harvard University* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Association, 2001).

⁴⁴ Visual History Archive, (Los Angeles: USC Shoah Foundation, 2007), <https://sfi.usc.edu/vha> (accessed July 6, 2017).

degree and it is up to individual historians to decide how best to critically and thoughtfully proceed with the materials they have at hand.⁴⁵

⁴⁵ Christopher R. Browning, *Remembering Survival: Inside a Nazi Slave-Labor Camp* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2010), 7-10. For a more thorough treatment on the nature of oral and written testimonies and their importance for questions of identity and the self after the Holocaust see: Zoë Vania Waxman, *Writing the Holocaust: Identity, Testimony, Representation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007).

CHAPTER 1: “ONCE UPON A TIME...ONLY IT WAS NOT A FAIRY TALE”: THE JEWISH COMMUNITY IN FRANKFURT, 1150-1914

1

Frankfurt was home to one of the largest and oldest Jewish communities in Central Europe. The first section of this chapter provides an overview of the changing place and status of Jews in the city during Frankfurt’s slow evolution from an imperial capital of the Holy Roman Empire to a multi-confessional economic center at the heart of twentieth century Europe. The history of the community in Frankfurt is indicative of the experience of many other Jewish communities in Central Europe. Despite several intense outbursts of religiously motivated violence, expulsions, and resettlements, the Jews of Frankfurt generally enjoyed stable and peaceful relations with their gentile neighbors. We can see both ghettoization and an increase in Jewish economic influence during the early modern era as well as a convoluted road toward emancipation, acculturation, modern orthodoxy, and bourgeoisification during the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

The first traces of Jewish life in the region around Frankfurt go as far back as the ninth century, and historians have generally agreed that the city’s first Jewish community was in existence by the middle of the twelfth century.² Its lifespan was brief, ending with the so-called *Judenschlacht* of 1241. Inspired by either their anger at Jewish participation in money lending or quarrels in the aftermath of the forced conversion of a Jewish youth, members of the Christian

¹ Arnsberg, *Bilder*, 10.

² Mayer, *Frankfurter Juden*, 8-10; *Jüdisches Lexikon Band II D-H*, edited by Dr. Georg Herlitz and Dr. Bruno Kirshner (Berlin: Jüdischer Verlag, 1928), 730.

population murdered the majority of the city's Jews and expelled the survivors.³ By 1270, a new Jewish community had formed and its members lived amongst Christians in the area around Frankfurt's cathedral. This second community suffered the same fate as the first. In 1349, a violent group of flagellant monks descended upon the city in 1349 and instigated a second *Judenschlacht* that once again led to the expulsion of Jews from the city. Their exile lasted a little more than a decade. Since 1360, there has been some form of Jewish community or presence in Frankfurt up until the present day.⁴

Over the course of the next century, the city and the government of the Holy Roman Empire introduced a series of increasingly harsh measures directed at regulating the lives of Frankfurt's Jews. Beginning in 1366, the city government implemented a legal compact known as the *Stättigkeit*, which delineated and limited Jewish settlement and economic activities. Over the coming decades, the city's rulers would subsequently draft and enact revised versions of the *Stättigkeit* that further circumscribed the nature of Jewish existence in Frankfurt.

The middle of the fifteenth century bore witness to the creation of Frankfurt's famous Jewish ghetto. In 1442, Holy Roman Emperor Friedrich II decreed that Jews would henceforth be barred from living in the vicinity of the city cathedral. Although this order was never implemented by local officials, a subsequent one issued in 1458 led to the creation in 1462 of the Frankfurt *Judengasse* ("Jewish Street"), a segregated block that was approximately 330 meters long and no more than nine meters wide between two rows of houses that were officially the property of the city.⁵ By the end of the century, a more restrictive *Stättigkeit* definitively

³ Estimates for the human toll of the *Judenschlacht* range from 159 to 179 out of the approximately 200 members of the Jewish community. Mayer, 10; *Lexikon*, 730-731; Friedrich Bothe, *Geschichte der Stadt Frankfurt am Main. Dritte, erweiterte Auflage* (Frankfurt: Englert und Schlosser, 1929), 29-30.

⁴ Mayer, *Frankfurter Juden*, 16-17; Bothe, *Dritte Auflage*, 44.

stipulated that Jews would no longer be recognized as citizens of the city. The city government would lock the gates of the *Judengasse* during the night, on Sundays, and holidays. During major festivals, Jews could only leave the ghetto if they had the express permission of the mayor and paid a fee. Additionally, the new *Stättigkeit* forced Jews to wear a golden ring on their outer most layer of clothing and a pointed gray hat.⁶ Cramped quarters could not keep the Jewish community from growing. By the start of the seventeenth century the population of the *Judengasse* had grown from an initial group of 110 Jews to a community of approximately 2,200 souls.⁷ However, despite its origins in state-sanctioned violence as well providing its inhabitants with chronically cramped and unhygienic quarters, the creation and maintenance of the *Judengasse*, like other ghettos throughout Europe, tacitly endorsed a sense of permanence for Frankfurt's Jewish community.⁸

The Jews of Frankfurt once more had to contend with mob violence during a popular uprising at the start of the seventeenth century. Beginning in 1612, a group of artisans and other burghers coalesced around the charismatic leadership of a baker named Vinzenz Fettmilch in order to voice their discontent with the rampant corruption among the oligarchical patricians who controlled the city council. They also directed their ire toward the city's large Jewish population, which many Christians associated with money-lending. When reforms were not forthcoming, an

⁵ Mayer, *Frankfurter Juden*, 19; Bothe, *Dritte Auflage*, 95; Heuberger and Krohn, *Hinaus aus dem Ghetto*, 13. The history of the Frankfurt *Judengasse* would later serve as an important case study in the sociologist Louis Wirth's pioneering study on urban ghettos. Louis Wirth, *The Ghetto* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1928), 41-62.

⁶ Bothe, *Dritte Auflage*, 95. For more information on Jews, hats, and other mandated pieces of clothing in the medieval era see Naomi Lubrich, "The Wandering Hat: Iterations of the Medieval Jewish Hat." In *Jewish History* 29, no. 3-4 (2015): 203-244.

⁷ Mayer, *Frankfurter Juden*, 19.

⁸ This not-so-new, but revisionist take on ghettos can be traced back to Salo W. Baron, "Ghetto and Emancipation: Shall We Revise the Traditional View?" *Menorah Journal* 14 (1928): 528-539.

emboldened Fettmilch and his coterie decided to launch a coup that would give them the reins to power in the city. In the ensuing chaos, an angry mob that included members of Fettmilch's family descended upon the *Judengasse* on 22 August 1614. Fettmilch subsequently issued a decree that expelled Jews from the city.⁹

Fettmilch's reign was brief. A member of his inner circle betrayed him to imperial commissioners of the Holy Roman Emperor, who decided to execute Fettmilch and several of his co-conspirators on the same day that Jews were allowed back into the city in February 1616. Several years later, the Frankfurt Jewish community began to memorialize the pogrom and expulsion by holding an annual fast day on the 27th day of the month of Elul in the Jewish calendar. They soon shifted to holding a more joyous festival on the 20th of Adar called "*Vinz-Purim*," which was modeled on Purim, a Jewish holiday celebrating how the Jews of Persia narrowly avoided destruction in the Book of Esther.¹⁰ Although the Holy Roman Emperor promised the Jews protection in the future and even had signs stating as much posted on the gates of the *Judengasse*, his offer came with a heavy price: a new version of the *Stättigkeit* that had to be renewed every three years, limited Jewish settlement in Frankfurt to 500 families, prohibited more than six new Jews a year to move to the city, and capped the number of annual marriage allowances at twelve.¹¹

⁹ Christopher R. Friedrichs, "Politics or Pogrom? The Fettmilch Uprising in German and Jewish History," *Central European History* 19, no. 2 (June, 1986): 190-194.

¹⁰ Ibid., 198. Frankfurt's Jews continued to learn about and celebrate their "*Vinz-Purim*" into the twentieth century. Selmar Spier, "The Fatherland: A Chapter from an unpublished Autobiography," in *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book* 4 (1959): 299-300. Frankfurt was one of several European Jewish communities that celebrated "second Purims." See Yosef Haim Yerushalmi, *Zakhor: Jewish History and Jewish Memory* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1982), 46-48.

¹¹ Mayer, *Frankfurter Juden*, 24; Arnsberg, *Revolution*, 52-53, 99; Heuberger and Krohn, *Hinaus aus dem Ghetto*, 13.

Moving forward to the dawn of the long nineteenth century, the military expansion of the French Revolution was ultimately responsible for initiating the long path to emancipation for not only Jews, but also Catholics and lower-class Protestants living in Frankfurt. Having briefly occupied the city in 1792, French troops once more captured the city during the night on Bastille Day in 1796. In the process of bombarding the city, they inadvertently sparked a fire that destroyed approximately 140 houses on the northern section of the *Judengasse*. By this point in time an estimated 3,000 Jews lived on the *Judengasse* and although the *Stättigkeit* from 1616 was still very much in force, many of the Jews who had lost their homes managed to secure temporary housing in rented rooms belonging to Christians in the area surrounding the ghetto.¹² In 1806, Napoleon named Frankfurt as the capital of the newly formed Confederation of the Rhine and placed it under the administration of the Karl Theodor von Dalberg, the reform-minded former Archbishop of Mainz. Dalberg firmly believed that a combination of education and emancipation would provide immense benefits for the Jews and, shortly after assuming power, granted Jews the right to freely walk on city promenades beyond the walls of the *Judengasse*.

In 1807, Dalberg oversaw the creation of a new *Stättigkeit* which allowed Jews to settle in the immediate vicinity of the ghetto and required the Jewish community to pay a yearly indemnity of 22,000 gulden. When the city became a Grand Duchy in 1810, Dalberg and the city government decided to expand the full rights of emancipation to the Jewish community in exchange for a one-time sum of 444,000 gulden, much of which was raised by members of the Rothschild banking dynasty, which had its base in a small house on the *Judengasse*. Over the course of 1812, 645 Jews took oaths of citizenship for Frankfurt. However, the demise of

¹² Ibid., 17.

Napoleon and his allies at the Battle of Leipzig soon brought about an end to French rule over the city and led the parties at the Congress of Vienna to revoke Frankfurt's first experiment with Jewish emancipation in 1815. Further progress toward emancipation came in bits and spurts over the next half century. In 1824, for example, the city government gave Jews the right to settle anywhere in the city and legally declared them "Israelite citizens," although they could not hold any municipal offices. By 1854, the government no longer prevented Jews from participating in local elections and the Jews of Frankfurt eventually gained full civic emancipation a decade later in 1864.¹³

Against the backdrop of emancipation, the Jewish community was also undergoing a tremendous degree of internal change as a response to modernity. Frankfurt soon developed into a thriving center of Jewish theological debates in Central Europe. The drive for reform in Frankfurt first began to take shape with the foundation in 1804 of the *Philanthropin*, a Jewish school that looked to provide students with a secular-humanist approach to education inspired by the works of reformers such as Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi. In short order, the school attracted non-Jewish teachers and pupils. Its faculty would later include Jewish intellectual luminaries such as Isaak Marcus Jost, one of the foremost Jewish historians of the nineteenth century.¹⁴ Beginning in 1813, individuals associated with the school began to hold their own Saturday morning services following those offered at the main Synagogue on the *Judengasse*. These services featured German-language hymns accompanied by an organ as well as a sermon. As of

¹³ Ibid., 20-32, 37, 66.

¹⁴ Arthur Galliner, "The Philanthropin in Frankfurt: Its Educational and Cultural Significance for German Jewry," *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book* 3 (1958): 169-186; Inge Schlotzhauer, *Das Philanthropin 1804-1942. Die Schule der Israelitischen Gemeinde in Frankfurt am Main* (Frankfurt: Waldemar Kramer, 1990).

1828, male attendees no longer covered their heads and there was a dedicated section where male and female participants would be able to sit together throughout the course of a prayer service.

By the middle of the nineteenth century, at least two-thirds of the 4,000 Jews in Frankfurt no longer practiced Judaism in an orthodox form and a vocal reform faction had managed to take control of the board of the community and install Leopold Stein, a moderate Reform thinker, as one of the city's rabbis. Stein introduced additional liturgical reforms including German-language prayers for the health of the government and community, as well as a Synagogue choir. By 1846, the Torah was read on a three-year rather than an annual basis and the weekly Haftarah portion was recited in German instead of in the original Hebrew.¹⁵

Advances of Jewish religious reform in Frankfurt inadvertently led to the creation of the *Israelitische Religionsgesellschaft* (IRG), a secessionist Jewish community that became one of the leading forces in the burgeoning Jewish neo-orthodox movement. The story of this second Jewish community began in 1838, when a group of ninety-nine observant Jews sent a letter to the Frankfurt Senate in which they complained about the leadership of the organized Jewish community. They asked the senate to officially place their religious affairs into the hands of a committee comprised of five predominantly wealthy Jews. Although the Senate did not support this initial request, they proved more receptive to the city's orthodox population after the Revolution of 1848. Given the fact that the city's main Jewish population had largely cast their lot with the forces associated with the now-defunct Frankfurt Parliament, several orthodox Jews consciously decided to demonstrate their loyalty to the city government. Thus, in 1850 the Senate allowed a group of orthodox Jews to hire their own Rabbi and to form *Adath Jeshurun*, the direct precursor to the IRG, so long as they officially remained members of the main Jewish

¹⁵ Michael A. Meyer, *Response to Modernity: A History of the Reform Movement in Judaism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 119, 423; Liberles, *Religious Conflict*, 64-65; Heuberger and Krohn, *Aus dem Ghetto* 71-73.

community. This meant that although they had the freedom to create their own synagogue, school, mikveh, and other institutions, the members of the IRG had to endure a dual burden of religious taxation until the Prussian parliament passed a law in 1876 that legally allowed them and other orthodox groups to form secessionist communities.¹⁶

After a failed first attempt to employ a new Rabbi, the members of the IRG hired Samson Raphael Hirsch, the foremost neo-orthodox leader in Central Europe, who presided over the community until his death in 1888. Despite his vehement opposition to the modernization efforts of reform leaders and thinkers, Hirsch's particular brand of orthodoxy – often referred to as *Thora im Derech Erez* – sought to integrate elements of contemporary thought into the service of worshipping God's word in the Torah. For example, the IRG's new synagogue also employed a choir during services and the high point of many services came when Hirsch delivered a German-language sermon. Furthermore, secular topics would eventually form a significant amount of the pedagogical model employed by the IRG's *Realschule*, which opened in 1853 as an alternative for Jewish students that did not want to attend the more liberal *Philanthropin*.¹⁷

And yet, despite the rapid growth of the IRG, it never became a truly viable competitor for the hearts and minds of most of Frankfurt's orthodox Jews. For one, the majority of the IRG's members continued to belong to the larger original Jewish community, the *Israelitische Gemeinde* (IG), even after the secession law of 1876 because they did not want to challenge or undermine the traditional solidarity of the Jewish community. Furthermore, the IG made

¹⁶ Jacob Katz, *A House Divided: Orthodoxy and Schism in Nineteenth-Century Central European Jewry*, translated by Ziporah Brody (Hanover: Brandeis university Press, 1998), 24-25; Liberles, *Religious Conflict*, 92-93.

¹⁷ Heuberger and Krohn, *Aus dem Ghetto*, 74-76; *Die Samson-Raphael-Hirsch-Schule in Frankfurt am Main. Dokumente, Erinnerungen, Analysen*, ed. by Hans Thiel and Die Kommission zur Erforschung der Geschichte der Frankfurter Juden (Frankfurt, Waldemar Kramer, 2001); For more information on Hirsch and his successors' ideas on the nature of neo-Orthodoxy and the nature of secessionist communities see: Liberles, *Religious Conflict*; Steven M. Lowenstein, *The Mechanics of Change: Essays in the Social History of German Jewry* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992), 201-214.

concentrated efforts to enact compromises that would stem the further secession of orthodox Jews for reasons including but not limited to the amount of tax revenue they generated. Beginning in the late 1870s, orthodox Jews were given supervision of kosher butchering, control of all communal institutions with the exception of the *Philanthropin*, and an explicit promise that their taxes would not be used for the aims of liberal factions within the IG. The community also hired an orthodox Rabbi, Markus Horovitz, and built a new orthodox Synagoge with 520 seats for men and 360 seats for women. By the start of the twentieth century, the IG was a typical German “*Einheitsgemeinde*” (unified community) whose membership included reform, conservative, and orthodox Jews.¹⁸

During the following decades, Frankfurt’s two Jewish communities maintained a tenuous peace that occasionally erupted into public feuds, such as a 1914 controversy over the construction of an *eruv*, a symbolic ritual enclosure that extends the area in which observant Jews can carry certain objects on shabbat.¹⁹ First conceived of in 1913, the *eruv* was primarily the brainchild of Rabbi Nehemiah Nobel, Markus Horovitz’s successor as the orthodox Rabbi of the IG, and was designed to include all of the city’s train stations, the municipal hospital, the IG’s newly opened hospital, buildings belonging to the soon-to-be-opened University of Frankfurt, Jewish cemeteries, and the city’s *Ostpark*.²⁰ The leadership of the IRG objected to

¹⁸ Heuberger and Krohn, *Hinaus aus dem Ghetto*, 74-79. Additional information on Rabbis Stein, Geiger, Hirsch, Horovitz, and many others can be found in Paul Arnsberg, *Neunhundert Jahre ‘Muttergemeinde.’*

¹⁹ To learn more about the importance and theoretical implications of *eruv*s see Barbara E. Mann, *Space and Place in Jewish Studies* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2012), 137-147.

²⁰ CAHJP D/FR3/158. Curiously, Nobel had begun his career at two secessionist orthodox congregations in Königsberg and Leipzig. He later recommitted himself to the principle of working in an *Einheitsgemeinde* while still being critical of certain elements of reform Judaism. For more on Nobel as well as his part in the *eruv* controversy see Rachel Heuberger, “Orthodoxy versus Reform: The Case of Rabbi Nehemiah Anton Nobel of Frankfurt a. Main,” in *LBIYB* 37 (1992), 45-58; *Ibid*, *Rabbiner Nehemias Nobel: die jüdische Renaissance in Frankfurt am Main* (Frankfurt: Societäts Verlag, 2005), 39-42; Oskar Wolfsberg, *Nehemias Anton Nobel 1871-1922. Versuch einer Würdigung* (Frankfurt: J. Kauffmann, 1929).

Nobel's plan on religious grounds and launched a press campaign that generated a series of increasingly petty recriminations in the orthodox newspaper *Der Israelit* and the more liberal *Frankfurter Israelitisches Familienblatt*.²¹ It may come as no surprise, then, to learn that there were several periods when Salomon Breuer, Hirsch's successor as the head of the IRG, refused to speak with Nobel and his other colleagues who worked for the IG.²²

Walking in Frankfurt

Up until now, this chapter has looked at the history of Jewish life in Frankfurt from its earliest days until the start of the First World War. Now that readers have a grasp of the broad strokes of the social, cultural, and political history of Jewish life in the city, the remainder of this chapter will serve as an exploration of the ways in which the past and present of the Jewish community was physically imprinted upon the geography of Frankfurt. Doing so not only deepens our understanding of the richness of Jewish life in the city, but also provides a first glimpse of the high level of Jewish integration in different sectors of daily life and the frequently porous nature of boundaries between Jews and non-Jews in Frankfurt between the start of the First World War and the Nazi seizure of power in 1933.

To do this, I propose that we take a walking tour through Frankfurt circa 1930, beginning at the western edge of the inner ring of neighborhoods surrounding the historic city center and ending in the industrial eastern edge of the city. This route emphasizes several key points about Jewish life and the relationship between Jews and urban space in Frankfurt. For one, walking from west to east affords us with the means to trace in reverse the history of the urban concentration of Frankfurt's Jews. It also highlights the pluralistic character of the city's Jewish

²¹ "Der Eruw in Frankfurt a. M.," *Frankfurter Israelitisches Familienblatt*, August 28, 1914.

²² Arnsberg, *Bilder*, 21.

population by traveling from *Westend*, a space associated with intense acculturation and bourgeois mores, to *Ostend*, the sight of the former ghetto and the home of more orthodox and proletarian elements of the local Jewish population. Along the way we will pause to observe sites of Jewish religious observance, Jewish involvement in the local economy, and spaces of Jewish sociability including a number of parks, theaters, and cafés.

Our stroll starts at *Bockenheimer Warte*, the site of numerous buildings belonging to the Goethe University of Frankfurt, which opened its doors to students in October 1914, a little more than two months after the start of the First World War. Although the drive to create a university had largely rested in the hands of Franz Adickes, who served as mayor of the city from 1890 until 1912, there is no doubt that his plans would not have succeeded without the support of numerous Jewish philanthropists who donated large sums for the creation of individual faculties, professorships, and affiliated institutions. By 1932, the Goethe University had the second-highest number of faculty members at any institute of higher education in Germany who were Jewish or of Jewish descent. Because of this combination of Jewish financial and academic influence, the university had earned the ire of the local and national Nazi Party, who derisively referred to it as a “Jewish-Liberal business.”²³

From there, we can start our eastward route by crossing the *Zeppelin-Allee* and entering the city’s *Westend* neighborhood. Located in the space between the former walls of Frankfurt and the previously independent city of Bockenheim, *Westend* rapidly developed into the city’s most affluent neighborhood between the 1880s and the start of the twentieth century. Having long ago won the right to freely settle anywhere in the entire city, many prosperous middle- and upper-class Jewish families decided to leave their homes in the eastern part of the city and settle

²³ Notker Hammerstein, “Vorwort,” introduction to *Die Juden der Frankfurter Universität*, ed. Renate Hauer and Siegbert Wolf, 7-8 (Frankfurt: Campus Verlag, 1997), 7-8.

in the newer buildings of *Westend*. In 1900, Jews made up more than fifteen percent of the neighborhood's population and by 1925, approximately twenty-five percent of Frankfurt's Jews lived in *Westend*.²⁴ Recalling his childhood in Frankfurt, Hans Salfield described *Westend* as a neighborhood that was residential to the point of having almost no pubs or restaurants. To him, it was a place of calm and comfort: "*Westend* was very liberal or moderately conservative, an enemy of any radicalism of the right or the left, full of humane tendencies, simultaneously very cosmopolitan and wealth-conscious. There, the course of the stock market on a given afternoon was more important than any event in a distant Cabinet room or on a battlefield. There was a unique stability in the *Westend* of my youth; it was not a neighborhood of becoming, but rather one of being."²⁵

Having entered *Westend*, let us make our way to the *Palmengarten*, a lush botanical garden located in the northwestern section of the neighborhood. Further reflecting on his youth in Frankfurt before the rise of the Nazi Party, Hans Salfield nostalgically recalled that "for generations the *Palmengarten* was deeply connected with the youth of *Westend*. It was a natural Eden in which the nursemaids and governesses led the well-mannered children of *Westend* families during the hours of the afternoon."²⁶ Dorothy Kaufman had similar memories of playing with her friends in the *Palmengarten* almost every afternoon while her family's genteel nanny socialized with other caregivers looking after their own charges.²⁷ On weekends, the

²⁴ See *Statistisches Jahrbuch der Stadt Frankfurt am Main 1928. Zweite Ausgabe. Enthaltend die Statistik der Jahre 1906/07 bis 1926/07*, edited by Statistisches Amt Frankfurt am Main (Frankfurt: A. Osterreith, 1928), 68-69; Lowenstein, *Mechanics of Change*, 175.

²⁵ LBI ME 548. MM 65 PID 504133, Bl. 8.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, Bl. 13.

²⁷ LBI ME 1638. MM V 1, Bl. 26.

Palmengarten was a popular destination for Jewish families taking long walks around the city.²⁸ Front gate attendants allowed observant Jews to enter the private park without their annual passes on Saturdays and many of these same Jews often paid in advance to pick up what was cheekily referred to in local dialect as their “Jew Coffee” (*Juddecaffee*).²⁹

After enjoying our stroll around the gardens, and perhaps a cup of coffee with a slice of *Frankfurter Kranz*, a local cake designed in homage to the crown of the Holy Roman Emperor, it is time for us to leave this pastoral setting and head back on our route through the city. If we turn right on *Siesmeyerstraße* and then turn on to *Friedrichstrasse*, we can proceed a few blocks to the magnificent *Westend* Synagogue, the largest Jewish house of worship in the entire city. The IG built this Synagogue in response to the new Jewish presence in the neighborhood and the growing number of Liberal Jews within the framework of their so-called *Einheitsgemeinde*. Like other Jewish communal institutions in Western and Central Europe during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, the leaders of the IG likely believed that building a monumental new synagogue would demonstrate their continued optimism about emancipation and the potential for increased integration.³⁰ In 1908, the board of the IG commissioned the construction of a design by Franz Roeckle, whose future projects included the IG’s hospital on *Gagernstraße*, the first headquarters of the famous Institute for Social Research, and the modernist *Heimatsiedlung* housing project.³¹ Even before the new house of worship was finished, members of the local

²⁸ University of Southern California Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive (VHA) Lore Hirsch. Interview 42428. Segment 9. Accessed on April 16, 2018.

²⁹ Jüdisches Museum Frankfurt am Main (JMF) A 238, Bl. 3

³⁰ Arnsberg, *Bilder*, 255. Nineteenth-century Synagogues in Munich, Berlin, and Paris also served as, “the principal transmitter of...[a] new Jewish identity to Jews and non-Jews alike.” Richard I. Cohen, “Celebrating Integration in the Public Sphere in Germany and France,” in *Jewish Emancipation Reconsidered: The French and German Models*, ed. Michael Brenner, Vicki Caron, and Uri R. Kaufmann, 55-73 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003).

Architecture and Engineering Association predicted that the Synagogue would become an important landmark in *Westend*³² When the synagogue finally opened to much fanfare on 28 September 1910, the guests of honor at its dedication service included Mayor Adickes, the speaker of the City Council, the chief of police, the head of the chamber of commerce, the president of the district court, and the regional governor based in the nearby city of Wiesbaden. In the local press, the *Frankfurter Zeitung* praised the building by labeling it “the proud temple” and the *Neudeutsche Bauzeitung* said that the IG had “given the cityscape a first-class architectural jewel.”³³

After taking in the splendor of the *Westend* Synagogue, let us proceed down *Freiherr-von-Stein-Straße* and then turn left on *Bockenheimer Landstraße*, which will take us past a number of grand mansions and a private park owned by the Rothschild family before guiding us into the historic heart of Frankfurt.³⁴ We will be able to mark our entrance into the center of town when we pass Frankfurt’s grand Opera House at the top of a street colloquially known as the *Freßgasse* because of its high density of butcher shops and sausage stands. The Opera House first opened in 1880 under the direction of Emil Claar, a Jewish convert to Lutheranism from Lemberg, who also served as the director of Frankfurt’s Municipal Theatre (*Städtische Bühnen*) from 1879 until 1912.³⁵ Just before reaching the opera house we would have briefly crossed the

³¹ IFS Ortsgeschichte S3/H 5.457. In a strange twist of irony, Roeckle became a fanatic Nazi and was even implicated in the kidnapping and murder of a Jewish couple that owned several prominent theaters in Berlin. Hans Riebsamen, “Franz Roeckle. Lehrbeispiel für menschliche Gemeinheit,” *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, December 10, 2009.

³² Architekt Thyriot and Architekt Rummel, “Kunstabauten,” in *Frankfurt 1886-1910. Ein Führer durch seine Bauten*, ed. Frankfurter Architekten und Ingenieur Verein, 57-68 (Frankfurt: J. Maubach & Co., 1910), 68.

³³ IFS Ortsgeschichte S3/H 5.457 Westendsynagoge; “Synagogenweihe,” *Frankfurter Zeitung*, September 29, 1910.

³⁴ Blecken, “Historische Parks,” 107.

³⁵ Paul Arnsberg, *Die Geschichte der Frankfurter Juden seit der Französischen Revolution*, vol. 3, *Biographisches Lexikon der Juden in den Bereichen: Wissenschaft, Kultur, Bildung, Öffentlichkeitsarbeit in Frankfurt am Main*

Anlagenring, a semi-circular park tracing the path of the walls that used to surround the center of the city. If we were to divert our walk to go around the entirety of the *Anlagenring* we would encounter a number of memorial statues dedicated to German cultural luminaries including the Jewish writers Heinrich Heine and Ludwig Börne, the latter of which was born on the *Judengasse*.³⁶ We are also in close proximity to the *Neues Theater*, a privately owned theatre created in 1911 by Arthur Hellmer, an Jewish Austrian actor.³⁷ It is still early in the day, but if we come back at night we might be able to see Jewish performers such as Richard Breitenfeld playing the lead role in “Rigoletto” at the opera or Mathilde Einzig in a supporting character role in a comedy at the Municipal Theater.

Continuing down the *Freßgasse*, we will cross the northern end of *Rathenauplatz*, a large square that the city government renamed in honor of Walter Rathenau, Germany’s first Jewish foreign minister, after his assassination by a gang of Nazi thugs in June of 1922.³⁸ From there, we’ll enter the *Zeil*, Frankfurt’s main shopping thoroughfare. After passing the Jewish-owned *Café Hauptwache*, we will come upon *Haus Wronker*, Frankfurt’s largest department store, whose owner, Hermann Wronker, was a nephew of the founder of the mighty Tietz department store chain.³⁹ *Haus Wronker* first opened in 1891, was home to the oldest movie theater in the

(Darmstadt: Eduard Roether Verlag, 1983), 78-79; Horst Reber and Heinrich Heym, *Das Frankfurter Opernhaus 1880-1944* (Frankfurt: Kettenhof, 1969), 16-19.

³⁶ Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, Arthur Schopenhauer, Friedrich Schiller, Otto von Bismarck, and, of course, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe were among the other writers memorialized on the *Anlagenring*. Max Bromme, “Grünanlagen und Parks,” in *Frankfurt am Main Einst und Jetzt*, ed. Lehrerverein zu Frankfurt a.M., 172-179 (Frankfurt: Verlag Moritz Diesterweg, 1931), 176-177.

³⁷ IFS Personengeschichte S2/2227 Arthur Hellmer; *Zehn Jahre Neues Theater zu Frankfurt a.M.*, ed. Heinrich Schmitt (Frankfurt: Voigt & Gleiber, 1921).

³⁸ IFS Stadtverordnetenversammlung 557.

³⁹ Arnsberg, *Bilder*, 178-180.

city, and had roughly three thousand employees by the middle of the 1920s.⁴⁰ Every year, Wronker and the Jewish owners of other department stores such as *Julius Oberzenner*, *Kaufhaus Schmoller*, *Kaufhaus Hertie*, *Bamberger und Hertz*, and *Gebrüder Robinson* closed their shops on the Jewish high holidays, temporarily slowing the normally frenetic pace of the *Zeil* and demonstrating how Frankfurt's Jewish community helped to define the yearly rhythm, temporality, and economic life of the city.⁴¹

The next stop on our trip is Frankfurt's more proletarian *Ostend* neighborhood, whose western-most edge includes the area that had once formed the core of the Frankfurt *Judengasse*.⁴² Despite the earlier exodus of many upwardly mobile Jews to *Westend* and other, newer neighborhoods at the end of the nineteenth century, more than forty percent of Frankfurt's Jews continued to live in *Ostend*. Moreover, as of 1925, 16.7% of the neighborhood's inhabitants were Jewish.⁴³ Many of the more working-class Jews who remained in the area closest to the former ghetto tended to live in medieval-era buildings that had become poorly appointed tenements. Gerald Oppenheimer, for example, lived in an apartment on *Rechneistrasse* during the middle of the 1920s that still had a coal-fired stove and possessed neither a bathtub nor a shower, forcing him and his parents to make trips to a public bath house in order to fulfill their hygienic needs.⁴⁴

⁴⁰ Stefan Appelius, "Arisierungen Lilli und die Kaufhauskönige," *Spiegel Online* October 25, 2010, <http://www.spiegel.de/einestages/arisierungen-a-948689.html> (accessed September 15, 2017).

⁴¹ Arnsberg, *Bilder*, 23; IFS LG 280 Georg Yehuda Guthmann "Briefe an meine Kinder" Bl. 61. For more on the fascinating history of Jewish-owned department stores in Germany see Paul Lerner, *The Consuming Temple: Jews, Department Stores, and the Consumer Revolution in Germany, 1880-1940* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2015).

⁴² IFS Ortsgeschichte S3/N.448 Museum jüdischer Altertümer.

⁴³ *Statistisches Jahrbuch*, 68-69; Lowenstein, *Mechanics of Change*, 175; Helga Krohn, "Ein 'Gruss aus Frankfurts schönstem Stadtteil' - Blick in die Frankfurter Stadtentwicklung," in *Ostend. Blick in ein jüdisches Viertel*, ed. Helga Krohn and Ernst Benz, 10-25 (Frankfurt: Societäts Verlag, 2000), 22-23.

⁴⁴ LBI ME 1115. MM II 32 Bl. 3.

Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe formed another sizeable portion of *Ostend*'s population. While many of these Jews had first come to Frankfurt for economic or, in very few cases, political reasons before the start of the First World War, the vast majority were refugees fleeing from anti-Jewish violence, persecution, and general chaos in the lands of the former Russian and Austro-Hungarian Empires. Upon arrival, it was not uncommon for several families of these so-called "*Ostjuden*" to live in a single *Ostend* apartment because of the acute housing crisis brought about by a ban on residential construction during the war.⁴⁵ Despite dealing with the constant disapproval and derision of gentiles and Jews from both of Frankfurt's Jewish communities, an article from a newspaper *Der Israelit* claimed that " 'the *Ostjuden* feel better and more at home in Frankfurt' " because " 'the contrasts [there] between east and west...were not as strong as in other cities in Germany and Western Europe.' " Over time, most blended into their surroundings, often establishing their own organizations and businesses.⁴⁶

Even though many Jews had moved to other parts of the city, *Ostend* continued to be the anchor of Jewish institutional life and religious practice in Frankfurt. This meant that Jews living in other parts of the city frequently streamed in and out of the neighborhood. Although all but one of the former buildings from the Frankfurt *Judengasse* had long since been torn down, the neighborhood around *Börnestraße* and *Börneplatz* remained the center of activity for the IG, whose headquarters on *Fahrgasse* also included one of Germany's first Jewish museums, which opened in 1922. Many Jews from *Westend* made weekly or, at the bare minimum, thrice-yearly

⁴⁵ IFS Magistratsakten 796 Bd. 4; IFS Wohnungsamt 892 Bl. 166-169. An example of politically motivated migration to Frankfurt can be found in Valentin Senger, *No. 12 Kaiserhofstrasse*, translated by Ralph Manheim (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1980), 6-9.

⁴⁶ Ernst Benz, "'In Frankfurter Ostend wohnten auch deutschstämmige Juden.' Das Ostend als Zentrum ostjüdischer Zuwanderer, in *Ostend. Blick in ein jüdisches Viertel*, ed. Helga Krohn and Ernst Benz, 90-95 (Frankfurt: Societäts Verlag, 2000), 95. Ironically, it seems that the members of the secessionist orthodox IRG were known for having an especially negative attitude towards their coreligionists from Eastern Europe. VHA Eva Shore. Interview Code 32290.Segment 1-2. Accessed on April 25, 2018.

treks – twice on Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish new year, and once on Yom Kippur, the day of repentance – to conservative and orthodox synagogues and prayer halls in *Ostend*. Georg Guthmann writes that the neighborhood’s streets could get so busy that “one would think that the Jewish high holidays were also a Christian Sunday or holiday.” Bertha Katz similarly recalled that following the end of Yom Kippur services, “the streets and trams were so full of our people that it seemed as if there were only Jews living in Frankfurt.”⁴⁷ Many other Jewish ritual events bled onto the streets of *Ostend* throughout the course of a given year. Jewish residents erected a temporary hut for a week in the gardens in front of their building during Sukkot, children and adults could be seen running around in costumes on Purim, and, during the days of awe, the *Obermain* Bridge was a prime location for *Tashlikh*, a ceremony in which Jews symbolically cast off their sins by tossing bread crumbs into a body of water.⁴⁸

Ostend was also home to a number of spaces of Jewish sociability, including kosher bakeries, butcher shops, and groceries stores. Chief among them was Café Goldschmidt, which many locals jokingly referred to as “Café Jonteff,” a play on the Hebrew and Yiddish word for a holiday. A quick peek inside the Café Goldschmidt would provide further proof of the pluralistic and heterogeneous nature of Frankfurt’s Jewish community. Like many other Jewish and gentile-owned neighborhood businesses, the café’s owners posted signs on the wall stating that they were happy to sell their menu items on credit to visitors who came on the sabbath. Jewish butchers and cattle traders could be seen talking shop with one another in a large room to the left of the main entrance, while the room across the hall tended to be the domain of architects,

⁴⁷ *Assimilation, Verfolgung, Exil am Beispiel der jüdischen Schüler des Kaiser-Friedrichs-Gymnasiums (heute: Heinrich-von-Gagern-Gymnasium) in Frankfurt am Main*, ed. Petra Bonavita (Stuttgart: Schmetterling Verlag, 2002), 113; JMF A162 B86/287 Bl. 25

⁴⁸ Arnsberg, *Bilder*, 14-17.

pensioners, and the owners of construction firms. The café was also an important point of interaction between Jews and gentiles. For example, Emil Carlebach's father frequently went to Café Goldschmidt in the afternoons to have coffee and cake with a comrade from the regiment he had served in during the First World War. Moreover, most of the Café's employees were Gentiles. Every year on December twenty-seventh, the Café would close early so that the owners could treat them to a traditional Christmas meal.⁴⁹

Scarcely a block away from Café Goldschmidt is the oldest Jewish cemetery in the city, with gravestones dating back to the year 1272. Until 1828, it was the only Jewish cemetery in Frankfurt and doubled as a place of refuge for Frankfurt's Jews during the Fettmilch uprising in 1616 and the first "*Judenbrand*," a large city fire that began on the *Judengasse* in 1711.⁵⁰ Local lore also held that Friedrich Ludwig Jahn, the famous nationalist founder of the German gymnastics movement, used the cemetery as a hiding place when Prussian troops broke up the Frankfurt Parliament in 1848. Thus, the Jewish cemetery played an important part in both the sacred and secular history of the city.⁵¹

Continuing to the east, we will cross the *Friedberger Anlage*, another segment of the park ring where Frankfurt's city wall once stood, and soon come face to face with the main synagogue of the IRG. Beginning in 1904, the IRG collaborated with several non-Jewish architects in order to build a monumental new synagogue which, among other things, would have seats for 1,600 worshipers and demonstrate that Jews were a part of and belonged to the German nation.

⁴⁹ Arnsberg, *Geschichte Band 1*, 898-899; Arnsberg, *Bilder*, 22, 175-178; Emil Carlebach, *Am Anfang stand ein Doppelmord. Kommunist in Deutschland Band I: Bis 1937* (Cologne: Pahl-Rugenstein, 1988), 33.

⁵⁰ IFS Ortsgeschichte S3/ E 8.207 Bl. 7-8.

⁵¹ Fried Lübbecke, *Merians Frankfurt. Genaue Beschreibung von Frankfurt am Main, der kaiserlichen Stadt, geweiht der Wahl der römischen Könige und Kaiser, als Hochburg des Handels von Deutschland* (Frankfurt: Waldemar Kramer, 1939), 74.

Construction began in 1905 and the new synagogue opened to much fanfare August 1907.⁵² Critics praised the building's mixture of old and new styles and one went so far as to proclaim it the "most valuable of all the houses of worship in Frankfurt."⁵³ This same part of *Ostend* was also home to several other Jewish educational institutions. These included the *Samson-Hirsch-Realschule*, the IRG's neo-orthodox educational alternative to the Liberal-minded *Philanthropin*, two orthodox yeshivas, and a number of small orthodox prayer rooms frequented by the members of German and Eastern European Jewish families.⁵⁴

From here we can head down to *Hanauer Landstraße* where, in order to give our feet a rest, we will hop on a tram for the remainder of our journey. One of the first landmarks we will pass along the way will be the *Großmarkthalle*, a massive expressionist building containing the city's largest wholesale market. The building, which opened in September of 1928, was one of the signature projects affiliated with the "New Frankfurt," an urban planning initiative to modernize the city spearheaded by three Jewish politicians: Mayor Ludwig Landmann, City Treasurer Bruno Asch, and City architect Ernst May. Working with sympathetic allies from the City Magistrate and the ruling coalition in the City Council, these three men left a lasting impact on the fabric of the city by creating Frankfurt's first airport, building several large modernist housing developments, and expanding the grounds of the city's convention center.⁵⁵

⁵² Salomon Korn, "Synagoge Friedberger Anlage (29. August 1907-9. November 1938)," in *Ostend. Blick in ein jüdisches Viertel*, ed. Helga Krohn and Ernst Benz, 48-57 (Frankfurt: Societäts Verlag, 2000), 48-9; IFS Ortsgeschichte S3/H 10.663.

⁵³ Paul Ferdinand Schmidt, *Stätten der Kultur Band 2: Frankfurt a.M.* (Leipzig: Klinkhardt & Biermann, 1908), 149-150.

⁵⁴ *Die Samson-Raphael-Hirsch-Schule in Frankfurt am Main. Dokumente, Erinnerungen, Analysen*, ed. Hans Thiel (Frankfurt, Waldemar Kramer, 2001); Helga Krohn, "Erziehung zu 'Menschen, Juden und Bürgern.' Schule und Ausbildung," in *Ostend. Blick in ein Jüdisches Viertel*, ed. Helga Krohn and Ernst Benz, 64-77 (Frankfurt: Societäts Verlag, 2000), 71-74.

⁵⁵ IFS S1/390/10 Bruno Asch: Nachlass. For more on the creation of the *Großmarkthalle* see: *Die neue Grossmarkthalle in Frankfurt a.M. zur Eröffnung am 25. Oktober 1928*, ed. Ernährungsamt und Hochbauamt

The remainder of our ride will be through the far eastern reaches of *Ostend*, which had quickly developed into a major warehouse district at the turn of the century because of its close proximity to Frankfurt's Eastern Train Station and the city's largest harbor area on the Main River. One of the larger warehouses on *Hanauer Landstraße* belonged to the firm *Schade & Füllgrabe*, a Jewish-owned chain that specialized at selling "colonial goods" such as coffee, tea, and chocolate. By the middle of the Weimar Republic, the firm had thirty-five stores in Frankfurt alone and 180 in total throughout Germany. Other Jewish-owned business in the area included the agricultural machinery manufacturer *Ph. Mayfarth & Co.*, the largest branch of the *Witwe Hassan*, another colonial goods store, and the *Naxos-Union* chemical company.⁵⁶ Our tour comes to an end at the *Casella Werke*, a large chemical factory under the ownership of the Jewish businessmen Fritz and Leo Gans.⁵⁷ The latter would go on to serve as one of the founding members of the board of directors for the massive chemical and pharmaceutical conglomerate IG Farben and was well known for his commitment to philanthropic causes including the creation of the University of Frankfurt.

And with that, we have reached the end of our walking tour through Frankfurt. But before, perhaps, repairing to a tavern to further rest our feet and enjoy a glass of locally produced apple wine, let us reflect on a few key points that this tour has tried to make about the Jewish community and the relationship between Jews and urban space in Frankfurt am Main before 1933. On one level, this walk has demonstrated the many ways in which Frankfurt's Jewish

Frankfurt a.M. (Frankfurt: Englert & Schlosser, 1928). Frankfurt had been a major site for conventions and trade fairs since the medieval period. To this day, many Germans refer to Frankfurt as a "*Messe-Stadt*" (convention city) because of the shrewd, long-term planning of the "New Frankfurt" program.

⁵⁶ Information on these and many other firms came from the following essay: Simone Mergen, "Firmensitz: Hanauer Landstraße. Jüdische Großhändler und Fabrikanten in Ostend," in *Ostend. Blick in ein jüdisches Viertel*, ed. Helga Krohn and Ernst Benz, 144-157 (Frankfurt: Societäts Verlag, 2000).

⁵⁷ *Frankfurter Biographie. Erster Band A-L*, ed. Wolfgang Klötzer (Frankfurt: Waldemar Kramer, 1994), 128.

community and Jewishness were physically encoded into the city. This can be seen not only through permanent Jewish religious spaces such as the *Westend* synagogue or the old Jewish cemetery, but also in the form of important fixtures of the local economy and spaces of Jewish sociability. By that same token, the rhythm of Jewish religious practice often intersected with and influenced the more secular temporality of the city. This was especially true during the Jewish high holidays, when Jewish owned businesses in the center of the city would close and *Sukkahs* dotted the streetscape of *Ostend*. Additionally, walking from *Westend* to *Ostend* has not only provided an overview of the neighborhoods that served as two poles of Jewish life in Frankfurt, but also further demonstrated the plurality of Jewish life in the city. It has also highlighted the porous nature of any presumed social or geographical boundaries between Frankfurt's orthodox, conservative, liberal, and Eastern European Jews. Even if the very name of *Westend* could serve as a stand-in for German-Jewish acculturation, it was just as likely to find more ritually observant Jews in venues such as the *Palmengarten* as it was to see large crowds of *Westend* Jews descending on the streets of the former ghetto in order to attend weekend or holiday services.

CHAPTER 2: THE POLITICS OF CONFESSIONAL PEACE, 1913-1933

On the morning of 12 December 1913, a crowd gathered on Frankfurt's *Friedberger Anlage* for the dedication ceremony of Germany's first public memorial to the poet Heinrich Heine. Heine, who was born Jewish and later converted to Christianity, was and is still widely considered one of the greatest German-language writers of the nineteenth century. However, Heine had long been a controversial figure because of his critical and irreverent stance towards German nationalism, politics, and culture. Unsurprisingly then, Heine's works and legacy became a lightning rod for the forces of political antisemitism during the final decades of the Wilhelmine Empire. Prior to 1913, the governments of Düsseldorf, Mainz, and Hamburg had each formulated and subsequently recanted plans to erect a Heine memorial on municipal land due to the effective mobilization of local, national, or even transnational antisemitic political groups.¹

In 1910, a group of Frankfurters calling themselves the "Committee for the Erection of a Heine Monument" asked the Frankfurt Magistrate and Mayor Franz Adickes if the city would be willing to provide a piece of land for a Heine memorial. They soon received a tentatively positive answer from the city and began to look for a proper location and an artist for the memorial.² For a long time, the city government and committee's plans drew little attention, but

¹ Düsseldorf tried to erect a memorial in 1887, Mainz in 1893-1894, and Hamburg in 1906. Inge Schlotzhauer, *Ideologie und Organisation des politischen Antisemitismus in Frankfurt am Main 1880-1914* (Frankfurt: Verlag Waldemar Kramer, 1989), 263-267. An excellent overview of Heine's complicated relationship with Judaism and his own Jewish background can be found in Sander L. Gilman, *Jewish Self-Hatred: Anti-Semitism and the Hidden Language of the Jews* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), 167-187.

² IFS Magistratsakten S/2.673 Heine-Denkmal.

in the spring of 1912, local antisemitic groups began an agitation campaign against the memorial. On 15 June, the local chapter of the reactionary *Deutscher Verein* sponsored a protest event at the Frankfurt *Kompostellhof* featuring a keynote speech by the antisemitic Reichstag Member Ferdinand Werner entitled “The Heine Memorial in Frankfurt: A Symbol of Jewish Domination.” Unfortunately for Werner, the event organizers failed to prevent a large number of Social Democrats and other supporters of the memorial from gaining entrance to the auditorium. Over the course of two hours, Werner’s speech was barely audible over a chorus of boos. Several members of the crowd, including at least one woman, were thrown out of the event. The protest failed to change the minds of the city Magistrate, who voted two weeks later to formally approved the plans for the memorial.³ Although the *Deutscher Verein* held another anti-Heine event in September, they had largely given up on their campaign by the end of the year. Ironically, the final anti-memorial flier that they produced in early 1913 attempted to appeal to Jewish and more liberal local citizens by including a series anti-Jewish quotes from Heine.⁴

The opening of the memorial was a cause for public fanfare and a celebration of both the poet and civic tolerance. Standing in front of the statue, the city’s new mayor, Georg Voigt, gave a speech in which he praised the brilliance of Heine’s poetry and prose. Grossly misinterpreting Heine’s famous and stridently anti-Prussian poem “Germany: A Winter’s Tale,” Voigt also claimed that Heine had envisioned “the strengthening of the German *Volk* and its unification under the throne of the Kaiser.”⁵ Several local newspapers from across the political spectrum reprinted Voigt’s speech and ran articles that praised the memorial for being a public form of

³ Ibid.

⁴ Examples of these quotes are, “Jews are insufferable hagglers,” and “Money has such influence on the Jews that they will do anything for it.” Schlotzhauer, *Ideologie*, 278-280; IFS Magistratsakten S/2.673 Heine-Denkmal.

⁵ Ibid.

protest against religious and political fanaticism.⁶ Additionally, Frankfurt's decision to erect a memorial appeared to signal a shift in public attitudes elsewhere in Germany towards building Heine Memorials. A month before the dedication in Frankfurt, the Berlin-based *Vossische Zeitung* announced that Hamburg's municipal government was now looking to commission a similar memorial by Georg Kolbe, the sculptor who had produced Frankfurt's Heine Memorial.⁷

In retrospect, it is safe to say that the campaign against the Heine Memorial was the last failed effort of organized antisemitism in Frankfurt prior to the First World War. Despite two decades of political agitation, the *Deutscher Verein* never had more than two representatives in the City Council and the swift end of the controversy surrounding the memorial is a testament to the continued power of liberalism in Frankfurt's local politics prior to the First World War.⁸ Between the Prussian annexation of 1866 and 1900, moderate-right and moderate-left Liberal parties dominated the two branches of the city's government: the popularly elected City Council (*Stadtverordnetenversammlung*) and Magistrate (*Magistrat*).⁹ Despite the fact that these parties called for greater democratization on a local and national level, much of their power was contingent on the restrictive nature of enfranchisement in Frankfurt. Although the city never adopted Prussia's harsh three-tiered system for assigning government representation, for a long time Frankfurt only granted the right to vote in municipal elections to citizens who had a

⁶ Leopold Schwarzschild, "Zur Einweihung des Frankfurter Heinedenkmal," *Kleine Press*, December 13, 1913; Emil Claar, "Heinrich Heine. Zur Enthüllung des Denkmals für den Dichter in Frankfurt a.M.," *General-Anzeiger*, December 13, 1913; "Die Enthüllung des Heinedenkmal," *Volksstimme*, December 13, 1913. Another article from the *Frankfurter Nachrichten* can be found in IFS Magistratsakten S/2.673 Heine-Denkmal.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ The *Deutscher Verein*'s two Representatives had only one year of overlap on the City Council. Johann Hettler Heinrich served in the body from 1900 until 1906 and Hermann Laaß, who owned the *Kölner Hof*, an antisemitic hotel near Frankfurt's main train station, served from 1905 until 1910. Schlotzhauer, *Ideologie*, 306-307.

⁹ Jan Palmowski, *Urban Liberalism in Imperial Germany: Frankfurt am Main, 1866-1914* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 96-99; Brian Ladd, *Urban Planning and Civic Order in Germany, 1860-1914* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990), 165-166.

substantial annual income of at least 1,200 Marks.¹⁰ As in many other German cities, Frankfurt's City Council was responsible for electing the city's mayor, who presided over the city Magistrate and the larger municipal bureaucracy.¹¹ In practice, then, the city's Liberal parties managed to maintain their hegemony over political power in Frankfurt during the final decades of the nineteenth century. Gradual shifts in the rules regarding legal suffrage allowed several new parties to gain a foothold in the City Council in 1900. These included the Social Democratic Party, the Catholic Center Party, and the *Handwerkerpartei*, which represented artisans and small property owners that were angry at the present state of municipal taxation.¹²

Having gained full political emancipation in 1864, Jews consistently played a major role in Frankfurt's municipal politics during the *Kaiserreich* and some scholars have estimated that every fifth member of the City Council between 1867 and 1892 was Jewish or had Jewish ancestry.¹³ Examples of prominent Jewish politicians from this period include Karl Flesch, who was one of the primary architects of city initiatives to build affordable housing and promote public welfare, and Leopold Sonnemann, a *bête noir* of Otto von Bismarck and founder of the Liberal *Frankfurter Zeitung* who represented Frankfurt in the Reichstag 1871 until 1884 and was a member of the City Council for the better part of three decades.¹⁴

¹⁰ Palmowski, *Urban Liberalism*, 143; Ladd, *Urban Planning*, 21-23.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 16.

¹² *Ibid.*, 169-70.

¹³ Jan Palmowski, "Between Dependence and Influence: Jews and Liberalism in Frankfurt am Main, 1864-1933," in *Liberalism, Anti-Semitism, and Democracy: Essays in Honour of Peter Pulzer*, ed. Henning Tewes and Jonathan Wright, 76-101 (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 79; "Die Synagogen brennen...!" *Die Zerstörung Frankfurts als jüdische Lebenswelt*, ed. Jürgen Steen (Frankfurt: Historisches Museum Frankfurt am Main, 1988), 18.

¹⁴ Schembs, *Mäzene und Stifter*, 132-134.

In his foundational work on the history of political antisemitism in Central Europe before 1914, Peter Pulzer perceptively argues that “the fate of Jews was tied to the fortunes of Liberalism.”¹⁵ Unsurprisingly, then, the First World War and the creation of the Weimar Republic are usually depicted as twin moments when Jews in Germany went from experiencing unbridled excitement at the prospect of full emancipation to a feeling of pessimism and isolation due to electoral failure of Liberal political parties as well as the rise of antisemitism and other illiberal forces.¹⁶ Local studies in particular tend to paint a fairly bleak picture of rising antisemitism and diminishing Jewish involvement in politics between the First World War and the Nazi seizure of power in 1933. Anthony Kauders has shown that local branches of the Catholic Center Party, the Bavarian People’s Party, and the right-Liberal German People’s party (DVP) used antisemitic rhetoric to gain votes in local elections in Nuremberg and Dusseldorf.¹⁷ In Cologne, the dominant Center Party gradually moderated their objections to rising antisemitism and came into conflict with the city’s Jewish community about the operation of communal schools and cemeteries.¹⁸ Elsewhere, dramatic shifts in Germany’s borders following the First World War eroded the electoral strength of Jewish-backed, moderate-left Liberals and brought about the swift rise of *völkisch* and nationalist parties in both Königsberg and Breslau.¹⁹

¹⁵ Peter Pulzer, *The Rise of Political Anti-Semitism in Germany and Austria*, rev. edition (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988), xxiii.

¹⁶ Representative works include Steven M. Lowenstein, Paul Mendes-Flohr, Peter Pulzer, and Monika Richarz, *German Jewish History in Modern Times Volume 3: Integration in Dispute 1871-1918* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997); Avraham Barkai and Paul Mendes-Flohr, *German-Jewish History in Modern Times Volume 4: Renewal and Destruction 1918-1945* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998); Donald L. Niewyk, *The Jews in Weimar Germany* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1980).

¹⁷ Anthony Kauders, *German Politics and the Jews: Düsseldorf and Nuremberg 1910-1933* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996).

¹⁸ Nicola Wenge, *Integration und Ausgrenzung in der städtischen Gesellschaft: eine jüdisch-nichtjüdische Beziehungsgeschichte Kölns 1918-1933* (Mainz: Verlag Philipp von Zabern, 2005), 358-422.

Reflecting on the situation in Frankfurt, Jan Palmowski has argued that the close connection between Jews and liberals actually hurt the latter's ability to understand and combat the threat of rising antisemitism.²⁰

This chapter looks at the fate of Jewish integration in Frankfurt's municipal politics by asking to what degree the First World War and the myriad of crises during the Weimar Republic actually altered the municipal government's ability and willingness to combat antisemitism, advocate on behalf of the city's Jewish community, and preserve peaceful relations between the city's different religious communities? During the early part of this period, members of the city council and local press frequently stressed the need to maintain what they called the "confessional peace" that had long served as the bedrock of harmonious coexistence and cooperation between Jews, Catholics, and Protestants in the city. This concept of "confessional peace" should be seen as a necessary pre-condition for the continued participation and integration of Jews in the city's political life. Thus, to find out how long this "confessional peace" remained tenable, I structure the chapter around the Frankfurt government's reaction to six flashpoints related to antisemitism and the city's Jewish population, beginning with an antisemitic sermon at the height of World War I and ending with the defacement of a public memorial to a Jewish poet in 1932.

The outcomes of these various events and controversies reveal that unlike in other major German cities, Frankfurt's culture of "confessional peace" stayed strong until the final years of the Weimar Republic. A key reason for this is that most of the major challenges to "confessional

¹⁹ Stefanie Schüler-Springorum, *Die Jüdische Minderheit in Königsberg/Preussen, 1871-1945* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1996), 209-216, 364; Till van Rahden, *Jews and Other Germans: Civil Society, Religious Diversity, and Urban Politics in Breslau, 1860-1925*, translated by Marcus Brainard (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2008), 234-238.

²⁰ Palmowski, "Between Dependence and Influence," 79.

peace” tended to crop up during moments of heightened tension and crisis on both a local and a national level. Generally speaking, the local controversies that popped up concurrently following Germany’s defeat in the First World War, during the German Revolution, and in the midst of the hyperinflation of 1923 were swiftly resolved thanks to the city government’s continued commitment to publicly fight and condemn agents of intolerance. The fate of “confessional peace” only began to appear tenuous in late 1928, when the city’s ruling “Weimar coalition” between the moderate Liberal German Democratic Party (DDP), Social Democratic Party (SPD), and Catholic Center Party lost hold of their majority on the City Council. During the next four years, political parties on the right and, occasionally, on the far left aligned themselves with representatives of the local Nazi Party in order to challenge the DDP and SPD’s continued control of the Frankfurt Magistrate. By the start of 1932, the city’s growing financial crisis and bitter partisan infighting on the City Council prevented the municipal government from being able to take the necessary action to fight antisemitism and effectively advocate for the city’s Jewish community. At the same time, the Jewish presence in the city government never dwindled during the Weimar Republic, suggesting that even if the future of “confessional peace” looked bleak, Jewish integration in municipal politics remained strong until the start of 1933.

Jewish Politicians from 1914 until 1933: A Brief overview

Before diving into these flashpoints, this first section of the chapter will provide an overview of the work of several prominent local Jewish politicians in order to highlight the high level of Jewish integration in Frankfurt’s municipal politics. It also introduces the names and stories of figures that will appear throughout the course of this chapter. As mentioned earlier, Jewish individuals had played an active part in Frankfurt’s municipal politics since the latter third of the nineteenth century. This trend continued during the period between the start of the

First World War and the Nazi seizure of power, with Jews making it into some of the highest echelons of the city government and taking part in party politics that stretched from the far left to the moderate right of the political spectrum.

Ludwig Heilbrunn entered into left-liberal politics during the first decade of the twentieth century and remained a fixture of political life in the city until the end of the 1920s. Heilbrunn joined the board of the local branch of the Progressive Party (*Fortschrittliche Partei*) in 1907, shortly after he narrowly lost an election for a seat in the Reichstag, was elected to a seat in the Frankfurt City Council in 1910, and actively took part in the creation of the University of Frankfurt, which opened in 1914. A year later, he was unanimously elected to serve as one of the Progressive Party's members of the Prussian Parliament.²¹

Although he became a member of the national board of the center-left German Democratic Party (DDP) in the immediate aftermath of World War I, he began to have doubts about his future in Frankfurt's municipal politics during the summer of 1919. Heilbrunn bemoaned the fact that the sense of unified purpose brought about by the German Revolution and the establishment of the Weimar Republic was giving way to a more partisan political landscape. More troublingly, he worried that a new wave of antisemitic hostility might break out if Jews played too prominent a role in government affairs during a period of national humiliation and defeat. However, several of Heilbrunn's Liberal colleagues from the City Council and Magistrate banded together to prevent him from dropping out of politics. In particular, Mayor Georg Voigt told Heilbrunn that it was imperative for him and other members "who had already worked in the City Council under the old regime to not deny their services" in a time of crisis. Heilbrunn heeded their advice and remained on the City Council until 1928, when he decided to leave the

²¹ IFS Personengeschichte S2/2.537 Ludwig Heilbrunn; IFS Chroniken S5/249 – Ludwig Heilbrunn "Eine Lebens-Skizze 1870-1936" Bl. 93, 95-96, 149-151.

increasingly contentious municipal government and more actively take part in academic life at the Goethe University.²²

Following the war, the radically emancipatory nature of the new Weimar Constitution allowed five Jewish women from four different political parties to win seats on Frankfurt's City Council in 1919.²³ Moving from left to right, these were Toni Sender of the Independent Social Democratic party (USPD), Henriette Fürth of the Social Democratic Party (SPD), Else Epstein of the DDP, Jenny Apolant of the DDP, and Anna Landsberg of the conservative German People's Party (DVP).²⁴ The latter two had been members of the German Women's Association and, by unlucky coincidence, were representatives in the City Council until their deaths in 1925.²⁵ Fürth had been an active participant in the German feminist movement and served as a member of the city's Bureau for Foodstuffs during the war before she officially entered the SPD in 1916.²⁶ Although the SPD did not list her as a candidate in 1924, she continued to serve on the advisory board of the University of Frankfurt and received a plaque of honor from the city government in 1931 for her many decades of volunteer work.²⁷ Sender was born into an Orthodox Jewish family

²² Ibid., 223-224, 242-244, 320-321.

²³ At that time, the City Council had expanded to have a total of 96 seats. This number would drop to 71 seats in 1924 and expand again to 85 seats in 1928. Barbara Köhler "Die Nationalsozialisten in der Frankfurter Stadtverordnetenversammlung 1929 bis 1933," *Archiv Frankfurts Geschichte und Kunst* 59 (1985): 440-2, 460-461; Armin and Renate Schmid, *Frankfurt in stürmischer Zeit 1930-1933* (Stuttgart: Konrad Theiss, 1987), 483.

²⁴ "Die Frauen im Bürgersaal," *Frankfurter Nachrichten*, April 20, 1919; IFS Personengeschichte S2/1.001 – Else Epstein.

²⁵ Dorothee von Velsen, "Worte der Erinnerung" in *Jenny Apolant. Zum Gedächtnis*, ed. Allgemeinen Deutschen Frauenverein, 7-14 (Frankfurt: Neuer Frankfurter Verlag, 1926); Personengeschichte S2/10.255 Anna Landsberg DVP.

²⁶ Fürth was a prolific author and even wrote a wartime cookbook for women on the German home front. Henriette Fürth, *Kleines Kriegskochbuch* (Frankfurt: Englert & Schlosser, 1915).

²⁷ IFS Personengeschichte S2/211 – Henriette Fürth; LBI ME 1321 Henriette Fuerth: Streifzuege durch das Land eines Lebens Bl 114-115; Henriette Fürth, *Streifzüge durch das Land eines Lebens. Autobiographie einer deutsch-jüdischen Soziologin, Sozialpolitikerin und Frauenrechtlerin (1861-1938)* (Wiesbaden: Kommission für die Geschichte der Juden in Hessen, 2010).

in the neighboring city of Wiesbaden in 1888 and came to Frankfurt at the age of thirteen to live in a boarding house and study. Over time, Sender became a leading figure in the anti-war wing of the SPD and was a founding member of the city's chapter of the USPD. During the German Revolution she was the Secretary of the Frankfurt Workers' Council and was the second name on the USPD's list for the City Council elections of 1919. Sender would go on to serve one term as a member of the Reichstag for a constituency covering parts of Frankfurt and Wiesbaden before switching to a different seat and moving to Dresden in 1924.²⁸

After 1924, Else Epstein remained in her position with the DDP until 1933 and Berta Jourdan joined the City Council fraction of the SPD. Jourdan was a teacher and worked for a decade at two elementary schools in the city.²⁹ Jourdan would leave the City Council and receive a reprieve from her teaching duties in 1928 after she was elected to a position in the Prussian Parliament. Although she was reelected to this position in May 1932, she lost this seat during the March election of 1933 and was fired from the civil service during that same year due to her affiliation with the SPD.³⁰ In sum, the entrance of these Jewish women into the City Council suggests a strengthening of Jewish integration into Frankfurt's political life for much of the Weimar Republic.

²⁸ Toni Sender, *The Autobiography of a German Rebel* (London: Routledge, 1940), 7-8, 58-60, 103-104, 150-151, 219; Annete Hild-Berg, *Toni Sender (1880-1964). Ein Leben im Namen der Freiheit und der sozialen Gerechtigkeit* (Cologne: Bund, 1994), 21; IFS Personengeschichte S2/1.340 – Toni Sender; Erhard Lucas, *Frankfurt unter der Herrschaft des Arbeiter- und Soldatenrates 1918/19* (Frankfurt: Verlag Neue Kritik, 1969), 15; James Wickham, "Working-Class Movement and Working-Class Life: Frankfurt am Main during the Weimar Republic," *Social History* 8, no. 3 (Oct. 1983): 322.

²⁹ According to the outdated language in her personnel files with the city government, Jourdan had received praise from the local school bureau for using her "motherly style" to deal with "psychopaths of the most extreme form" in a remedial class that she taught at the Anna-Schule. IFS Personalakten 204.391 Berta Jourdan B1. 70.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 74, 79; IFS Stadtverordnetenversammlung 92 Stadtverordnetenversammlung Wahlen 1924-1933.

Perhaps no Jewish individual had a bigger impact on the city of Frankfurt during the Weimar Republic than Ludwig Landmann, who served as mayor of the city from 1924 until March of 1933. Born in Mannheim in 1868, Landmann studied law at several German universities before entering into his hometown's civil service in 1892. During the next three decades, he worked in various positions in the city government and even served as the director of the city's main municipal theater and opera companies. Sensing that he had reached the upward limit of his career trajectory in Mannheim, Landmann applied for and was later elected to a position as a City Councilor (*Stadtrat*) on Frankfurt's Magistrate in 1917. Shortly thereafter, Landmann officially declared that he no longer wished to belong to a Jewish community. Although on first glance it appears that Landmann may have done this to further his career ambitions, it is important to note that he did not proceed to convert to Christianity. In his biography of Landmann, Dieter Rebentisch has claimed that the future mayor most likely made this move because he identified as an atheist and a free thinker.³¹ During the next seven years, Landmann's concentrated on efforts to modernize the city and stimulate economic recovery following Germany's defeat in November 1918. This included tasks such as supervising the construction of a new canal connecting the Main and Danube rivers, running the city's building and housing bureaus, and organizing the first Frankfurt International Convention in October 1919.³²

According to the historian Michael Habersack, there are several reasons why it is surprising that the City Council elected Landmann to be mayor in 1924. For one, every mayor of Frankfurt since at least 1880 had prior experience serving as the mayor of a smaller German city.

³¹ Dieter Rebentisch, *Ludwig Landmann. Frankfurter Oberbürgermeister der Weimarer Republik* (Wiesbaden: Steiner Verlag, 1975), 22-32, 37, 58-60, 62-64.

³² *Ibid.*, 67-68, 75, 88-89, 99.

Second, Landmann was a member of the same political party – the DDP – as his main challenger in the election: the city’s incumbent mayor, Georg Voigt.³³ Landmann’s election ultimately depended on the support of Friedrich Dessauer, the chairman of the city’s left-leaning branch of the catholic Center Party. Landmann won the contentious election by a vote of 35 to 26 in spite of an onslaught of taunts from the far-right German National People’s Party (DNVP), who claimed that the members of the Catholic party could not in good faith support the candidacy of an atheist with a Jewish background. Nevertheless, even the conservative *Frankfurter Nachrichten* newspaper welcomed his election, which it framed as the potential start of a more positive era of urban development for the city.³⁴

Landmann’s legacy as mayor has often been tied to his close collaboration with two other Jewish members of the Frankfurt Magistrate during the late 1920s: the city architect Ernst May and city treasurer Bruno Asch. May, who was born in Frankfurt and had studied architecture in England with leaders of the garden city movement, spearheaded the creation of thousands of new housing units in his capacity as the main creative force behind Landmann’s “New Frankfurt” program, which aimed to modernize the city’s infrastructure and eliminate its chronic housing shortage.³⁵ Asch, who came from a working-class Jewish family in Berlin, had undergone a political awakening during his service on the Eastern Front during the First World War and

³³ Michael Habersack, “Es hat sich noch nie eine Stadt ‘emporgeknausert.’ Ludwig Landmann und Frankfurts Aufstieg zur Weltstadt,” in *Frankfurter Stadtoberhäupter vom 14. Jahrhundert bis 1946*, ed. Evelyn Brockhoff and Lutz Brecht, 179-194 (Frankfurt: Societäts-Verlag, 2012), 179-181, 185-186.

³⁴ Rebentisch, *Landmann*, 115.

³⁵ The city built 16,827 new housing units during Ernst May’s tenure from 1925 to 1930. Ben Lieberman, “Testing Peukert’s Paradigm: the ‘Crisis of Classical Modernity’ in the ‘New Frankfurt,’ 1925-1930,” *German Studies Review* 17, no. 2 (1994), 290-291; Eckhard Herrel, “‘Stete Reifung.’ Studienjahre, Villenbauten in Frankfurt und Kriegsgräber an der Front,” in *Ernst May 1886-1970*, ed. Claudia Quiring, Wolfgang Voigt, Peter Cachola Schmal, and Eckhard Herrel, 15-31 (New York: Prestel, 2011); Christoph Mohr, “Das Neue Frankfurt. Wohnungsbau und Großstadt 1925-1930,” in *Ernst May 1886-1970*, ed. Claudia Quiring, Wolfgang Voigt, Peter Cachola Schmal, and Eckhard Herrel, 51-67 (New York: Prestel, 2011), 51-54.

served as the head of the Soldiers' Council of Kovno during the German Revolution of 1918-1919.³⁶ In 1923, he was elected as a representative of the USPD to be the mayor of Höchst am Main, an industrial city that would be incorporated into Frankfurt in 1928.³⁷ Asch was an incredibly popular mayor, not least because of his passionate opposition to the French occupation of the city, which resulted in his arrest by French troops during the Ruhr crisis in 1923.³⁸ Asch left Höchst to become Frankfurt's treasurer in 1925 and would remain in this position until 1931, when he became the treasurer of Berlin. During this time, he played an integral role in raising funds and acquiring loans for city projects by making frequent trips to and visiting with representatives of large financial firms based in New York City.³⁹

Although the "New Frankfurt" proposed radical solutions to a number of problems the city faced, the program started to face major setbacks during the final years of the Weimar Republic. As a later section of this chapter will show, the Frankfurt branch of the Nazi Party found common cause with other conservative groups and, in some cases, with the German Communist Party (KPD) during the period between 1928 and 1933 by opposing the "Landmann system," which was seen as a hindrance to Frankfurt's full economic recovery.⁴⁰

The Kübel Affair, 1917-1918

³⁶ Helga Krohn, *Bruno Asch. Sozialist. Kommunalpolitiker. Deutscher Jude 1890-1940* (Frankfurt: Brandes & Apsel, 2015), 15-16.

³⁷ IFS Höchst 809 Bürgermeisterwahl 1921 Bl. 19-20.

³⁸ Krohn, *Bruno Asch*, 177; CAHJP P283/6; CAHJP P283/45.

³⁹ Asch won the treasurer vote in the City Council with the support of the Communist Party after their candidate received less votes than him in the first round. "Stadtverordnetensitzung. Bürgermeister Asch zum Kämmerer gewählt mit 38 von 68 Stimmen," *Frankfurter Nachrichten*, September 16, 1925; Krohn, *Bruno Asch*, 198, 202-203.

⁴⁰ Lieberman, "Peukert's Paradigm," 294-297.

At first glance, the start of the First World War inspired a commitment to nonpartisan governance in Frankfurt not unlike the *Burgfrieden* proclaimed by Kaiser Wilhelm II in Berlin. Shortly before the November 1914 elections for the City Council, all the political parties in the city agreed to support a unified list of candidates.⁴¹

Towards the end of the war, the city government demonstrated its continued commitment to combat antisemitism and support the interests of the local Jewish community during a controversy related to a sermon by Johannes Kübel, a Lutheran Minister. Kübel had been working at the *Weißfrauenkirche* in the center of the city since 1909. After returning to Frankfurt following several years of army service at the front, Kübel was appointed to serve as the chairman of the local chapter of the right-wing *Vaterlandspartei*.⁴² A controversy first began to take shape on 14 January 1918, when Kübel received a letter from the local chapter of the interfaith Association for Resistance against Antisemitism (*Verein zur Abwehr des Antisemitismus*) claiming that he had used his New Year's Eve sermon to accuse Jews of profiting from the war effort in the Habsburg Empire.⁴³ Kübel's initial response was to forward the letter to the local consistory of the Lutheran Church, which threw its support behind Kübel, curtly writing that there was no need to take punitive actions against him because, in their view,

⁴¹ "Die Stadtverordnetenversammlung," *Frankfurt Nachrichten*, November 27, 1914.

⁴² Johannes Kübel, *Erinnerungen. Mensch und Christ, Theologe, Pfarrer und Kirchenmann* (Villingen-Schwenningen: Selbstverlag der Verelegerin, 1973), 47, 50-51, 63-64, 107.

⁴³ The "*Abwehr Verein*" came into existence in 1890 and had a mixed Jewish and Christian membership. For more information on its history see Barbara Suchy, "The *Verein zur Abwehr des Antisemitismus* (I) From its Beginnings to the First World War," *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book* 28 (1983): 205-239; Ibid, "The *Verein zur Abwehr des Antisemitismus* (II) From the First World War to its Dissolution in 1933," *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book* 30 (1985): 67-103; Auguste Zeiß-Horbach, *Der Verein zur Abwehr des Antisemitismus. Zum Verhältnis von Protestantismus und Judentum im Kaiserreich und in der Weimarer Republik* (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2008).

his sermon had attacked the “general spirit of war profiteering without one-sided attacks against Judaism.”⁴⁴

The matter resurfaced in April when the Left-Liberal City Council Representative Max Gehrke, who served on the board of the Association for the Resistance of Antisemitism, brought it to the attention of the City Council. Gehrke pointedly criticized Kübel and the Lutheran consistory for creating a hostile environment that flew in the face of the long-standing “confessional peace” that had allowed for the peaceful coexistence of members of the city’s Jewish, Catholic, and Protestant communities. Following Gehrke’s comments, representatives of both the SPD and the National Liberals seconded his arguments and called on the city magistrate to take a firmer stance against antisemitism when another representative suggested that the City Council should refrain from accusing the consistory of antisemitism until a further investigation had taken place. This led Mayor Voigt to forcefully interject “That the magistrate completely agrees with the City Council that antisemitism must be met with the strongest resistance possible should it appear anywhere in Frankfurt.” The discussion finally ended after the following a statement from Fritz Friedleben, the Speaker of the City Council: “As Herr Justizrat Dr. Gehrke has already said, we have always been proud that there has been a *Burgfrieden* between the different confessions in Frankfurt and that tolerance prevails. In my opinion we are all not only justified, but also required to take a stand should anything damage the religious peace of our *Vaterstadt*.” Many of Friedleben’s colleagues greeted his comments with lively applause and calls of “bravo.”⁴⁵

⁴⁴ IFS Magistratsakten S/422 Band II Lutherische Geistliche, 1902-1928 Bl. 83.

⁴⁵ IFS SD1 175 1918 Bl. 313-317.

The accusations appear to have gotten under Kübel's skin. At the end of April 1918 he published selected excerpts from his sermon in a local church newsletter and stressed that he had also used the sermon to accuse Christians of profiting from the war effort of the Central Powers. Kübel further attempted to exonerate himself by writing about his prior work with Jews in several political and communal organizations and reasoned that "if I were an antisemite, I would not be ashamed to admit to it."⁴⁶

Kübel continued to try to redeem himself in the eyes of the city and its Jewish population throughout the existence of the Weimar Republic. When city officials commissioned him in 1927 to write an essay on local religious life for a promotional volume on the city, Kübel used the occasion to write that "One cannot possibly overrate the importance that Jews have had on the economic, philanthropic, and political life of the city of Frankfurt." Three years later, he took part in an ecumenical event with a rabbi and a Catholic priest that protested against the persecution of religious groups in the Soviet Union.⁴⁷ A decade later, the Gestapo forced Kübel into early retirement at the end of the 1930s because of his contacts with anti-Nazi circles within the dissident Confessing Church.⁴⁸

The quick resolution to the controversy surrounding Kübel's sermon indicates the degree to which antisemitism continued to be politically toxic in Frankfurt during the final months of the German Empire. At a time of heightened political tension and social pressures brought on by constant shortages on the home front, Frankfurt's City Council and Magistrate still managed to take a forceful public stand in the name of defending its Jewish citizens because of its

⁴⁶ IFS Magistratsakten S/422 Band II Bl. 87

⁴⁷ Johannes Kübel, "Religiöses und kirchliches Leben im heutigen Frankfurt," in *Frankfurt. Das Buch der Stadt*, ed. Otto Ruppberg, 211-219 (Frankfurt: A. Schulze & Co., 1927), 217; Kübel, *Erinnerungen*, 108.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 10.

commitment to peaceful relations between the city's three main religious groups. Beyond that, Kübel's extended campaign of contrition reveals that even conservative public figures affiliated with groups like Frankfurt's chapter of the *Vaterlandspartei* were willing to go to great lengths to protect themselves from accusations of antisemitism that could potentially damage their political and social standing in the city. Thus, for a time, even right wing and conservative groups also had to pay homage to the city's prevailing culture of "confessional peace."

"Ostjuden" and the Housing Crisis of 1917-1921

During Frankfurt's housing crisis in the early years of the Weimar Republic, statements about Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe – so-called "*Ostjuden*" – revealed the true limits of the city government and City Council's tolerance for Jews. The city government had long had an ambivalent relationship with this immigrant population that had first begun to arrive in the city during the final decades of the *Kaiserreich*. Officially, Frankfurt followed Prussia's policy of expelling Jewish immigrants who did not have an official work permit. Unofficially, they tolerated the presence of Jewish immigrant workers in spaces such as leather factories during the day so long as their primary residence was not in Frankfurt. In practice, this meant that a sizeable number of Jewish immigrants from the Russian and Habsburg Empires regularly commuted to Frankfurt from the nearby city of Offenbach, which sat just over the border of the state of Hesse-Darmstadt, which had more lenient laws regarding deportations.⁴⁹

The number of Eastern European Jewish immigrants in Frankfurt increased dramatically during the course of the First World War. At first, the German government actively arranged for

⁴⁹ This led to a long exchange of grievances and denials between bureaucrats and police officers in the two cities. At one point in 1909, exasperated officials in Offenbach even asked the Frankfurt police for tips on how to more effectively deport Eastern European Jews living in their city. Stadtarchiv Offenbach (SO) 1094/2 Zuzug und Abzug von Ausländern von und nach Offenbach 1906-09-1911; SO 1094/3 Aufenthalt der Ausländer in Offenbach a.M. 1910 und 1911.

many male and female Jewish workers to come to Frankfurt and work in nearby factories that were contributing to the country's larger war effort. According to the local Jewish press, several Jewish associations affiliated with the *Israelitische Gemeinde* and Chief Rabbi Nehemiah Nobel attended to the immigrant's spiritual and social welfare.⁵⁰ The Russian Revolution and the end of the war brought about a new wave of migration connected to heightened ethnic tension and violence in East Central Europe and the lands of the former Russian Empire.⁵¹ According to the *Frankfurter Israelitisches Familienblatt*, at least 1,000 refugees, many of which were men aged 17 to 25 who wanted to avoid conscription in the Polish army, came to Frankfurt following the armistice in November 1918. Several historians have claimed that anywhere between 5,000 and 10,000 Ostjuden came to Frankfurt in the aftermath of the war. Official records show that at least 5,753 remained there as of 1925, accounting for almost one-fifth of the city's Jewish population.⁵²

The increased migration of “*Ostjuden*” took place against the backdrop of a severe housing crisis in the city. Before July 1914, the city government and several small housing associations had managed to create an average of two thousand new apartment units per year. This came to a grinding halt when the German War Ministry issued a resolution in 1916 that

⁵⁰ “Frankfurter Berichte. Kleine Notizen,” *Frankfurter Israelitisches Familienblatt*, October 12, 1917. More information on Eastern European Jewish laborers in Germany during this period can be found in Ludger Heid, *Maloche – nicht Mildtätigkeit: ostjüdische Arbeiter in Deutschland 1914-1923* (New York: Georg Olms Verlag, 1995); Zosa Sjakowski, “East European Jewish Workers in Germany During World War I,” in *Salo Wittmayer Baron Jubilee Volume on the Occasion of his Eightieth Birthday*, vol. 2, ed. American Academy for Jewish Research, 887-918 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1974).

⁵¹ More information on anti-Jewish violence in East Central Europe following the end of World War I can be found in Ezra Mendelsohn, *The Jews of East Central Europe Between the World Wars* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1983); Oleg Budnitskii, *Russian Jews Between the Reds and the Whites, 1917-1920*, translated by Timothy J. Portice (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012).

⁵² By comparison, official records show that 3,451 Ostjuden lived in Frankfurt in 1910. “Die Ostjuden in Frankfurt,” *Frankfurter Israelitisches Familienblatt*, April 16, 1920; Paul Arnsberg, *Geschichte der Frankfurter Juden*, 906; Heuberger and Krohn, *Hinaus*, 135.

banned the construction of any buildings that did not have a military or industrial purpose. By December 1917, less than two percent of the city's 76,000 small apartments were vacant and habitable for new tenants. The problem only grew worse after the war when Frankfurt became a magnet for German refugees from Alsace-Lorraine and occupied western cities such as Aachen, Cologne, Koblenz, Mainz, and Wiesbaden. Faced with this crisis, officials at the city's Housing Bureau started searching for dramatic solutions and even considered following the example of Berlin city officials who had attempted to expel new residents who had not been registered at their current domicile before the outbreak of the war. Under the leadership of Ludwig Landmann, who was still a City Councilor, the municipal government eventually decided to set up emergency rooms in former army barracks and issued an order calling on property owners to report any of their empty rooms and to convert attics into new apartments.⁵³

Over time, right-wing groups attempted to place the blame for the housing crisis on Eastern European Jewish refugees who had recently arrived in the city as well as segments of the city's Sinti and Roma population. In September 1919, the local chapter of the right-wing *Deutschvölkischer Bund* distributed pamphlets saying that the city was "positively swarming with Polish and Galician Jews and Gypsies" who, in addition to having well established criminal records, had unfairly occupied apartments that should be given to returning German prisoners of war. The pamphlet closed with a call for "the honorable City council to immediately pass a decree banning all Jewish immigrants and other dubious elements from eastern countries that entered during the war from remaining in the city."⁵⁴ The pamphlet soon became the basis for a

⁵³ I have first-hand experience of the afterlife of the city's order to create attic apartments. While conducting research for this dissertation, my wife and I spent seven months living in one of these "*Dachwohnungen*" – a small, sixth-floor walk-up apartment in a building on *Heinestraße*. IFS Magistratsakten 796 Bd. 4; IFS Wohnungsamt 892 Erteilung der Zuzugs u. Aufenthalts Genehmigung Abgabe von Lebensmittelkarten 1919-1926 Bl. 1-2.

⁵⁴ IFS Stadtverordnetenversammlung 1.583 Aufenthaltsbeschränkung für Ausländer.

heated debate in the City Council when Julius Schellin, a member of the right-wing DNVP quoted the pamphlet and put forward a resolution requiring the city to prevent the further influx of Russian, Polish and Galicians immigrants “that already act as bloodsuckers on the body of the *Volk (Völkskörper)*.” Anna Schultz, a representative from the German Democratic Party (DDP), immediately earned loud applause from the center and left of the chamber when she chastised Schellin for his offensive comments that were clearly directed at Frankfurt’s Jewish population. Schultz won further approbation from her colleagues when she bluntly stated that, “We know no Jews, we know no Christians, we only know people, and we demand that these people be assessed as such and not because of their religion... There is no place for antisemitism here in Frankfurt and in Germany.” Other representatives from the DDP, the Social Democratic Party (SPD), and the Independent Social Democratic Party (USPD) also came forward to condemn Schellin. It is telling that no other representatives attempted to aid him during the same debate. Finally, speaking on behalf of the magistrate, Mayor Voigt said that the city government would also refuse to take up the *Deutschvölkischer Bund*’s “indecent” proposal.⁵⁵

Behind the scenes, however, the city police and representatives of moderate political parties were growing increasingly leery of the continued presence and immigration of large numbers of *Ostjuden*. At the start of December 1919, a City Council representative from the Catholic Center Party, started spreading a rumor that the arrival of at least 2,000 “Galicians” to Frankfurt during the last two weeks of November would further exacerbate the city’s housing shortage. Although the representative did not specifically talk about the religious identity of this

⁵⁵ It bears mentioning that none of the members of the City Council condemned the pamphlet for targeting Sinti and Roma. *Bericht über die Verhandlungen der Stadtverordneten-Versammlung der Stadt Frankfurt a.M. nach stenographischer Aufnahme. Zweiundfünfzigster Band 1919*, ed. Kanzlei der Stadtverordneten-Versammlung (Frankfurt: Rupert Baumbach, 1920), 1461-1464; “Eine Antisemitische Debatte im Stadtparlament,” *Frankfurter Israelitisches Familienblatt*, October 3, 1919.

group, most readers would have understood that the phrase “Galicians” meant Jews.⁵⁶ More troublingly, Frankfurt’s Chief of Police began to blame the local Jewish community and national Jewish organizations for encouraging the unabated migration of Jews from Eastern Europe. In a letter to state-level authorities in Kassel, he wrote that the city continued to be overrun with:

Galician and Polish Jews, who use the good will of their wealthy, local coreligionists to come to Frankfurt in order to freeload or to peddle, buying and selling rags, bones, bottles, and similar items... Whole streets in the old city are populated by foreign Jews who live in tight quarters under the poorest of living conditions and serve as the epicenter for contagious diseases and epidemics. In many ways the Jewish Welfare Organizations are to blame for the strong influx of these foreign Jews.... It is [also] a well-known fact that the Jews have a preference for employing their own people. This means that many Jewish businessmen have employed foreign Jews without thinking about the present unemployment of local workers.⁵⁷

Rather than objecting to the antisemitic implications of this letter, a representative of the Frankfurt Magistrate informed the Prussian Interior Ministry in February 1920 that the city agreed with the Chief of Police’s assessment of the situation. The representative added that even though many of these Jews were refugees who had a right to be protected by the city government, the city had already fulfilled its duty by taking in more than one thousand of them. Another contemporaneous report from Ludwig Landmann’s Housing Bureau repeated many of the Police Chief’s claims about Eastern European Jews forming a large contingent of smugglers in the city and warned that their malfeasance “significantly contributes to the general dip in public morale” and would inevitably lead to an “intensification of antisemitism.”⁵⁸

This high level of tension regarding both the *Ostjuden* and the housing crisis slowly dissipated during the next two years. Working with private American and German donors as well

⁵⁶ “Gegen den Zuzug von Ausländern,” *General-Anzeiger*, December 2, 1919.

⁵⁷ IFS Wohnungsamt 892 Erteilung der Zuzugs u. Aufenthalts Genehmigung Abgabe von Lebensmittelkarten 1919-1926 Bl. 153-157.

⁵⁸ IFS Magistratsakten R/1.376 Zuzug von Ostjuden; IFS Wohnungsamt 892 Erteilung der Zuzugs u. Aufenthalts Genehmigung Abgabe von Lebensmittelkarten 1919-1926 Bl. 166-69.

as the city Housing Bureau, the IG established an Advice Center for Eastern Jewish Refugees that helped over 1,000 Eastern European Jews to achieve visas for foreign countries or residence permits to legally live in other German cities. By the end of 1921, even the local Jewish press could approvingly say that the “Advice Center is the reason that the streets of Frankfurt have been cleaned of refugees that are unemployed bums (*unbeschäftigten herumlungernenden Flüchtlingen*).”⁵⁹ During the remainder of the Weimar Republic, Frankfurt’s Eastern European Jews reemerged only one more time as a topic of debate in the City Council in 1925, when the Nazi City Council member Jakob Sprenger proposed expelling Eastern European Jews to Poland in retaliation for Poland’s recent decision to expel ethnic Germans. The motion was effectively dead upon arrival after several members of moderate and leftist parties dismissed Sprenger’s suggestion as a frivolous and unnecessary piece of invective at a moment when reconciliation between different people and religions was of utmost importance.⁶⁰

While the housing crisis of the early Weimar Republic clearly reveals the city government’s generally negative view toward newly arrived Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe, the public actions of the Magistrate and the City Council reveal a continued commitment to maintaining “confessional peace” in Frankfurt. Members of the City Council quickly rejected attempts to politicize the presence of this population, demonstrating a continued commitment to condemn political antisemitism. Unsurprisingly, no political group other than the Nazis would ever attempt to mobilize electoral support by targeting this group during this period and questions related to illegal Jewish immigration essentially disappeared from political debates after the city’s housing market began to stabilize in the early 1920s. Additionally, the

⁵⁹ Ibid., Bl. 200-201; “Beratungstelle für ostjüdische Flüchtlinge,” *Frankfurter Israelitisches Familienblatt*, November 3, 1921.

⁶⁰ IFS Stadtverordnetenversammlung 1.583 Aufenthaltsbeschränkung für Ausländer.

magistrate's call for stricter immigration laws and housing rules was due to their fear that the presence of Eastern "*Schnorrers*" could unleash a larger wave of antisemitism that would target the city's German Jewish population. Thus, even though members of the Magistrate and city police accused the local Jewish population of enabling illegal immigration and employment practices that took jobs away from German citizens, their attitudes toward Eastern European Jewish immigrants was informed by their desire to keep "confessional peace" alive.

The *Katharinenkirche* Controversy, 1923

Antisemitism briefly resurfaced in Frankfurt politics at the height of twin national crises during the summer of 1923: the French occupation of the Ruhr region and Germany's runaway hyperinflation. A new controversy developed out of a pre-existing quarrel between the local Lutheran Church and the city Magistrate over the latter's plan to build a row of stores in front of the *Katharinenkirche*, a historic Church located at the heart of the *Zeil*, Frankfurt's main shopping thoroughfare.⁶¹ The Magistrate's plan was not without precedent: a number of stores had once stood directly in front of the side of the Church that faced the *Zeil*. They were removed in 1908 because of the city government's ongoing efforts to alter pedestrian and tram traffic in the center of the city. Back then, the municipal government had abandoned plans to rebuild these stores after prominent voices in the press claimed that any new construction would mar the view of a building "[whose] serious, austere walls fit in harmoniously with the modern image of the square."⁶²

⁶¹ The church was officially consecrated on February 20, 1681. Willy Veit, *Die St. Katharinenkirche zu Frankfurt a. Main ein Denkmal des deutschen Protestantismus des 17. Jahrhunderts* (Frankfurt: Ludwig Baum, 1931), 26. Newspaper articles, government documents, and other publications from this period alternatively refer to the church as "*Katharinenkirche*" or "*Catharinenkirche*." I use the former in the text because it is has become the standard present-day spelling.

⁶² IFS Magistratsakten S/455 Catharinenkirche Bl. 32, 71, 73, 75-78; IFS Magistratsakten T/1153 Platz vor der Catharinenkirche an der Zeil 1870- Bl. 101-102; "Gegen die Anbauten an der Katharinenkirche," *General Anzeiger*, September 2, 1909.

The city government returned to the idea of building and leasing stores in front of the *Katharinenkirche* in 1921. Representatives of the city's construction bureau said a new set of stores would be a vital part of ongoing efforts to stimulate Frankfurt's economy that had begun after the end of the First World War. In an attempt to preempt complaints that their plan would make the square in front of the church uglier, the same officials wrote that their plan would allow for the creation of tastefully designed structures that would "elevate and enrich" the aesthetic charms of both the church and the *Zeil*.

At first, the local press voiced their approval of the plan. One article in the *Frankfurter Nachrichten*, a newspaper associated with the conservative DVP, even argued that the city had erred in not rebuilding the shops before the First World War.⁶³ However, a few days later, the same newspaper published an opinion piece in which the rector of the *Katharinenkirche* said that the construction of new stores would have a detrimental effect on both the square and the function of the church. Despite the church community's objections, the Magistrate officially approved a plan to build stores in September 1921. In an attempt to quell further opposition from other Lutheran officials, the City Council assented to the plan under the condition that the Magistrate would ensure that any future stores would not impinge upon "the Church-like character of the area."⁶⁴

Their effort at reconciliation failed to mollify the church's parishioners, who continued to more vocally and vehemently oppose the construction of the stores. Few politicians appeared willing to change their position, as the cash-strapped city government had received approximately 160 applications from businesses that wanted to occupy the future stores.

⁶³ IFS Magistratsakten T/1153 Platz vor der Catharinenkirche an der Zeil 1870- Bl. 90-92, 95.

⁶⁴ Pfr. Lic. Dr. Dr. Schwarzlose, "Anbauten an die Katharinenkirche," *Frankfurter Nachrichten*, June 30, 1921; IFS Magistratsakten T/1153 Platz vor der Catharinenkirche an der Zeil 1870- Bl 103-104.

Speaking in front of the City Council, Rudolf Lion of the DVP, accused the rector of the *Katharinenkirche* of holding antiquated beliefs about the separation of commercial and sacred space and pointed out that stores could be found outside of prominent cathedrals and churches in other German cities such as Ulm.⁶⁵ Representatives of the city Magistrate informed the provincial government in Wiesbaden that there was little merit to the church's claim that the stores would worsen foot traffic on the *Zeil* and stressed that the stores would not even be open when most parishioners attended services on holidays and Sundays.⁶⁶

The controversy over the shops reached a fever pitch and veered into the realm of antisemitism in the summer of 1923, after the magistrate voted 10 to 9 to rent the planned stores in front of the church to two prominent Jewish-owned businesses: Café Goldschmidt and the department store *Gebrüder Robinsohn*.⁶⁷ In early June, the leadership of the local Lutheran Church released the following plea to the city council:

Renting the planned storefronts in front of the St. Katharinenkirche for the sale of cigarettes etc. and for the presentation of articles of clothing would profane one of the oldest and most venerable houses of worship in our city. We protest this attack on the religious worth of a place of worship and ask in the last hour that all parties involved to refrain from a plan that would wound the religious sentiments of a large portion of our population and that threatens to disrupt the confessional peace in our city.⁶⁸

⁶⁵ IFS Stadtverordneten-Versammlung 1.040 "Die Katharinenkirche" 1871 Aug 9 – 1931 Febr. 26; *Bericht über die Verhandlungen der Stadtverordneten-Versammlung der Stadt Frankfurt a.M. Vierundfünfzigster Band 1921*, published by Kanzlei of the Stadtverordneten-Versammlung (Frankfurt: Rupert Baumbach, 1922), 602-603.

⁶⁶ To this day, most shops and other commercial enterprises in Germany are closed on Sundays and holidays. IFS Magistratsakten T/1153 Platz vor der Catharinenkirche an der Zeil 1870- Bl 121-129.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, Bl. 139-140.

⁶⁸ "Die Ladenbauten an der Katharinenkirche. Ein Protest der evangelischen Einwohnerschaft," *Frankfurter Volkszeitung*, June 16, 1923.

The local chapter of the SPD thought they could smell a rat. In a strongly worded editorial, their local newspaper, the *Volksstimme*, said that it was no coincidence that the Church had decided to intensify their protests once it was announced that the stores would be run by Jews.⁶⁹

The controversy continued to grow after the DNVP City Council member Julius Schellin, who had previously made inflammatory comments about Eastern European Jewish immigrants in 1919, requested that the Magistrate provide an official explanation for its decision to build the stores despite the opposition of the local Church community.⁷⁰ Ironically, Schellin's efforts during a meeting of the City Council to dispel any accusations that antisemitism had played a role in his and the Lutheran Church's recent actions proved that this was indeed the case. Speaking in front of the City Council, Schellin pointedly argued that the sale of the stores to Jewish businesses had exacerbated the local Protestant community's sense of marginalization. This unleashed a raucous round of heckling and shouts in which other politicians pointed out the irony that Schellin and the Lutheran community were in fact responsible for disturbing the "peace within the population." Schellin attempted to reject these accusations of antisemitism by accusing his colleagues of engaging in "unparalleled slander" and expounding on the longer history of the Lutheran community's opposition to rebuilding stores in front of the church. Unsurprisingly, Schellin's last comments were unsatisfactory to his colleagues from the SPD and USPD, and the meeting closed with a strong round of condemnations of antisemitism from representatives including City Council Speaker Leonhard Heißwolf.⁷¹

⁶⁹ IFS Magistratsakten T/1153 Platz vor der Catharinenkirche an der Zeil 1870- Bl 140.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 145.

⁷¹ IFS Stadtverordneten-Versammlung 1.040 "Die Katharinenkirche" 1871 Aug 9 – 1931 Febr. 26.

The controversy came to a close a few days later when, according to the *Frankfurter Nachrichten*, the owners of Café Goldschmidt and *Gebrüder Robinsohn* met with representatives of the Lutheran Church and the city government. By the end of the meeting, the different parties agreed that the city would no longer build new stores in front of the *Katharinenkirche* in order to preserve the “confessional peace.”⁷² In a parting shot, the Magistrate quickly passed a resolution in which they argued that their initial plans would have still respected the character of the church.⁷³

What does the *Katharinenkirche* controversy reveal about possible shifts in the city government’s approach to handling antisemitism and the status of Jews’ political integration of in Frankfurt during one of the worst years of the Weimar Republic? First, it is important to remember that before taking on an antisemitic tinge, this controversy was born out of two years of intense bickering and ongoing tension between the city Magistrate and the local Lutheran church. While it appears that the Lutheran Church managed to most effectively mobilize against this plan by voicing their outrage at what they framed as a Jewish encroachment on sacred Christian space, representatives of the Church and politicians such as Schellin still went to great lengths to defend themselves against the charge that they were intentionally drumming up antisemitism. Instead, they argued that they were following a longer tradition of policy choices that would maintain peaceful relations between different religious groups in the city. It appears that antisemitism continued to be a greater liability than an asset in Frankfurt’s political sphere. Moreover, the comments of the Lutheran Church and representatives from politicians on the right, left, and center demonstrates that Frankfurt’s government and public sphere were still very

⁷² “Magistrat und Katharinenengemeinde,” *Frankfurter Nachrichten*, June 17, 1923.

⁷³ “Kommandiert Herr Schellin den Magistrat,” *Volksstimme*, June 18, 1923; IFS Magistratsakten T/1153 Platz vor der Catharinenkirche an der Zeil 1870- Bl 143.

much committed to developing policies and acting in a manner that would promote “confessional peace.” After all, the final resolution of the conflict depended upon a triangular dialogue in good faith between the Magistrate, the Lutheran Church, and Jewish businessmen. Finally, the Magistrate’s decision to swiftly minimize a controversy that could have engendered more antisemitism echoes their earlier effort to prevent a similar kind of fallout related to the migration of Eastern European Jews to the city in the immediate aftermath of World War I.

Controversy Averted: The New Jewish Cemetery, 1925-1929

The creation of a new Jewish cemetery in Frankfurt during the latter half of the 1920s is a prime example of the city government’s continued commitment to maintaining cordial cooperation with the *Israelitische Gemeinde*, during the “golden years” of the Weimar Republic. The lack of any controversy stemming from an instance in which public space transformed into Jewish space also serves as a compelling counterpoint to the public imbroglio surrounding the aborted plan to open Jewish-owned stores in front of the *Katharinenkirche* in 1923.

Representatives of the city Magistrate and the leadership of the IG had engaged in an ongoing dialogue about plans for building a new Jewish cemetery since well before the start of the First World War. Before 1828, countless generations of Frankfurt’s Jews had been buried in a cramped medieval cemetery adjacent to the *Judengasse*. The Frankfurt Senate first allowed Jews to open a cemetery beyond the confines of the Jewish ghetto in 1828, on a plot of land on *Rat-Beil-Straße* that directly abutted the city’s newly opened main cemetery.⁷⁴ The burial plots in the IG’s new cemetery filled up at a rapid rate, reflecting the growth of the city’s Jewish population as well as growing aversion towards prior practices of reusing burial plots when the

⁷⁴ IFS Ortsgeschichte S3/E 8.207 Jüdischer Friedhof Battonstraße; IFS Ortsgeschichte S3/E 8.206 Alter Jüdischer Friedhof; Willy Wolff, “Der Neue Gemeinde Friedhof,” *Gemeindeblatt der Israelitischen Gemeinde Frankfurt am Main*, June 10, 1925.

city's Jews were still restricted to living on the *Judengasse*. By 1908, the board of the IG had started a dialogue with the magistrate about buying land that would expand the present size of their newer cemetery. In February 1915, after several years of on and off negotiations, the magistrate informed the City Council of their decision to sell the IG a large parcel of municipal land adjacent to the Jewish and main city cemeteries.⁷⁵

Officials within the city government began to second-guess this transaction during the middle of the 1920s. In one letter, an official from the city's Office of Civil Engineering (*Tiefbauamt*) warned the city Magistrate that the expansion of the Jewish cemetery onto the land sold to the IG would negatively impact the city's and private developers' plans to create nearby housing projects. According to this official, the city ran the risk of creating a "cemetery district" that few Frankfurters would want to move to and stressed that Jewish ritual law would prevent them from ever being "used for other purposes, in contrast to other cemeteries that can be closed as needed and...turned into public parks." Because the IG was predicting that their cemetery on *Rat-Beil-Straße* would reach full capacity by March 1935, the official closed their letter by asking the Magistrate to undertake a new round of negotiations with the IG and suggested that the city might be wise to offer them a larger piece of land connected to another municipal cemetery in the northwestern district of Rödelheim. Although the city would likely have to spend money on a new bus line that would shuttle Jews from a local train station to the location of this new cemetery, the official believed it was a better option for the future development of the city.⁷⁶

The Magistrate quickly adopted the official's position and informed the board of the IG that they now opposed the planned cemetery expansion because the land needed to be used for

⁷⁵ IFS Magistratsakten S/576 Friedhofs- und Begräbniswesen der israelitischen Gemeinde 1882-1929 Bl. 19-20, 44.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, Bl 63-65.

creating new housing developments. They also wrote that the city did not want to “strengthen or lengthen the detrimental psychological influence” that the Jewish and municipal cemeteries already had on current residents of the surrounding neighborhood. Far from being outraged, the leaders of the cash-strapped IG, who had already contacted the city about their need for additional funds to build the new cemetery, decided to seize the moment and asked for a sizeable long-term loan with generous terms that would allow them to build it. The Magistrate agreed and, after further negotiations, eventually offered the IG a piece of land directly north of the main city cemetery and said that they would build a path that would directly connect it to the main municipal cemetery.⁷⁷

But the city was not out of the woods yet, as the Magistrate had overlooked the fact that the parcel of land being offered to IG had already been leased to a local gardeners’ association until 1929. In a series of letters to Mayor Ludwig Landmann, members of the association bitterly complained that it would be “better for the image of the city to build a new cemetery outside of the city, rather than forcing hundreds of gardeners to travel further kilometers” outside the center of the town and demanded financial compensation. Although this set off a new round of negotiations, the Magistrate and IG decided to split the bill on a compensation fund for the gardeners’ association, who would also be provided with a new plot of municipal land. The City Council voted to approve the plan at the end of June 1926 and the new Jewish cemetery officially opened on 8 September 1929.⁷⁸

While the creation of the new Jewish cemetery may appear to be little more than a small incident of bureaucratic incompetence, it is important precisely because it did not turn into a

⁷⁷ Ibid., B1 55, 58-59.60-62, 71-72, 80-81, 98.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 93-97, 107-111, 113, 192, 148; “Eröffnung des neuen Friedhofs,” *Gemeindeblatt der Israelitischen Gemeinde Frankfurt am Main*, June 1929.

large-scale controversy about the creation of a new Jewish space in Frankfurt. Despite their concern for optimizing housing developments, the city Magistrate always made sure that it engaged in a respectful dialogue with the IG, ultimately offering them a prominent piece of land that was previously earmarked to become an extension of the main municipal cemetery.⁷⁹ Unlike the campaign to prevent stores from being built in front of the *Katharinenkirche*, community organizations like the gardeners' association never resorted to antisemitism in their effort to mobilize their opposition to city policy. This shows that political antisemitism continued to be either largely absent or ineffective within Frankfurt politics during the second half of the 1920s. It also suggests that relations between the city's different confessional groups had once again become stable after earlier flare ups in the aftermath of the war and at the height of Germany's hyperinflation.

A Shift in Frankfurt Politics and No Confidence Votes: 1928-1932

Much like the German Reichstag, Frankfurt's municipal government became increasingly fractious and chaotic during the final years of the 1920s. This was primarily the result of the erosion of the city's long-standing liberal hegemony and a major breakdown of interparty cooperation in the City Council. On the left, the KPD and SPD fractions in the City Council began to drift further apart over the former's opposition to the policies of the Magistrate. and In 1928, Frankfurt's classic "Weimar Coalition" of the DDP, the SPD, and the Catholic Center Party lost their absolute majority in the City Council. Concurrently, the fractions of moderate and extreme right parties – the DVP, the DNVP, the Economic Party, and the Nazi Party – banded together to oppose to the policies of Mayor Ludwig Landmann and the other members of the moderate-liberal city magistrate. Soon, it was not uncommon for representatives of these parties

⁷⁹ IFS Magistratsakten S/576 Friedhofs- und Begräbniswesen der israelitischen Gemeinde 1882-1929 Bl 93.

to hold joint demonstrations to protest against what they derogatorily referred to as the “Landmann system.”⁸⁰ As a result of these combined factors, Frankfurt’s magistrate and City Council rapidly lost their ability to effectively govern the city.⁸¹

Nevertheless, the Nazi Party had only limited success in Frankfurt’s municipal politics before 1933. A local cell of the party had first formed in 1922. As of 1924, the primary leaders of this cell were the postal worker Jakob Sprenger and the jurist Friedrich Krebs, who would respectively go on to serve as the *Gauleiter* and mayor of the city under the Third Reich.⁸² During that same year they managed to enter the City Council for the first time after winning 5.5% of votes in the May elections of 1924. Their share of the local vote decreased by one percent in the 1928 elections that followed Frankfurt’s incorporation of several surrounding municipalities.⁸³ A year later, the party won 9.9% of the popular vote in municipal elections. Although this meant that they held only nine out of eighty-five seats in the City Council, the Nazi delegation quickly discovered that they could use the mechanisms of parliamentary debate to further their campaign of political agitation and by depicting the Magistrate as fundamentally out of touch with the needs and desires of the city’s population.⁸⁴

⁸⁰ Barbara Köhler “Die Nationalsozialisten,” 460-61.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 446, 451.

⁸² Ironically, the early meetings of the party took place near the heart of Jewish life in *Ostend* establishments located on *Lange Straße* and *Börnstraße*. Adalbart Gimbel and Karl Hepp, *So kämpften wir! Schilderungen aus der Kampfzeit der NSDAP im Gau Hessen-Nassau* (Frankfurt: NS-Verlagsgesellschaft, 1941), 12-13, 17.

⁸³ Köhler, “Nationalsozialisten, 483. The Frankfurt chapter of the NSDAP also did poorly in the 1928 elections for the Reichstag and the Prussian Landtag, respectively winning 4.5% and 4.4% of votes in the city. *Statistische Jahresübersichten der Stadt Frankfurt a. Main: Ausgabe für das Jahr 1928/29, Zweites Ergänzungsheft zum Statistischen Handbuch der Stadt Frankfurt A. Main II. Ausgabe*, ed. by Statistisches Amt (Frankfurt: Statistisches Amt, 1930), 159-160.

⁸⁴ Köhler, “Nationalsozialisten,” 441-442, 483.

Throughout the remainder of the Weimar Republic, the Nazis and other opposition parties tried and failed on several occasions to pass no confidence votes against Mayor Landmann and three Jewish members of the city Magistrate. Shortly after the 1929 election, DVP representative Richard Merton – the scion of the powerful industrialist, philanthropist, and Jewish-convert Wilhelm Merton – decided to capitalize on the momentum of a potential anti-Landmann coalition by putting forward a vote of no confidence in the mayor and his treasurer, Bruno Asch. The vote failed because the KPD refused to vote for any motion of no confidence that did not call for the instant removal of the mayor and all of the permanent counselors working for the Magistrate.⁸⁵ Three months later, the Nazis requested another vote of no confidence that would call for the immediate resignation of the triumvirate behind the “New Frankfurt”: Landmann, Asch, and the city architect Ernst May. In a bizarre move, the KPD decided to throw its support behind the Nazis’ resolution because they believed that Landmann and Asch represented the interests of the bourgeoisie and the massive IG Farben chemical concern. Once again, the no confidence vote failed.⁸⁶

The DVP, NSDAP, and KPD put forward individual motions for yet another vote of no confidence when the City Council met on 9 December 1930. This time, all three groups said that Landmann had lost the confidence of the City Council due to problems related to the city budget and welfare politics in Frankfurt. The chamber eventually decided to vote on the DVP resolution after members of the fractions of the DDP, Center Party, SPD, and the Employees’ Party (*Arbeiternehmergruppe*) refused to even consider the Nazis’ motion. The third time was the

⁸⁵ Michael Habersack, “Landmann,” 192; Rebentisch, *Landmann*, 260.

⁸⁶ Habersack, “Landmann,” 192; *Bericht über die Verhandlungen der Stadtverordneten-Versammlung der Stadt Frankfurt am Main nach stenographischer Aufnahme. Zweiundsechzigster Band 1929*, ed. Büro der Stadtverordneten-Versammlung (Frankfurt: Rupert Baumbach, 1930), 143-150.

charm for the anti-Landmann opposition, which passed the DVP's no confidence resolution by a majority of one vote. In practice, however, their success meant nothing because the resolution was non-binding and the city constitution guaranteed Landmann the right to remain in his position until the formal end of his contract with the city in 1936.⁸⁷

Around the same time, the Nazis decided to put forward a no confidence resolution targeting Max Michel, another Jewish member of the city Magistrate. Michel was the son of a teacher at the *Philanthropin*, a well-regarded Jewish *Gymnasium*, and had been member of the city's civil service since the summer of 1914. In October 1927, he was elected to a twelve-year term on the Magistrate thanks to the support of the local SPD and the Center Party. Michel spent the majority of his time on the Magistrate as the city's Councilor for Cultural Affairs, a position from which he supervised Frankfurt's Municipal Theater and Operahouse.⁸⁸

Michel entered the crosshairs of Frankfurt's Nazis because he helped facilitate an early performance of Kurt Weill and Bertolt Brecht's satirical opera *Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny* at the opera house in October 1930. Shortly thereafter, the Nazi faction in the City Council filed a resolution saying that they had lost confidence in Michel's ability to serve in his position because the opera had offended "the German and Christian sensibilities of Frankfurt's population."⁸⁹ In contrast to the many votes targeting Landmann and his close associates, the Nazis found no support in the City Council for their attack on Michel during a meeting in

⁸⁷ Rebentisch, *Landmann*, 260-263; *Bericht über die Verhandlungen der Stadtverordneten-Versammlung der Stadt Frankfurt am Main nach stenographischer Aufnahme. Dreiundsechzigster Band 1930* (Frankfurt: Rupert Baumbach, 1930), 1183-4, 1198, 1201.

⁸⁸ Michael Bermejo, *Die Opfer der Diktatur. Frankfurter Stadtverordnete und Magistratsmitglieder als Verfolgte des NS-Staates* (Frankfurt: Waldemar Kramer, 2006), 262-69; Heuberger and Krohn, *Aus dem Ghetto*, 151-152; IFS Personalakten 65.183 – Max Michel Bl. 3-4, 43, 48, 50, 57-58; "Die kommenden neuen Stadträte," *General-Anzeiger*, September 20, 1927; "Die Ergänzung des Magistrats," *Frankfurter Nachrichten*, November 21, 1927; "Die kommenden neuen Stadträte," *General-Anzeiger*, September 20, 1927.

⁸⁹ IFS Personalakten 65.101 – Stadtrat Max Michel 1927-1931 Bl. 13-14.

January 1931. The Jewish SPD City Council member Walter Loeb declared that the opera was no more morally depraved than a generic work of Shakespeare. When members of the Nazi fraction interrupted him with antisemitic taunts about his physical appearance, Loeb confidently responded:

You are very right, good sir, to point out my crooked nose to me. My dear colleague, if you had a crooked nose than you would actually have intelligence in your brain; right now you have neither and thus you are annoying... Dear friend, things would be going better for you if you actually understood “Jewish distortions.”... Yes, maybe you could learn something from me!⁹⁰

Even Konrad Lang, the head of the KPD fraction and a fierce opponent of Landmann, stood up for Michel by claiming that the Nazis must have found the opera to be immoral because their own twisted moral compass neglected the dangers of unbridled capitalism. Ultimately, the City Council declined to vote on the manner.

Despite the fact that these repeated resolutions targeted Jewish members of the city government, none of them explicitly said that Michel, Landmann, and May’s Jewish backgrounds affected their ability to hold office. Even if Nazi members of the City Council felt emboldened enough to openly use antisemitic invective in the *Römerberg*, Frankfurt’s town hall, it did not help them to build common cause with other parties and none of their own of no confidence resolutions were ever passed. The fact that other parties pursued their own attacks on Landmann, Asch, and May should be seen more as a sign of fractious politics, rather than as any referendum on the continued presence of Jews in positions of power in Frankfurt. These votes also reveal the continued resilience of Jewish politicians in the face of increasing Nazi harassment in the city’s political sphere. Indeed, Walter Loeb’s aforementioned statement

⁹⁰ Ibid., Bl. 59-60.

suggests an eagerness on the part of some Jewish politicians to unflinchingly challenge the Nazis at their own games within the confines of parliamentary debates.

The Börne Memorial Incident, 1931-1932

An incident involving a statue of the German Jewish writer Ludwig Börne in December 1931 shows how financial crises and a lack of consensus impeded the ability of Frankfurt's government to more effectively fight antisemitism during the twilight of the Weimar Republic. The statue, which was located on the *Bockenheimer Anlage* section of the park ring surrounding the center of the city, was first erected in 1877, forty years after Börne's death in Paris.⁹¹ In late 1931, a group of unknown hooligans defaced the statue by breaking off its nose, a clear reference to Börne's Jewish origins.⁹² The action incensed the local chapter of the Defense League of German Writers. In a letter to the Magistrate they wrote that, "By erecting the memorial for Ludwig Börne, the city of Frankfurt committed itself to honorably preserving the memory of an outstanding hometown son," and asked how the city planned to fix the memorial. A month later, Stadtrat Reinhold Niemeyer, the head of the Magistrate's Office for Science, Art, and Public Education, replied that the damage to the statue was so severe that the entire memorial would need to be recast before returning to its pedestal on the park ring. Given the high cost of this action, Niemeyer asked if the Defense League would be willing to raise the necessary funds to help the city pay for this. The Defense League rejected this suggestion and subsequently asked

⁹¹ Like Heine, Börne had a complicated and often ambivalent relationship with Judaism. Shortly before his conversion to Lutheranism in 1818, he formally asked the city government if he could change his surname from Baruch to Börne because he wanted to write and publish his literary and political works "in a way which would make my religious affiliation unrecognizable, a fact [which has been] standing in the way of my public relying on my writing." Quoted in Gilman, *Jewish Self-Hatred*, 155.

⁹²Wird die Börnestraße in Frankfurt umbenannt?," *Centralverein Zeitung*, October 18, 1934; "Was wird mit Börnes Nase? Der Magistrat hat kein Geld für die notwendige Operation," *Volksstimme*, February 16, 1932.

the Magistrate to return to the damaged statue to its pedestal and place next to it a sign declaring that the statue had been damaged by “unknown evildoers.”⁹³

When the Magistrate did not reply quickly enough, the Defense Leagues decided to redouble their campaign by working with the local press. On 16 February 1932, the *Volksstimme* and the *Frankfurter Zeitung* both ran articles that contained quotes from the letter exchange between the Magistrate and the Defense League. Both newspapers supported the Defense League’s suggestion to return the statue to its pedestal. Openly speculating about who the vandals were, the *Volksstimme* said that the city should add a placket about this incident of “national artistic defilement” that would read: “Damaged and besmirched by the pupils of Adolf Hitler, Professor of Applied Pedagogy: Germany awake!”⁹⁴ Nevertheless, the Magistrate felt little pressure to answer these calls for action from the moderate and socialist left. In March, Niemayer suggested that the city’s best option would be to call on unemployed artists to submit drafts to a contest for building a new statue of Börne. Nine months later, no progress had been made and the city government had effectively been bankrupt since November 1932.⁹⁵ An internal memo from the Office for Science, Art, and Public Education on 7 December 1932 said the city did not have enough money to fix or replace the statue and advised against working with the IG to erect a cheaper copy of the original statue that could easily be damaged. The pedestal of the statue was removed shortly after the Nazi Party took control of the city in March 1933. A new Börne memorial would not be erected until 1958. Thus, at the end of the Weimar Republic, the

⁹³ IFS Magistratsakten 2.293 Bördedenkmal B1 1-4, 8.

⁹⁴ “Die Nase Börnes und die Frankfurter Schriftsteller,” *Frankfurter Zeitung*, February 16, 1932; “Was wird mit Börnes Nase? Der Magistrat hat kein Geld für die notwendige Operation,” *Volksstimme*, February 16, 1932.

⁹⁵ Schmid and Schmid, *stürmischer Zeit*, 157.

financial woes of Frankfurt's municipal government had significantly decreased its ability to take a militant stance against public manifestations of antisemitism.⁹⁶

The End of Political Integration in Frankfurt

By the summer of 1932 it appeared that the forces of liberalism and social democracy were fast on the wane in Frankfurt. Adolf Hitler had already won 31.3% of local votes cast in the presidential elections of March and July. During the latter month, the Nazi Party had also won 38.71% of the city's votes for the Reichstag. This was a staggering achievement for a political party that had won less than five percent of the vote as recently as the national elections of May 1928. Although the Nazis' numbers briefly dropped down to 35.16% of the vote in November 1932, they pulled in a staggering 44.13% of votes in the 5 March 1933 elections, slightly higher than the party's national average. Eight days later, the NSDAP won 47.17% of votes in Frankfurt's last free elections before the end of World War II.⁹⁷

The Nazis' so-called "national revolution" brought about the swift and total end of Jewish integration into political life in Frankfurt as well as the city's democratic tradition. Hoping to work in tandem with the ascendant Nazis, Richard Merton and other representatives of the DVP expressed their agreement with the Nazis' calls to liquidate communal administrative bodies like the Magistrate in order to establish a less partisan brand of politics that would be based in what Merton called a "*Persönlichkeitsprinzip*."⁹⁸ Their calculations backfired when the DVP lost 10% of its vote share and was reduced to holding just two seats in the City Council.

⁹⁶ IFS Magistratsakten 2.293 Börsedenkmal Bl. 7, 16.

⁹⁷ *Statistische Jahresübersichten der Stadt Frankfurt a. Main: Ausgabe für das Jahr 1931/32, Fünftes Ergänzungsheft zum Statistischen Handbuch der Stadt Frankfurt A. Main II. Ausgabe*, ed. Statistisches Amt (Frankfurt: Statistisches Amt, 1933), 49; Köhler, "Nationalsozialisten," 483.

⁹⁸ The phrase is slight revision of the Nazis' own "*Führerprinzip*." Rebutisch, *Landmann*, 298.

Merton himself did not even manage to win reelection.⁹⁹ When members of the City Council arrived for the first session of the new term on 31 March 1933 they entered a chamber that was bedecked with flowers and wired with microphones that would play the proceedings to crowds gathered on the square outside of the City Hall. With the exception of the SPD and the KPD, which had already been outlawed, all of the other parties unanimously voted to appoint the Nazi Party member Karl Lange to serve as City Council Chairmen. The Nazi fraction then introduced a resolution that would essentially grant their party total control of determining the body's order of business. Because of their statistical advantage they managed to pass the order against the protest of other parties in the chamber.¹⁰⁰ By the end of the year, the City Council no longer existed.¹⁰¹

At first, Ludwig Landmann declared that he would resign as mayor due to his age on 1 October 1933, but he quickly decided to do so on either March 11th or 12th after members of the magistrate said this might entitle him to keep part of his pension. Landmann soon had to flee the city when he heard that Jakob Sprenger, who was now the *Gauleiter* of Greater Frankfurt, had issued an order for his arrest. Suffering a heart attack along the way, Landmann ended up in Berlin. After several attempts to apply for emigration to The Netherlands, his wife's home country, Landmann left Germany for good in August of 1939 and was officially stripped of his citizenship in 1941. He eventually died due to malnutrition and heart problems while hiding out in The Hague during the final months of World War II.¹⁰²

⁹⁹ Köhler, "Nationalsozialisten," 473-474.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 474-475.

¹⁰¹ Bettina Tüffers, *Der Braune Magistrat. Personalstruktur und Machtverhältnisse in der Frankfurter Stadtregierung 1933-1945* (Frankfurt: Waldemar Kramer, 2004), 19.

¹⁰² Rebentisch, *Landmann*, 301-03; Habersack, "Landmann," 192-193.

Max Michel was traveling on city business during the March elections and only found out that he had been fired from his position from an article in the *Frankfurter Zeitung* newspaper. However, Michel's fate was initially unclear because he had served in the army during the First World War, suggesting that he was exempt from the provisions of the Nazi government's April Law for the Restoration of the Professional Civil Service. Despite Michel's best efforts to demonstrate in writing his tireless work for the city and German culture, he lost his job when officials at the city Magistrate who had likely once been his colleagues claimed that his long-time membership in the SPD meant that he could not be trusted to fully work for the benefit of the German national state.¹⁰³ Michel immigrated to the United States in 1936 and died in 1941.¹⁰⁴

A number of other former Jewish members of both the Magistrate and the City Council suffered under the strains of life and persecution under Germany's new regime. In June 1933, the body of Rudolf Lion was found in the middle of the city forest. The victim had died of what appeared to be a self-inflicted gunshot wound. Lion had been a City Council representative since 1909 for both the National Liberals and the DVP, a party that had actively worked with the Nazis to challenge the government of Ludwig Landmann during the final years of the Weimar Republic. One can only assume whether or not this was the key factor behind Lion's decision to take his own life. At the very least, the recent Nazi Revolution did not immediately erase the

¹⁰³ Reading Michel's letters is a sobering experience. In addition to highlighting President Hindenburg's decision to award him a *Reichsgoethemedaille* (National Goethe Medal) for his service during the "Goethe Year" of 1932, Michel tried to show that he could be relied upon to cooperate with a fascist government. To do this, Michel stressed that he had received a special commendation from Italy's fascist government for these same efforts and that he had personally been present to hear Mussolini give a speech on Goethe in Rome during the summer of 1932. Michel further said that the Nazi mayor of the nearby town Oberursel could vouch for the fact that, "My relationship to the National-Socialist City Council members was always loyal." IFS Personalakten 65.183 - Dr. Max Michel Bl. 94, 105, 112, 195-201.

¹⁰⁴ IFS Personengeschichte S2/5.338 Max Michel SPD Stadtrat.

public memory of his many years of public service. Reporting on his death at least one local newspaper published the following tribute to Lion:

Public life in Frankfurt has lost a man of excellent qualities. This old Frankfurter was a knight beyond fear or reproach, a gentlemen in the best sense of the word, a friend of art with unassailable judgment... The good that he has done or, at the very least, inspired is so great that it cannot be obscured. He always fought hard against the November Revolution and Marxism; his dialectic and his sarcasm harnessed many city fathers of the left, but he also possessed a refined humor unique to Old Frankfurters, which is what he was.¹⁰⁵

Lion was not the only former Jewish lawmaker to take their own life during the course of the Third Reich. Theodor Plaut of the SPD died in Wuppertal in 1938, having immigrated to the United States, only to return in 1934 because his ailing wife wished to be buried in Germany.¹⁰⁶ Salli Goldschmidt of the DDP continued to write for the *Frankfurter Zeitung* until the paper was forced to fire all of its Jewish authors in late 1936 and early 1937. Thereafter he wrote under a pseudonym. Although his daughter tried to get him a visa to South America, Goldschmidt was turned back when ships stopped sailing there from Germany in the fall of 1939. Goldschmidt most likely committed suicide at a time when the Nazi government had begun to deport the first groups of the Frankfurt's Jews to ghettos in Eastern Europe during the fall of 1941.

Bruno Asch and his family left Berlin in 1933 and immigrated to Amsterdam, where he and Walter Löb, a colleague from his days in the Frankfurt SPD, opened up an asset management firm. Entries in Asch's diary from the late 1930s reveal his profound sense of despair with the failure of democracy in Germany and the end of his political career. In an excerpt from 8 May 1938 Asch writes: "The fate of a Jewish man that was forced to leave behind his Fatherland, the land where he was able to apply his full strength and abilities to public service, is dreadfully

¹⁰⁵ IFS Personengeschichte S2/3.021 Rudolf Lion.

¹⁰⁶ Michael Bermejo, *Opfer*, 135, 286-290; IFS Personengeschichte S2/16.677 Theodor Plaut; IFS Personengeschichte S2/8.096 Sally Goldschmidt.

hard. I am amazed by the contrast between the uplifting strength that life once gave me and the depressing feeling brought on by a life whose alpha and omega is the pursuit of personal profit.”

Asch wrote his final diary entry on 15 September 1939, during the Jewish New Year’s festival Rosh Hashanah on 15 September 1939. The diary closes with Asch expressing his fear:

that a progressive fascistization of the world threatens to undermine all the values that I find valuable and that make life worthwhile.... Will a war be fought over the entire political, economic, and legal foundations of Europe? [A war] in which everyone must finally take a position and everyone has the feeling or belief that their own personal war is being fought, and that no one has the moral right to let others fight for them? But who today can guess which consequences this global shock will lead to and which changes will come in its wake? Which of us will survive and what social order will we have become? I can only imagine that it will be entirely meaningless if this terrible event should end without a search for a new order.

Eight months later, Asch killed himself on the same day that the Dutch government capitulated to invading German forces.¹⁰⁷

Despite his wealth and prominence in German industry, even Richard Merton was not immune to the increasingly harsh anti-Jewish policies of the Nazi government. In 1937 he was forced out of his positions on the Curatorium and Great Council of the Goethe University, an institution that would not have existed without the largesse and devotion of his father Wilhelm Merton. Within a year he had similarly been cast off from the supervisory boards of IG Farben, the Institute for Public Health, and the mighty *Metalgesellschaft* that his father had also created. In November 1938 he was arrested with most of the adult Jewish men in Frankfurt and spent several months at the Buchenwald concentration camp. Although the Gestapo had already confiscated his passport, he was eventually allowed to leave for England in 1939 because he was still a British citizen.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁷ IFS S1-390/10 Bruno Asch: Nachlass; CAHJP P283/45 30-33.

¹⁰⁸ Bermejo, *Opfer*, 252-62; IFS Personengeschichte S2/3.039 – Richard Merton. Hans Achinger, *Richard Merton* (Frankfurt: Waldemar Kramer, 1970), 165-166.

Only one of the many Jews active in Frankfurt's government before 1933 managed to survive the war and to play an active role in rebuilding democratic political life in the city and a defeated Germany. Else Epstein had been born a Lutheran, but converted to Judaism in 1911 before marrying her husband Wilhelm Epstein, the longtime director of the city's Association for Popular Education. The couple both won seats on the City Council in 1919, with Wilhelm serving as a representative for the SPD and Else working with the DDP fraction. Although Wilhelm left the chamber in 1924, Else stayed on until 1933, when she was one of four members of the delegation for what was now called the German State's Party. Although Wilhelm died in 1941, Else managed to survive imprisonment in the Ravensbrück concentration camp. Upon returning home to Frankfurt in 1945 she became a founding member of the local chapter of the Christian Democratic Union and was reelected to the first body of the newly constituted City Council in 1946.¹⁰⁹

Conclusion

This chapter has looked at the fate of Jewish integration in the sphere of municipal politics and Frankfurt's political culture of "confessional peace." Before the First World War, the desire to preserve peaceful and smooth relations between the city's Jewish, Catholic, and Protestant populations had undergirded the city government's commitment to advocate on behalf of the local Jewish community and actively combat antisemitism. Looking at the six political flashpoints highlighted in this chapter has shown how the city government's efforts to maintain "confessional peace" remained strong until the final years of the Weimar Republic. Major challenges to this status quo tended to arise during moments of intense national uncertainty and crisis. For example, the Lutheran pastor Johannes Kübel's antisemitic sermon came at the start of

¹⁰⁹ Bermejo, *Opfer*, 103-107; IFS Personengeschichte S2/1.001 – Else Epstein; IFS Personengeschichte S2/603 – Wilhelm Epstein, SPD SVV.

the final phase of Germany's total war against the Triple Entente. By that same token, public and political animus against Jewish migrants and refugees from Eastern Europe crested at the same time and continued through Germany's defeat, the German Revolution of 1918-1919, and the initial financial crisis of the Weimar Republic. This initial period gave way to a major period of stabilization during the middle of the 1920s. This explains the fact that while the potential construction of Jewish-owned stores in front of the *Katharinenkirche* resulted in a major controversy at the height of the German hyperinflation and the French occupation of the Ruhr in 1923, the decision in 1925 to use municipal land for the creation of a new Jewish cemetery only raised the hackles of a small group of local gardeners who were forced to find a new plot of land on which they could till the soil.

In retrospect, it is fairly clear that the fate of Frankfurt's "confessional peace" largely depended on the continued hegemony of liberal and social democratic forces in city politics. Liberal parties had dominated city politics since the years immediately following Prussia's annexation of the city in 1866. Beginning in the first decade of the twentieth century, the local branches of the moderate Progressive Party and its successor, the DDP, routinely formed coalitions in the City Council with the Social Democratic Party and Liberal mayors continued to lead the Magistrate until the resignation of Ludwig Landmann in March 1933. Their firm grip on municipal power and the strength of "confessional peace" began to break down in 1928 when the ruling coalition of the DDP, SPD, and Center Party could no longer maintain an absolute majority in the City Council. During the next four years, the government's commitment to combating antisemitism weakened due to partisan infighting, which often created unholy alliances between the factions of the KPD, the right-liberal DVP, the DNVP, and the Nazi party. Additionally, the city's growing debts and the acute local effects of the global financial

depression meant that by 1932, Frankfurt's Magistrate claimed that they could not even provide funds to fix a defaced statue of the Jewish writer Ludwig Börne.

However, despite the breakdown of the city's Liberal order, Jews never ceased to be an active presence in the city's political life before March 1933. In the aftermath of the First World War and throughout the Weimar Republic, a number of Jewish politicians – including several women – from across the political spectrum won seats on the Frankfurt City Council and held high offices in the City Magistrate. This continued a long-standing trend of Jewish representation in city government. Moreover, the City Council's decision in 1924 to elect Ludwig Landmann – who had formally left the Jewish community – to serve as mayor set a new precedent that few Jewish politicians in Frankfurt could have imagined before 1914. By start of the 1930s, the organized opposition to Landmann included the Frankfurt chapter of the DVP, whose longest serving City Council member was the Jewish politician Rudolf Lion and whose leader was Richard Merton, the son of a baptized Jewish industrialist.¹¹⁰ Thus, even if the traumas associated with the First World War, the German Revolution, repeated financial crises, and the decline of Liberalism had done little to erode the strong integration of Jews into the political framework of Frankfurt am main, the future of the city government's commitment to and ability to maintain the “confessional peace” seemed tenuous by the start of 1933.

¹¹⁰ In his autobiography, Merton relates a brief anecdote in which the future Deputy Gauleiter of Frankfurt asked Merton to switch his political affiliation to the Nazi Party's faction in the City Council. The Nazi recoiled in horror when Merton proudly told him about his Jewish ancestry and “advised him not to speak with me for too long because it could damage him within his party.” Richard Merton, *Erinnerenswertes aus meinem Leben, das über Persönliche hinausgeht* (Frankfurt: Fritz Knapp Verlag, 1955), 75.

CHAPTER 3: JEWS IN FRANKFURT'S CULTURAL LIFE, 1914-1937

On a frigid day in December 1921, Georg Guthmann and his brother went to an open rehearsal of Johann Sebastian Bach's "Christmas Oratorio" at the *Saalbau*, a two thousand-seat theater in the center of Frankfurt.¹ Born in the Alsatian city of Metz, Georg and his family had arrived in Frankfurt two and a half years earlier after the French government had expropriated his German-speaking father's business.² Despite the family's precarious finances, Georg managed to get free tickets to the event because his two older sisters were members of a local choir that was taking part in the performance. Once the rehearsal began, the music astounded him: "My emotions rose with every aria, every hymn, and every chorus. I could imagine everything in front of me: the mountains and valleys of the holy land, Nazareth and Bethlehem, Romans and Jews, the procession of the holy family, the birth of Christ, the adoration of the [three] kings. When the trumpets blared and the choir sang hallelujah, I thought I could see the multitudes of the angels in heaven." As soon as he left, Guthmann bought tickets for the two planned performances of the piece.³

Years later, Guthmann memorialized this and other moments from his youth in a series of letters that he wrote to his children – who had always lived in Palestine and the State of Israel – about his life and Jewish culture in Germany before the Holocaust. Perhaps challenging their

¹ IFS Ortsgeschichte S3/G 1715 Saalbau; Matthias Alexander, "Der Saal mit der besten Akustik der Welt," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, August 22, 2016.

² IFS LG 280 Georg Yehuda Guthmann "Briefe an meine Kinder" Bl. 56.

³ *Ibid.*, 60.

expectations, Guthmann writes “Don’t think, dear children, that my sisters were the only Jews that sang in such a choir or that my brother and I were the only Jews that harkened to the Christmas Oratorio, the St. Matthew, and the St. John Passions. Almost half of the members of the Cäcilien Association, one of the other singing groups in Frankfurt...were Jews...[and] the percentage of Jews in the audience was especially large.”⁴

Taking Guthmann’s story as a starting point, this chapter looks at the integration of Jews in Frankfurt’s cultural life from 1914 until the early years of the Nazi dictatorship. Beginning in the early nineteenth century, Jewish Frankfurters increasingly played important roles in funding, consuming, and performing in different artistic and cultural endeavors. This tradition continued unabated into the first third of the twentieth century. During and after the First World War, Jews could be found on the stage and behind the scenes at Frankfurt’s main theaters, on the staff of municipal and private museums, as faculty members at local conservatories, and as members of local cultural associations. Why was Jewish integration into Frankfurt’s cultural life so consistently strong and how resilient did it prove to be in the face of the Nazi takeover of the city in March 1933? To answer these questions, this chapter focuses on Jewish presence and participation at Frankfurt’s *Städtische Bühnen*, which consisted of the city’s Opera House and Municipal Theater (*Schauspielhaus*), and several smaller private and public institutions and associations.

The *Städtische Bühnen*, 1914-1933

The city and the *Städtische Bühnen* had a long-standing relationship that stretched back to the middle of the nineteenth century. Beginning in 1867, the city government held a majority of shares in a joint stock company known as the *Frankfurt-Theater AG* and appointed members

⁴ Ibid.

of the Magistrate and City Council to serve on the organization's supervisory board.⁵ As early as 1913, Mayor Georg Voigt, the Magistrate, and the City Council appointed Jewish members of the latter group to serve on this board.⁶ By 1926, almost half of the board was comprised of Jewish members of the Magistrate and City Council or prominent citizens.⁷ After years of lobbying from leftist parties, the city government decided to municipalize the *Städtische Bühnen* in 1928 after the organization had generated a massive deficit of 850,000 RM during its previous season.⁸ One part of the takeover was the creation of a new Theater Deputation under the direction of Mayor Ludwig Landmann that would have final say over hiring and firing artists, determining ticket prices, and approving guest performances by visiting artists and theater groups. At various points in time, Jewish politicians including Richard Merton, Richard Lion, Ernst May, Bruno Asch, and Max Michel were members of this new supervisory body.⁹

Jews began to play an important role in Frankfurt's municipal opera company from the moment that Emil Claar became the inaugural General Manager of the Opera House in 1878.¹⁰ Three years later, Otto Dessooff became the opera's inaugural Music Director and Principal Conductor. Following his death in 1892, he was succeeded by Ludwig Rottenberg, who would

⁵ IFS Magistratsakten U 509 Bd. 1 Städtische Theater Deputation 1913-1930 Bl. 1; Eva Hanau, *Musikinstitutionen in Frankfurt am Main 1933 bis 1939* (Köln: Studio, 1994), 10.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 8.

⁷ As of 1926, the following Jewish politicians and philanthropists were members of the city's supervisory board for the theater: Rudolf Lion, Ludwig Heilbrunn, Bertha Jourdan, Arthur von Weinberg, Wilhelm Epstein, and Richard Merton. IFS Magistratsakten 7.929 Städtische Bühnen AG 1924-1935.

⁸ Hanau, *Musikinstitutionen*, 10; IFS Manuskripte S6a/323 Bettina Schültke, "Das Frankfurter Schauspielhaus von 1933 bis 1944" Bl. 14-15.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 16; IFS Magistratsakten 7.929 Städtische Bühnen AG 1924-1935; IFS Magistratsakten 7.928 Einrichtung, Verwaltung, Theaterausschuß, Theatergesetze, Theaterdeputation 1930-1944.

¹⁰ Albert Richard Mohr, *Das Frankfurter Opernhaus 1880-1980* (Frankfurt: Waldemar Kramer, 1980), 56.

remain in this position until 1926.¹¹ Lead Directors included Lothar Wallerstein and Herbert Graf, who worked closely with the Music Director Hans Wilhelm Steinberg during the final years of democratic rule in Frankfurt.¹² The opera house also had two Jewish General Managers during the Weimar Republic: Ernst Lert and Josef Turnau, who had previously worked as an assistant to Richard Strauss at the State Opera in Vienna and Directed the City Theater in Breslau.¹³

The baritone Richard Breitenfeld was one of six Jewish soloists at the Frankfurt Opera House during this period. Having joined the company as a baritone in 1902, he specialized in leading roles such as Iago in *Othello* and the eponymous roles in both Tchaikovsky's *Eugen Onegin* and Wagner's *Flying Dutchmen*.¹⁴ Although Breitenfeld had reached the age of retirement in 1926, he continued to give occasional performances on an ad hoc basis when the company needed him to fulfill a specific role. In 1927, for example, he starred as Rigoletto in a performance celebrating his twenty-five years as a member of the *Städtische Bühnen* and his final performance, which marked his thirtieth anniversary in Frankfurt, took place on December

¹¹Most scholars claim that Rottenberg beat out Richard Strauss in the competition to succeed Dessoff because of a strong recommendation from Johannes Brahms. Rottenberg soon became a well-connected figure in the city. He married a daughter of Mayor Franz Adickes and his own daughters would later marry the non-Jewish composer Paul Hindemith and Hans Flesch, the General Manager of Frankfurt's main radio station during the Weimar Republic. Hanau, *Musikleben*, 8; IFS S2/779 Personengeschichte Ludwig Rottenberg; IFS Chroniken S5/576 "Hundert Jahre Juedisches Frankfurt: Das Juedisches Element Im Musikleben der Stadt" Bl. 10; Hildegard Weber, "Ein Leben für die Frankfurter Oper," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, October 17, 1964.

¹² IFS Chroniken S5/576 "Hundert Jahre Juedisches Frankfurt: Das Juedisches Element Im Musikleben der Stadt" Bl. 14-15; IFS Personengeschichte S2/261 William Steinberg.

¹³ IFS Personengeschichte S2/658 Josef Turnau; IFS Magistratsakten U/541 Neue Theateraktiengesellschaft (später: Städtische Bühnen AG): Intendanten, Direktoren, Vorstand Bl. 47-47a.

¹⁴ Albert Richard Mohr, *Die Frankfurter Oper 1924-1944. Ein Beitrag zur Theatergeschichte mit zeitgenössischen Berichten und Bildern* (Frankfurt: Waldemar Kramer, 1971), 149-50; Universitätsbibliothek Johann Christian Senckenberg Frankfurt am Main (UB) Mus 840.400 *Almanach für Opernhaus, Schauspielhaus, Neues Theater. Amtliche Ausgabe 1927=1928* (Frankfurt: Max Koebecke, 1928), 25-26; IFS Chroniken S5/576 "Hundert Jahre Juedisches Frankfurt: Das Juedisches Element Im Musikleben der Stadt" Bl. 16.

18, 1932.¹⁵ The baritone Benno Ziegler, Breitenfeld's functional replacement, was also Jewish and transferred to Frankfurt from the prominent State Opera in Berlin in order to work with his wife, the non-Jewish Soprano and Frankfurt native Else Gentner-Fischer.¹⁶

Beginning in 1918, the Jewish bass Hans Erl was an equally important member of the opera company. A native Austrian, Erl had spent the first half of his career shuffling between companies in Vienna, Dresden, Graz, Merano, and Chemnitz before Karl Zeiß brought him to Frankfurt.¹⁷ In stark contrast to other Jewish artists at the *Städtische Bühnen*, Erl appears to have been a constant nuisance throughout most of his engagement in Frankfurt. Shortly before the end of his initial contract in 1923, he received a strongly worded letter stating that his contract would only be renewed if he agreed to play smaller roles, give up larger roles like Mephistopheles in *Faust*, and obeyed “without objection any directive of the artistic board” of the opera house. That fall, he was reprimanded for missing rehearsals for the opera *Don Juan* and a year later he was further castigated for his “failure to appear, without apology or excuse” at his own solo rehearsals. Despite these black marks on his record, it appears that Erl continually managed to have his contract renewed because no matter how much city officials disliked him, the members of Frankfurt's theater-going public regarded him as one of the best basses in all of Germany.¹⁸

Erl also benefited from the support of his Jewish and non-Jewish colleagues. When he was informed in December 1930 that his contract would not be extended past August 1932, the

¹⁵ IFS Personalakten 3.687 Richard Breitenfeld; Mohr, *Frankfurter Oper 1929-1944*, 67-68; IFS Magistratsakten 7.965 Städtische Bühnen: Bühnenmitglieder 1930-1935.

¹⁶ Ziegler's prominent stock roles included Papageno in “The Magic Flute” as well as the eponymous roles in “Rigoletto,” “Falstaff,” and Ernst Krenek's “*Jonny spielt auf*.” IFS Personengeschichte S2/306 Else Gentner-Fischer; IFS Personengeschichte S2/1.754 Benno Ziegler. IFS Personalakten 10.333 Benno Ziegler Bl. 71-76, 83, 89.

¹⁷ IFS Personalakten 1.163 Hans Erl 8.10.1882 Bl. 4-6, 12, 245.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, Bl. 83, 115, 136, 141, 185, 189; IFS Personengeschichte S2/3.3609 Hans Erl.

members of the opera's Employees' Council quickly banded together to prevent him from being fired. In a letter to the city's Labor Court they argued that a non-renewal "would create unfair social hardships for Erl" because he was forty-eight years old and used his income to support his elderly father in Vienna and his Russian wife's parents, whose land had been confiscated by the government of the Soviet Union.¹⁹ Two years later, the Employee's Council filed a nearly identical complaint in early January 1933 after Josef Turnau, the opera's General Manager, had told Erl that he would not be able to renew his contract beyond August of that year.²⁰ The group's continued support of someone as seemingly disagreeable as Erl suggests that Jews continued to enjoy the opera house's *esprit de corps* up until the end of the Weimar Republic.

Apart from these male soloists, the Jewish alto Magda Spiegel was one of the longest-standing female vocalists at the opera house. Born in Prague, Spiegel's engagement in Frankfurt began with a performance of one her signature roles, the gypsy Azucena in the Verdi opera "*Il Trovatore*," in December 1916. Throughout her tenure, she continued to play leading alto roles in a number of operas and frequently received outside employment as a soloist with groups such as the independently run Frankfurt Symphony Orchestra.²¹

No one, however, better represents Frankfurt's embrace of Jewish artists at the opera house than Hermann Schramm, who first joined the company as a tenor soloist in 1899.

Schramm took part in more than 6,000 performances at the *Städtische Bühnen* and his repertoire

¹⁹ IFS Personalakten 1.163 Hans Erl 8.10.1882 Bl. 192.

²⁰ Turnau and Erl had a particularly poor working relationship. In a letter from March 1932, Turnau lambasted Erl for bringing his beloved dogs into his dressing room, despite an expressly stated prohibition against dogs in the theater due to "hygienic reasons." A little over a month later, Turnau chastised Erl for refusing to leave the backstage green room when two female performers were trying to quickly change into different costumes. *Ibid.*, 246, 198, 202.

²¹ IFS Personengeschichte S2/308 Magda Spiegel; Claudia Becker, *Magda Spiegel. Biographie einer Frankfurter Opernsängerin 1887-1933* (Frankfurt: Waldemar Kramer, 2003), 53; IFS V120 53 Sängerkorchor des Lehrervereins Frankfurt A.M. Festkonzert zur Feier des 50-Jährigen Bestehens.

included more than 235 roles at the opera house. He was particularly beloved for his many turns as Eisenstein in Johann Strauss's farcical operetta "The Fledermaus."²² In 1924, Schramm celebrated his twenty-fifth stage jubilee to great fanfare in the local press. At least one author in the *Frankfurter Zeitung* praised him for being a paragon of fulfilling his artistic duties with both seriousness and joy and said that most Frankfurters could hardly imagine a local theater column that did not include his name.²³ That same year, a recording of Schramm singing an operatic aria was the first voice to be heard on Frankfurt's local radio station.²⁴ Schramm also won the respect of his peers and the local population by establishing a foundation that raised money to support retired artists, employees, and the survivors of deceased members of the *Städtische Bühnen*, a particularly worthy cause in an era of heightened economic uncertainty.²⁵ In recognition of his artistic abilities and charitable works, the city Magistrate voted to name Schramm an honorary member of the *Städtische Bühnen* on the occasion of his thirtieth stage jubilee in 1929. The official declaration praises Schramm for having become "a strong and always reliable linchpin for the ensemble with untiring enthusiasm and constant willingness to spring into action in an emergency." It further mentioned that Schramm had the uncanny ability to be work as an effective mediator between the staff and leadership of the opera house.²⁶ The announcement was

²² The theater critic Rudolf Geck estimated that Schramm appeared in over 250 performances of "The Fledermaus." UB Mus 840.400 *Almanach für Opernhaus, Schauspielhaus, Neues Theater. Amtliche Ausgabe 1933=1934* (Frankfurt: Max Koebeke, 1934 Bl. 25-26).

²³ Franz Wartenberg, "Hermann Schramm zum 19. September," *Frankfurter Zeitung*, September 17, 1924.

²⁴ IFS S2/918 Personengeschichte Hermann Schramm.

²⁵ " 'Alter ist Einbildung.' Jubiläum bei Frankfurts populärsten Opersänger," *Frankfurter Neue Presse*, February 16, 1951.

²⁶ IFS Magistratsakten U/543 Städtische Bühnen AG: Bühnenmitglieder (u.a. Schauspieler Mathieu Pfeil, Opersänger Richard von Schenk, Schauspieler Arthur Bauer, Schauspieler Mathilde Einzig, Schauspieler Elisabeth Bergner, Regisseur Herbert Graf, Tenor Hermann Schramm), 1927-1930.

applauded in the local press, where Schramm was once again praised as a “true artist” who had always been a crowd favorite.²⁷

Like the Opera House, the *Schauspielhaus*, Frankfurt’s Municipal Theater, also boasted a number of Jewish performers and directors up until the start of 1933. Although the tenure and importance of individual actors varied, there was never a gap in the presence of Jews on the stage or behind the scenes at this theater. Minor players over the years included Jakob Kaufmann, an alumnus of the *Philanthropin* who began working as an actor and director in 1910.²⁸ The actress Kitty Achenbach joined the ensemble in 1916 and was cast in many leading and supporting roles before returning to Berlin to work in prominent theaters and Germany’s burgeoning film industry.²⁹ Another prominent player was the Jewish actor Ben Spanier, who joined the company as a leading player at the start of the 1918-1919 season and remained in Frankfurt until the summer of 1931. Although he was only thirty-one years old when he joined the company, Spanier carved out a niche for himself and won over audiences by primarily playing older male roles.³⁰ In one curious twist of irony, Spanier also landed the title role in a 1928 production of the dialect poet Adolf Stoltze’s play *Vinzenz Fettmilch*, which commemorates a municipal uprising from the seventeenth century that spiraled out of control and led to pogrom on the *Judengasse*.³¹

²⁷ “Hermann Schramm Ehrenmitglied der Oper,” *Frankfurter Nachrichten*, September 6, 1929.

²⁸ IFS Schulamt 6.010 Privat-Unterricht des Oskar Ebelsbacher in dramatischen Kunst 1917.

²⁹ IFS Personengeschichte S2/2.674 Kitty Aschenbach.

³⁰ Stolpersteine in Berlin, Frank Siebold, (Berlin: Koordinierungsstelle Stolpersteine Berlin), <https://www.stolpersteine-berlin.de/de/biografie/3179> (accessed August 14, 2019); IFS Schulamt 1.444 Private Frankfurter Schauspielschule 1925-; UB Mus 840.400 *Almanach für Opernhaus, Schauspielhaus, Neues Theater. Amtliche Ausgabe 1919=1920* (Frankfurt: Max Koebecke, 1920); Ibid. *Almanach für Opernhaus, Schauspielhaus, Neues Theater. Amtliche Ausgabe 1920=1921* (Frankfurt: Max Koebecke, 1921); Dieter Wedel, “Das Frankfurter Schauspielhaus in den Jahren 1912 bis 1929” (PhD diss., Freie Universität Berlin, 1965), 220-221.

³¹ UB HM 21 Zb Blätter der Städtischen Bühnen Heft 27/28 2-15 Juli 1928; Adolf Stoltze, *Vinzenz Fettmilch. Drama in fünf Aufzügen* (Frankfurt: August Osterrieth, 1925).

In addition to Spanier, the Jewish actress Leontine Sagan was a featured cast member at the *Schauspielhaus* for most of the 1920s after several successful years working at the rival *Neues Theater*. While at the Municipal theater, local critics celebrated Sagan for the intellectual sophistication of her performances and her work as a director on productions of plays including George Bernard Shaw's "Caesar and Cleopatra" and Arthur Schnitzler's "*Liebelei*."³²

On the production side, Alwin Kronacher was the final General Manager of the *Schauspielhaus* before the start of the Third Reich. Born in Bamberg, Kronacher had received his theatrical training in Munich and worked at theaters in Karlsruhe and Bremen before receiving a longer-term engagement at the Leipzig *Schauspielhaus* in 1916. Members of the local press greeted the announcement that he would be taking over the theater in Frankfurt in August 1929 with great enthusiasm.³³ An article on Kronacher in the *General-Anzeiger* praised him for working to modernize Bremen's municipal theater company. In the same piece, Kronacher revealed his intentions to ensure that the program of the *Schauspielhaus* would boast "lively, modern, and contemporary" works such as Bertolt Brecht and Kurt Weill's "Three Penny Opera."³⁴

Although Kronacher embraced edgier works that embodied the spirit of Weimar, he was also a nationalist with a pronounced streak of conservatism. In Leipzig and Frankfurt, he was subjected to the ire of the leftist press for firing actors with suspected or outspoken ties to the communist party.³⁵ Kronacher also clashed with his Jewish colleague Arthur Sakheim, who had

³² IFS Personengeschichte S2/5.113 Leontine Sagan; "Frankfurter Theater" *Das Illustrierte Blatt*, October 24, 1922; "Schauspielerin, Regisseurin, Weltbürgerin. Leontine Sagan zu Besuch in Frankfurt," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, November 13, 1965.

³³ IFS Personengeschichte A2/657 Alwin Kronacher.

³⁴ "Der Neue Schauspiel Intendant. Dr. Kronacher – Leipzig," *General Anzeiger*, February 28, 1929.

³⁵ IFS Personengeschichte A2/657 Alwin Kronacher.

been the chief dramaturg at the *Schauspielhaus* and the editor since 1916 of the *Blätter der Städtischen Bühnen*, the municipal theater's promotional magazine. Sakheim was born in present-day Latvia in 1884, but soon immigrated to Hamburg with his family. In addition to working as a critic, dramaturg, and director, Sakheim was also a translator and writer whose books included a survey of "the Jewish element in world literature." According to the historian Paul Arnsberg and Sakheim's son, Kronacher, who was an "assimilated and atheist," fired Sakheim in 1931 because he had overseen an "un-German composition" of the theater's repertoire.³⁶

By the start of 1933, four out of the twenty-one ensemble members of the *Schauspielhaus* were Jewish.³⁷ The newest member of this group was the Czech-Jewish actress Lydia Busch, who joined the company in June 1932 after previously working at the *Neues Theater*. During her only year at the *Städtische Bühnen*, Busch managed to be a constant presence on the stage and even landed the title role in "Hedda Gabbler" by Hendrik Ibsen.³⁸ The Jewish leading actor Lothar Rewalt had joined the company three years earlier and also performed in leading and supporting roles such as the apostle Paul in Franz Werfel's "*Paulus unter den Juden*,"

³⁶ Sakheim died suddenly of appendicitis shortly after losing his job in Frankfurt. Perhaps due to his position as General Manager, Kronacher was given the task of writing an obituary of Sakheim that appeared in the *Blätter der Städtischen Bühnen*. The obituary he wrote tacitly confirms the tension that existed between the two, with Kronacher paying tribute to Sakheim as "a spirited person full of irony and skepticism, gifted with a biting wit that often came out in sarcastic phrases." Paul Arnsberg, *Die Geschichte der Frankfurter Juden seit der Französischen Revolution Band III: Biographisches Lexikon der Juden in den Bereichen: Wissenschaft, Kultur, Bildung, Öffentlichkeitsarbeit in Frankfurt am Main* (Darmstadt: Eduard Roether Verlag, 1983), 312-413; IFS S2/2.374 Personengeschichte Arthur Sakheim; "Arthur Sakheim," *Frankfurter Zeitung*, August 25, 1931; UB HM 21 Zb 340 *Blätter der Städtischen Bühnen* Heft 35/36 November 1930 Bl. 567-571.

³⁷ UB Mus 840.400 *Almanach für Opernhaus, Schauspielhaus, Neues Theater. Amtliche Ausgabe 1932=1933* (Frankfurt: Max Koebeke, 1933).

³⁸ Albert Richard Mohr, *Das Frankfurter Schauspiel 1929-1944* (Frankfurt: Waldemar Kramer, 1974), 56-57, 65-67, 78-79.

Robespierre in Romain Roland's "*Der 14. Juli*," Julius Caesar in Shakespeare's tragedy, and Mephistopheles in Kronacher's new staging of Goethe's "Faust" in 1932.³⁹

Beginning in 1929, the Polish-Jewish actor Kurt Katsch (né Isser Katz) was also one of the leading players at the *Städtische Bühnen*. Born into a Yiddish-speaking family in Grodno in 1893, Katsch first encountered German when his family moved to Lemberg in the aftermath of pogroms prompted by the Russian Revolution of 1905. Katsch turned to acting after several itinerant years of young adulthood working as a semi-professional soccer player in Brody and Czernowitz, a salesman in Vienna, an unemployed immigrant in England, and a wine salesman in Pomerania and Magdeburg.⁴⁰ He first appeared on the stage in 1917 in Berlin, where he rubbed shoulders with luminaries such as Ernst Lubitsch and found additional work with Max Reinhardt, the famous director of the *Deutsches Theater*. Katsch went on to work at various theaters in Bremen, Hamburg, Zurich, Munich, and Chemnitz before he ended up being down and out in Berlin in 1928.⁴¹

Katsch made his way to Frankfurt in 1929 because he had previously worked under Alwin Kronacher for two years in Bremen. After sending several letters to Kronacher explaining his poor financial state and eagerness to return to the stage, Katsch was invited to work as a substitute for a bit role at the *Schauspielhaus* in July of that year. With additional help from Kronacher, Katsch managed to secure a one-year contract from the Frankfurt Theater Deputation

³⁹ UB HM 21 Zb 304 Blätter der Städtischen Bühnen Heft 9/10 March 1929 Bl. 143; Mohr, *Schauspiel*, 13, 19-20, 49-50.

⁴⁰ IFS Chroniken S5/264 Bl. 1, 11, 12, 15, 24, 25-26, 44-45; IFS Personalakten 10.030 Katz, Isser *28.1.1893 [Katsch, Kurt = Bühnename] Bl. 13.

⁴¹ IFS Chroniken S5/264 Bl. 72-73.

for the 1929-1930 season that was subsequently renewed in 1931, 1932, and as late as February of 1933.⁴²

Katsch generally appeared in character roles during his tenure at the *Schauspielhaus*. These included parts such as the film director Süßmilch in the premiere of Fritz von Unruh's "Phaea," the title role in Arnold Zweig's "The Case of Sergeant Grischa," and Albert Doolittle in George Bernhard Shaw's "Pygmalion."⁴³ The highlight of his time in Frankfurt was a starring turn as Shylock in Kronacher's new staging of William Shakespeare's "The Merchant of Venice" during the 1931-1932 season. Although Katsch had previously played the role at other theaters in Hamburg and Zurich, the actor later commented that the extraordinarily empathetic crowds in Frankfurt allowed him to perform his truest version of the notorious money-lender. Later reviews of his work suggest that the local theater-going public had a sympathetic view of Katsch's Shylock because he imbued him with a winning degree of humility and an exasperation about his marginalized place within a diverse Venetian society.⁴⁴ Katsch also notes in his memoirs that he felt at home beyond the stage in Frankfurt because of similarities between his native Yiddish and the local dialect.⁴⁵

The final Jewish member of the *Schauspielhaus* at the end of the Weimar Era was Mathilde Einzig, one of the most beloved performers in the city. Born in 1886, Einzig had an early connection to the *Städtische Bühnen* because her father was one of the original members of

⁴² Ibid., Bl. 160-1; IFS Personalakten 10.030 Katz, Isser *28.1.1893 [Katsch, Kurt = Bühnenname] Bl. 14-16, 18, 21-23, 32, 98, 184, 207-209, 218-219.

⁴³ Albert Richard Mohr's book on the *Schauspielhaus* between 1929 and 1944 includes more encyclopedic information on almost all of the roles that Katsch played during his time in Frankfurt. Mohr, *Schauspielhaus*, 32, 39-40, 42-43.

⁴⁴ IFS Chroniken S5/264 Bl.165-166; Mohr, *Schauspiel*, 40.

⁴⁵ IFS Chroniken S5/264 Bl. 161-2.

the orchestra at the opera house. According to later interviews, she first began to imagine a career on the stage after reading Friedrich Schiller's "William Tell" as a twelve-year-old student at the Philanthropin, the city's prestigious Liberal-Jewish Gymnasium.⁴⁶ Despite her parents' objections, Einzig joined the ensemble of the *Schauspielhaus* at the age of sixteen in 1902, when the theater was still under the direction of Emil Claar.⁴⁷ She was not immediately successful. Her inaugural role as a boy soldier in Schiller's play "Wallerstein's Camp" is indicative of the small parts that Claar consistently gave her before his retirement in 1912.⁴⁸ Her fortunes began to change during Karl Zeiß's tenure as the General Manager of the *Schauspielhaus* between 1916 and 1920. During this period, Einzig started to consistently land larger roles and developed into a first-rate character actress. By the end of the decade, she was one of the leading players in her company who a local critic described as a "young artist...predestined with all her acting ability for 'old characters,' " such as mothers, spinsters, and "clumsy women."⁴⁹

During the Weimar Republic, Einzig developed a reputation for her ability to perform in and direct plays that were written in Frankfurt's local dialect, a skill that few actors born outside of the city could have effectively mastered. In April 1931, for example, she directed and starred in "Old Frankfurt," a farce written by the local playwright and poet Adolf Stoltze. A review in the *Rhein-Mainische Zeitung*, a Catholic newspaper, said that she had given the "most authentic

⁴⁶ IFS S1/90-19 Erinnerungen von Frederic L. Brandeis; "Mathilde Einzig. 25 Jahre am Schauspielhaus," *Frankfurter Zeitung*, November 11, 1930; Arnsberg, *Lexikon*, 100-102.

⁴⁷ IFS Magistratsakten 7.969 Städtische Bühnen: Bühnenmitglieder 1945-1953, 1963-1967; IFS Personalakten 45.990 Mathilde Einzig Bd. 2 Bl. 103-105; Mohr, *Schauspielhaus*, 79.

⁴⁸ IFS Chroniken S5/576 "Hundert Jahre Juedisches Frankfurt: Das Juedisches Element Im Musikleben der Stadt" von Artur Holde Bl. 13; Mathilde Einzig, "Unter sieben Intendanten!," *General Anzeiger*, November 8, 1930; Rudolf Geck, "Nachrufe und Jubiläen," *Almanach für Opernhaus, Schauspielhaus, Neues Theater. Amtliche Ausgabe 1934* (Frankfurt: Max Koebecke, 1934), 26-27.

⁴⁹ Dr. Diebold, "Die Künstler des Frankfurter Schauspielhauses," in *Almanach für Opernhaus, Schauspielhaus, Neues Theater. Amtliche Ausgabe 1919=1920* (Frankfurt: Max Koebecke, 1920), 29.

acting performance of the evening” and that her grasp of local patois evoked memories of older periods in the city’s history.⁵⁰ Other dialect roles included the wife of Vincenz Fettmilch in Adolf Stoltze’s play of the same name.⁵¹ By the time of her twenty-fifth stage jubilee, the *Frankfurter Nachrichten* praised Einzig for being authentically local to the point of having been “baptized with water from the River Main (*Määwasser*)” and as late as the start of 1933, another critic wrote that Einzig “is for Frankfurt’s dialect what *Duden* is for High German.” In other words, this means that a Jewish actress had come to be seen as a guardian of the Frankfurt’s unique history and local culture for much of the Weimar Republic.⁵²

Einzig also won acclaim for writing and directing a stage adaptation of Erich Kästner’s beloved children’s book *Emil and the Detectives* in November 1931. The show was added to the schedule of the *Schauspielhaus* in lieu of a Christmas play that normally ran for a few performances each year. In addition to adapting the story so that it took place in Frankfurt rather than Berlin, Einzig decided to take a risk and produce the show with a cast full of local children who could speak in local dialect.⁵³ Einzig received almost universal praise from the city press for successfully corralling the young performers who had never before set foot on the stage, the authenticity of the Frankfurt setting, and for putting on a “fresh, happy play...[that] is a thousand times better than the phony kitsch of the usual Christmas tale.”⁵⁴ The lone negative review of the

⁵⁰ “Alt Frankfurt im Schauspielhaus,” *Rhein-Mainische Zeitung*, April 8, 1931.

⁵¹ Einzig played the role alongside her Jewish colleague Ben Spanier, creating an ironic scenario in which two Jews played two of the most notorious antisemites in the history of the city. UB HM 21 Zb 340 Blättern der Städtischen Bühnen Heft 27/28 2-15 July 1928.

⁵² “Mathilde Einzig,” *Frankfurter Nachrichten*, November 11, 1930; Habé, “Kleines Schauspieler ABEZH,” in *Almanach für Opernhaus, Schauspielhaus, Neues Theater. Amtliche Ausgabe 1923-1933* (Frankfurt: Max Koebecke, 1933), 47-49.

⁵³ Mathilde Einzig, “Frankfurter ‘Buwe’ spielen im Schauspielhaus,” *General Anzeiger*, November 26, 1931.

⁵⁴ “Frankfurter Schauspielhaus. Emil und die Detektive. Ein Jungenstück von Erich Kästner,” *Neueste Zeitung*, November 30, 1931; “Theater für Kleine und Große Kinder,” *General Anzeiger*, November 30, 1931; “Erich

production appeared in the *Frankfurter Volksblatt*, the local organ of the Nazi Party. Their critic railed against the *Städtische Bühnen* for not staging a traditionally German Christmas play and churlishly criticized the plot of the play for unrealistically suggesting that a child could prevent a bank robbery. Nevertheless, this dissenting Nazi critic spent part of the same review praising Einzig for her performance as the main character's grandmother in the play, revealing just how infallible she was in the eyes of most Frankfurters.⁵⁵

Off the stage, Einzig and other Jewish members of the *Schauspielhaus* were active in other parts of Frankfurt's cultural life. For much of the 1920s, Einzig, Ben Spanier, and Leontine Sagan played an important role on the teaching staff of the Acting School that was attached to the *Schauspielhaus*. The school had opened in the fall of 1919 with the intention of training new actors from different class backgrounds without causing them to take on any debt. In exchange for not paying tuition, students agreed to pay a small percentage of their future stage wages to the school.⁵⁶ Formed in the aftermath of the German Revolution, the school exhibited a democratic ethos based on close cooperation between a "teacher collective" and a "student collective" that would play an equal role in determining the shape of courses including ensemble study, fencing, makeup, dancing, speech and voice, and exercise.⁵⁷ All three Jewish actors were responsible for leading scene study classes at some point in time. Einzig in particular developed close friendships with a number of her students, frequently joining them for drinks in local cafes in

Kästners 'Emil' im Schauspielhaus," *Volksstimme*, November 30, 1931; "Kästner: Emil und die Detektive. Erstaufführung im Frankfurter Schauspielhaus," *Frankfurter Nachrichten*, November 30, 1911; "Emil und die Detektive," *Rhein-Mainische Volkszeitung*, November 30, 1911; UB HM 21 Zb 340 Blätter der Städtischen Bühnen Jahrgang 1932 Nr. 1. Copies of most of these reviews can be found in IFS S1/90-11 "Emil und die Detektive."

⁵⁵ "Frankfurter Schauspiel. 'Emil und die Detektive,'" *Frankfurter Volksblatt*, November 30, 1931.

⁵⁶ IFS Ortsgeschichte S3/M 3.050 Schauspielschule; "Schauspielschule 50 Jahre Alt," *Frankfurter Rundschau*, September 1, 1969.

⁵⁷ IFS Schulamt 1.444 Private Frankfurter Schauspielschule.

addition to having them do creative exercises such as rotating between roles in the fight scene from Shakespeare's "Romeo and Juliet."⁵⁸ Einzig and Spanier were also part of the *Stammtisch Abgeschminkt*, an Algonquin-roundtable-esque gathering of notable artists that met at several cafes across the city. Other Jewish members included the beloved opera singer Hermann Schramm, the sculptor Benno Elkan, and Frank Brandeis, Einzig's husband.⁵⁹ This presence of Jews at the school and in elite artistic circles should be seen as further proof of the high level of Jewish integration into different parts the city's cultural milieu.

The production of shows with Jewish themes during the 1920s and early 1930s demonstrate another way in which the *Städtische Bühnen* both supported and reflected Jewish integration in Frankfurt. For example, the *Schauspielhaus* produced the world premiere of "The Hunt for God" by Emil Cohn in 1926. Cohn, a Zionist Rabbi and educator at the *Grunewald* Synagogue in Berlin, had written the play with an eye toward contemporary Jewish issues occupying the minds of the novelist Jakob Wassermann, the theologian Martin Buber, and other intellectuals associated with what Michael Brenner has called "the renaissance of Jewish culture in Weimar Germany."⁶⁰ Reflecting a growing fascination with "*Ostjuden*" as a source of tradition and religious authenticity, the action of the play takes place in a Jewish *shtetl* high in the Carpathian Mountains that has recently been attacked by Cossacks.⁶¹ Most of the plot centers

⁵⁸ IFS Schulamit 1.444 Private Frankfurter Schauspielschule; IFS S1/90-23 Erinnerungen an Mathilde Einzig. Despite chronic funding problems, the acting school continued to exist beyond the demise of the Weimar Republic, eventually merging with the Hoch Conservatory in 1939. The school was forced to close in 1944, but later reopened in 1960 as part of Frankfurt's University of Music and Performing Arts. IFS Magistratsakten U/561 Frankfurter Schauspielschule 1924-1930; IFS Ortsgeschichte S3/M 3.050 Schauspielschule.

⁵⁹ Artur Joseph, "Stammtisch Abgeschminkt" in *Frankfurt und sein Theater*, ed. Heinrich Heym, 51-53 (Frankfurt: Waldemar Kramer, 1963); "Drei Schauspieler feiern Jubiläum," *Kleine Presse*, September 1, 1949.

⁶⁰ "Cohn, Emil Moses," in *Biographisches Handbuch der Rabbiner Teil 2: Die Rabbiner im Deutschen Reiche 1871-1945 Band 1*, ed. Michael Brocke and Julius Carlebach (Munich: K.G. Saur, 2009), 136-139; Brenner, *Renaissance*; UB HM 21 Zb 340 Emil Bernhard, "Zur Problematik des Jüdischen," *Blätter der Städtischen Bühnen*, January 16, 1926.

on a conflict between the town's elderly Rabbi and a mysterious outsider who arrives after the attack and declares himself to be the messiah. Critics from local newspapers including the social-democratic *Volksstimme* and the conservative-nationalist *Frankfurter Post* praised the work of the ensemble under the direction of the Jewish actress Leontine Sagan.⁶² During the same period, the Opera house consistently put on performances of J.F. Halévy's "The Jews" and the world premiere of Eugen d'Albert's opera "The Golem" in 1926.⁶³

The *Schauspielhaus* also hosted multiple guest performances by the Hebrew-language theater troop *Habima* during the latter half of the 1920s. Founded in Moscow in 1917, the group had left the Soviet Union for good in 1926 and proceeded to make several tours of Europe and the United States before setting down roots in Palestine, where it would go on to become the National Theater of Israel.⁶⁴ Promotional material for *Habima's* guest performances of S. Ansky's "The Dybbuk" in October 1927 made note of the group's close connection to the influential Avant Garde director Konstantin Stanislavski and published a translation of the Russian playwright Maxim Gorki's paean to the group. During that same visit, *Habima* put on performances of a Hebrew translation of Richard Beer-Hoffmann's "Jacob's Dream," "The Eternal Jew" by David Pinski, and a non-operatic adaptation of "The Golem."⁶⁵ A mixed review of the latter in the Catholic *Rhein-Main Zeitung* still praised the collective spirit of the ensemble

⁶¹More information on this positive view of "Ostjuden" can be found in Stephen E. Aschheim, *Brothers and Strangers: The East European Jew in German and German Jewish Consciousness, 1800-1923* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1982), 185-213.

⁶² UB HM 21 Sb 340 "Jagd Gottes," *Blätter der Städtischen Bühnen*, February 1, 1926; UB Mus S1/310 e10.

⁶³ Mohr, *Oper 1924-1944*, 30, 53-54.

⁶⁴ For more information on the history of *Habima* see Emanuel Levy, *The Habima – Israel's National Theater, 1917-1977* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1979), 3-19, 79-109.

⁶⁵ UB HM 21 Zb 340 "Zur Geschichte der Habima," *Blätter der Städtischen Bühnen*, September 25, 1927; *Ibid.*, Maxim Gorki, "Habima," September 25, 1927.

and its earlier work in “The Dybbuk.”⁶⁶ *Habima* went on to do at least three more runs at the *Schauspielhaus* in Frankfurt. In November 1929 they staged new productions of “David’s Crown” by P. Calderòn de Barca and “The Treasure” by J.D. Berkowitsch as well as revivals of “The Eternal Jew” and “The Dybbuk.”⁶⁷ A year later, they returned twice to put on productions of Karl Gutzkow’s play about the Jewish philosopher and skeptic Uriel Acosta.⁶⁸ Although the religious makeup of the audiences at *Habima* performances is unclear, anecdotal evidence suggests that Jews were a regular presence at these and other theatrical performances during this era. Indeed, it seems that the vast majority of donors who belonged to the Patrons’ Association of the *Städtischen Bühnen* were Jews.⁶⁹

The evolution and execution of the *Römerbergfestspiele*, an outdoor theatrical event in the summer of 1932, drives home the degree to which Jews were integrated into and shaped the cultural life of the city up until the very end of the Weimar Republic. That year marked the hundredth anniversary of Goethe’s death. Because Goethe had been born and spent most of his youth in Frankfurt, the city government decided to subsidize and curate a number of events collectively billed as “the Goethe Year” that would increase tourism to the city.⁷⁰ Sensing an opportunity, the Jewish Magistrate member Max Michel concocted an idea to stage two of

⁶⁶ Werner Thormann, “Das Habima Gastspiel. Zweiter Abend: Der Golem, Drama von G. Leiwik,” *Rhein-Main Zeitung*, October 13, 1927.

⁶⁷ Mohr, *Schauspiel*, 17.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 30; “Habima,” *Gemeindeblatt der Israelitischen Gemeinde Frankfurt am Main*, December 9, 1930; UB HM 21 Zb 340 Heft 21/22 *Blätter der Städtischen Bühnen*, July 1930; Ibid., Arthur Sakheim, “‘Acosta oder: Über die Grenzen des neuhebräischen Dramas.’ Zum Habima-Gastspiel im Frankfurter Schauspielhaus,” *Blätter der Städtischen Bühnen*, November 1930.

⁶⁹ *Dokumente zur Geschichte der Frankfurter Juden 1933-1945*, ed. Kommission zur Erforschung der Geschichte der Frankfurter Juden (Frankfurt: Verlag Waldemar Kramer, 1963), 86-87

⁷⁰ For example, the city History Museum and the Städel art museum worked with the *Freies Deutsches Hochstift* to expand and re-open a museum in the poet’s boyhood home and held. *Freies Deutsches Hochstift Festgabe zum Goethejahr 1932*, ed. Ernst Beutler (Halle: Kommissionsverlag Max Niemeyer, 1932), VII-VIII, XV-XVI.

Goethe's plays at an open air amphitheater in front of the *Römerberg*, Frankfurt's historic city hall. This was a risky venture given the poor state of the city's finances and the fact that a similar event held at the Heidelberg castle in 1931 had closed with a massive deficit. Members of the *Städtische Bühnen* were also concerned about a potentially disastrous outcome, prompting Alwin Kronacher to write a memo to Mayor Landmann in which he stated that too lavish a production might threaten the continued existence of the *Schauspielhaus*. Against the odds and, as some might argue, common sense, Michel prevailed and won over the support of Kronacher, the actors at the *Schauspielhaus*, and Mayor Landmann.⁷¹

Contrary to earlier fears, the event was a roaring success. Michel's insistence on offering low price tickets ranging from 1 to 4.5 *Reichsmarks* ensured that all of the 1,500 seats in the hastily built amphitheater were filled. An estimated 75,000 people attended 31 performances of "Urgötz" and 16 performances of "Egmont." Hundreds of other spectators witnessed each performance for free from the windows or rooftops of other buildings on the square. The three remaining Jewish players at the *Schauspielhaus* took part in both productions. Mathilde Einzig receiving second billing as the wife of the eponymous hero of "Urgötz" and Lothar Rewalt getting third billing in "Egmont." By the end of the summer, the *Festspiele* had met with almost universal praise in the local press. Rudolf Geck, the theater critic for the *Frankfurter Zeitung*, argued that each performance had succeeded in bringing together people from different classes and segments of Frankfurt's society. Even the conservative *Frankfurter Nachrichten*, a fierce opponent of the "Landmann system," ran a cartoon in which Goethe thanks Kronacher for "putting together a project in a time of great uncertainty that honors all art loving

⁷¹ IFS Ortsgeschichte S3/T 345 Römerbergfestspiele; Georg Lengbach, "Der Mann, der die Römerbergfestspiele 'erfand.' Gedenkblatt für Frankfurts Stadtrat Max Michel," *Frankfurter Neue Presse*, July 14, 1947.

Frankfurters...and that will turn the eyes of the world toward my beautiful hometown.”⁷² At the end of the summer, Reich President Paul von Hindenburg and the Prussian Interior Ministry awarded Michel with a National Goethe Medallion in honor of his work and by October the city had given him and Kronacher the Goethe Badge of Frankfurt in honor of his efforts for the “Goethe Year.”⁷³

Other Cultural Institutions, 1914-1933

Moving beyond the *Städtische Bühnen*, Frankfurt’s second largest theater company, the *Neues Theater* (New Theater), is another fine example of the integration of Jewish artists and individuals into the cultural landscape of the city. The primary creative force behind the *Neues Theater* was Arthur Hellmer, an Austrian-Jewish actor who had spent five years performing “youthful hero” roles at the *Schauspielhaus* between 1905 and 1910.⁷⁴ Working with his stage colleague Max Reimann, Hellmer raised enough capital to build and open his own eight-hundred-seat theater in 1911.⁷⁵ Over the years, Hellmer ensured that the *Neues Theater* maintained a brisk pace, frequently putting on the premier performance of a new production every Saturday when it was in season.⁷⁶

⁷² Albert Richard Mohr, *Die Römerberg-Festspiele Frankfurt am Main 1932-1939: Ein Beitrag zur Theatergeschichte in Bildern und zeitgenössischen Berichten* (Frankfurt: Waldemar Kramer, 1968), 8, 21, 24; IFS Ortsgeschichte S3/T 354 Römerbergfestspiele; Rudolf Geck, “Die Frankfurter Römerberg-Festspiele,” *Frankfurter Zeitung*, August 14, 1932; “Was würde Goethe sagen,” *Frankfurter Nachrichten*, June 19, 1932.

⁷³ IFS Nachlass S1/329 Stadtrat (SPD) Max Michel (1888-1941) Bl. 28, 52, 64; IFS Magistratsakten 8.640 Goetheplakette der Stadt Frankfurt a.M. 1932-1948 Bl. 14.

⁷⁴ IFS Personengeschichte S2/2227 Arthur Hellmer.

⁷⁵ Thomas Siedhoff, *Das Neue Theater in Frankfurt am Main 1911-1935. Versuch der systematischen Würdigung eines Theaterbetriebs* (Frankfurt: Waldemar Kramer, 1985), 16-17; John Willett, *The Theater of the Weimar Republic* (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1988), 285.

⁷⁶ Karlheinz Müller-Ruzika, “Notizen zum Neuen Theater,” in (24-29) in *Frankfurt und sein Theater*, ed. Heinrich Heym, 24-29 (Frankfurt: Waldemar Kramer, 1963), 24.

The home front environment during the First World War was a proving ground for the young theater company. Like his counterpart Karl Zeiß at the *Schauspielhaus*, Hellmer became an early supporter of expressionist playwrights from Central Europe. The *Neues Theater* gained national notoriety in 1917 when it produced the world premiere of Georg Kaiser's play "*Die Bürger von Calais*." Thereafter, Hellmer and Kaiser had a close working relationship that resulted in the premier of many of the latter's pieces in Frankfurt.⁷⁷ Hellmer also worked to ensure that the theater was readily available to the beleaguered German public. Between 1917 and 1918 he produced fifty-two performances with ticket prices of less than thirty *Pfenning* apiece for armament workers in Frankfurt factories. After the war, he organized two free shows in January 1919 for troops returning from the front and consistently donated free tickets to the city's Association for Adult Education.⁷⁸

Throughout its existence, the *Neues Theater* cultivated close ties to the Jewish community. Beginning in 1911, the music director of the theater was Artur Holde, a Jewish musician, music critic, and the choir director at the *Hauptsynagoge*.⁷⁹ At the start of 1914, the theater hosted a benefit to raise money for Jewish schools in Palestine.⁸⁰ More importantly, it produced works with themes that were relevant to contemporary Jewish life. The most successful and frequently produced play in the history of the theater was Carl Rößler's "The Five

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 25-26; Siedhoff, *Das Neue Theater*, 19.

⁷⁸ Wilhelm Epstein, the long-term Director of this association, estimated that Hellmer donated more than 115,900 tickets to this group between 1917 and 1921. Wilhelm Epstein, "Neues Theater und Volksbildung," in *Zehn Jahre Neues Theater zu Frankfurt a.M.*, ed. Heinrich Schmitt, 23-4 (Frankfurt: Voigt & Gleiber, 1921).

⁷⁹ Siedhoff, *Das Neue Theater*, 17; Rudolf Frank, "Zehn Jahre Neues theater," in *Zehn Jahre Neues Theater zu Frankfurt a.M.*, ed. Heinrich Schmitt, 9-12 (Frankfurt: Voigt & Gleiber, 1921), 12; IFS Personengeschichte S2/1256 – Artur Holde (1885—1962) Dirigent; IFS Chroniken S5/576 "Hundert Jahre Juedisches Frankfurt: Das Juedisches Element Im Musikleben der Stadt, Bl. 23.

⁸⁰ "Wohltätigkeitsfest im Neuen Theater," *Frankfurt Israelitisches Familienblatt*, February 6, 1914.

Frankfurters,” a light comedy about the ennoblement of the Rothschild banking family which directly deals with the potential and limits of Jewish integration and acculturation in German society. Rößler’s play, which was performed a total 216 times over the course of 17 seasons at the *Neues Theater*, ends with Charlotte Rothschild foregoing conversion to Christianity in order to marry a German Duke. Instead, she follows the wise counsel of the family matriarch, her grandmother Gudula, and finds true happiness and love by marrying one of her Jewish relatives.⁸¹ Furthermore, the theater hosted the premiere of Lion Feuchtwanger’s play “*Jud Süß*” in 1919 put on fifty performances of Wilhelm Herzog and Hans Rehfisch’s play about the Dreyfus Affair in 1930s.⁸²

Elsewhere in the city, Jews played a prominent role in the leadership and faculty of the renowned Hoch Conservatory, which had opened in 1878 and earned a high artistic reputation because of faculty members including Clara Schumann and Engelbert Humperdinck.⁸³ By 1911, approximately one-third of the paying members of the Conservatory were Jewish and the Jewish banker and philanthropist Emil Sulzbach served as the head of its Curatorium.⁸⁴ Like many institutions in Weimar Germany, the Conservatory had lost the majority of its endowment during the hyperinflation that followed the end of the First World War. Although long-standing efforts to municipalize the institution never fully materialized, the conservatory grew increasingly

⁸¹ Siedhoff, *Das Neue Theater*, 14; Carl Roessler, *The Five Frankforters. A Comedy in Three Acts*, trans. J. Fuchs (New York: H.K. Fly Company, 1913).

⁸² *Almanach für Opernhaus, Schauspielhaus, Neues Theater. Amtliche Ausgabe 1919=1920* (Frankfurt: Max Koebecke, 1920), 159; *UB Mus 840.400 Almanach für Opernhaus, Schauspielhaus, Neues Theater. Amtliche Ausgabe 1929=1930* (Frankfurt: Max Koebecke, 1930).

⁸³ Albert Richard Mohr, *Musikleben in Frankfurt am Main. Ein Beitrag zur Musikgeschichte vom 11. bis zum 20. Jahrhundert* (Frankfurt: Waldemar Kramer, 1976), 310-311; Eva Hanau, *Musikinstitutionen in Frankfurt am Main 1933 bis 1939* (Köln: Studio, 1994), 11-12.

⁸⁴ For what it’s worth, Eva Hanau speculates that 3 of the 6 members of the Curatorium in 1904 had “well-known Jewish [last] names.” *Ibid.*, 8-9, 33; IFS Personengeschichte S2/4064 Emil Sulzbach; Peter Cahn, *Das Hoch’sche Konservatorium in Frankfurt am Main 1878-1978* (Frankfurt: Waldemar Kramer, 1979), 234.

dependent on the city over the course of the 1920s. In exchange for yearly subsidies, the Magistrate and City Council received seats on the conservatory's Curatorium. By 1932, Mayor Ludwig Landmann, Max Michel, and SPD Councilman Leonhard Heißwolf held seats on the eight-member board.⁸⁵ Moreover, the conservatory worked directly with the *Städtische Bühnen* to create an opera school whose first three directors were Lothar Wallerstein, Josef Turnau, and Herbert Graf.⁸⁶ Several other Jews held important positions at the Conservatory. Ludwig Rottenberg, the music director of the Frankfurt opera, taught conducting classes until his retirement in 1924. That same year, the board appointed the Jewish composer Bernhard Sekles a native of Frankfurt who had attended the school as a student, to serve as Director of the Conservatory.⁸⁷ By 1930, eleven of the Conservatory's fifty staff members were Jewish including Mátyás Seiber, who Sekles had hired in 1928 to teach courses on jazz.⁸⁸

Prominent Jewish citizens were involved in the activities of the *Museumsgesellschaft*, an association that sponsored concert events in the city. Although the group initially had a reputation for antisemitism when it was founded in 1807, an estimated ten to fifteen percent of its members were Jewish by the time it was two decades old. At the end of the Weimar Republic fourteen percent of its members were Jews and the Jewish politicians Ludwig Landmann and Richard Merton were members of the association's twelve-member board.⁸⁹ Like the Hoch Conservatory, the *Museumsgesellschaft* depended on the financial support of the municipal

⁸⁵ Hanau, *Musikinstitutionen*, 12-14; Cahn, *Hoch'sche Konservatorium*, 233-241, 272-282, 287.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 258.

⁸⁷ Two of his most famous pupils at Hoch's were the composer Paul Hindemith and the philosopher Theodor Adorno. Cahn, *Das Hoch'sche Konservatorium*, 257-270; Hanau, *Musikinstitutionen*, 28.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 8; IFS Personengeschichte S2/12.723 Mátyás Seiber.

⁸⁹ IFS Magistratsakten 8.206 Museumsgesellschaft 1931-1939; Hanau, *Musikinstitutionen*, 8, 155.

government. Beginning in May 1917, the orchestra of the *Städtische Bühnen* performed several concerts a year for the association and in 1931, Max Michel decided that Hans Wilhelm Steinberg, the Jewish Music Director at the Opera House, would be allowed to conduct at least three concerts per season.⁹⁰

In February 1932, the *Museumsgesellschaft* entered the crosshairs of the local branch of the Nazi Party after a concert featuring the Russian-Jewish conductor Isaak Dubrowen and the Polish-Jewish violinist Bronisław Huberman. The music critic of the *Frankfurter Volksblatt* wrote:

One can only summarily label this concert as an “*Ostjuden* evening.” Isaak Dobrowen was the conductor and Bronisław Huberman the soloist. One could have at least spoken of a “stylized program” (Stillprogramm) if Huberman had selected a work that he was personally connected to instead of the great Beethoven’s only violin concerto... This [decision] must have appalled conscious German listeners. When will the German public finally take up a position against the unworthy favoritism for foreign music and foreign musicians?

The negative review so enraged the board of the *Museumsgesellschaft* that its chairmen, Gustav Spieß, drafted a letter of protest. In it, he avowed that “Since its founding one hundred and twenty-three years ago, the highest ideal and task of the Frankfurt *Museumsgesellschaft* has been to present what is artistically the best” and to stay above the fray of “party-political views.” Spieß then closed the draft of his letter by threatening to revoke the free tickets that they had consistently provided to the critics from the *Volksblatt*. Looking for external confirmation, Spieß forwarded a copy of the letter to Mayor Ludwig Landmann, who was also a member of the board. Ultimately, Landmann suggested that Spieß moderate the tone of the letter because if it were too harsh it would merely rile up the staff of the *Volksblatt*, potentially turning it into a

⁹⁰ IFS Magistratsakten S. 1.827 Frankfurter Museumsgesellschaft 1891-1930 Bl. 35; IFS Magistratsakten 8.206 Museumsgesellschaft 1931-1939.

larger controversy than would be necessary.⁹¹ Nevertheless, the *Museumsgesellschaft's* reaction demonstrated its firm commitment to multi-confessional membership and programming.

The city government also paved the way for Jews to play an important role in municipal cultural institutions. In 1928, Georg Swarzenski, who had been the Director of the private Städel Art Institute and the Founding Director of the city's Municipal Gallery since 1906, became the city's inaugural General Manager of Municipal Museums. This new position meant that Swarzenski was responsible for supervising, planning, and acquisitions at the Municipal Gallery, the Historical Museum, the sculpture collection at the Liebig House, and the Museum of Applied Arts.⁹² During that same year, the art historian Guido Schoenberger, was appointed to serve as the curator of the Historical Museum.⁹³

Finally, the city government actively facilitated cultural engagement with the Jewish community by supporting the creation of the Museum of Jewish Antiquities. The genesis of the museum dates back to the creation of the Society for the Research of Jewish Artistic Monuments in Frankfurt in 1897. In 1909, the Director Frankfurt's History Museum offered to provide the group with a room where they could exhibit part of their collection. After several years of inactivity during the First World War, the activities of the group were revived when members of

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Thomas W. Ghaetgen, "Die Organische Einheit von alter und neuer Kunst. Georg Swarzenski, das Städel und die Gründung der Städtischen Galerie," in *Museum im Widerspruch. Das Städel und der Nationalsozialismus*, ed. Uwe Fleckner and Max Hollein, 1-24 (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2011), 3; IFS Magistratsakten S/1.526 Georg Swarzenski Bl 56d-56o; Perry T. Rathbone, "Georg Swarzenski, 1876-1957," *Bulletin of the Museum of Fine Arts* 55, no. 301/302 (1957): 53-55; Sebastian Farnung, *Kulturpolitik im Dritten Reich am Beispiel Frankfurter Museen* (Frankfurt: Henrich Editionen, 2016), 326-331, 334-5; IFS Personalakten 56.289 Georg Swarzenski Bl. 28.

⁹³ Schoenberger was a native of Frankfurt and had written his dissertation on art and architecture in the city during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. In 1919 he was hired to work as a Research Assistant at the University of Frankfurt. During this time, the Frankfurt Artistic Association (Kunstverein) commissioned him to edit and publish a series of historical photos of the city. In 1926 he completed his *Habilitation* on the Frankfurt Cathedral and began working there as a *Privatdozent*. IFS S2/18.090 Personengeschichte Guido Schoenberger; *Das Schöne Gesicht von Frankfurt am Main*, ed. Guido Schoenberger (Frankfurt: Verlag des Frankfurter Kunstvereins, 1924); Farnung, *Kulturpolitik*, 109-110.

the Rothschild family took an interest in establishing a museum dedicated to Jewish history that would be run by the *Israelitische Gemeinde* (IG) and located in the former headquarters of the family business on the *Fahrgasse*, which was not far from the site of the former *Judengasse*.⁹⁴ In February 1922, the city Magistrate agreed to provide the IG with an open-ended loan of Jewish antiquities from the collection of the city's History Museum that would be put on display in the new museum.⁹⁵ At the opening ceremony of the museum, the Magistrate Member Julius Ziehen gave a speech stating the city government had made this loan because of its sincere wish that the museum would "help spread understanding of Judaism's cultural achievements" and that it would also continue to expand into "a great public collection of the art history of Judaism."⁹⁶ The museum would go on to hold exhibitions on topics such as illustrated Passover prayer books and the evolution of Chanukah. They also collaborated with the Frankfurt Artistic Association in 1925 to put on an exhibition about "The Development of the Jewish Community of Frankfurt from its creation until the middle of the nineteenth century." After it opened, the local historian Friedrich Bothe praised results of this partnership in the conservative *Frankfurter Nachrichten* newspaper, arguing that it was relevant for understanding Germany's economic and intellectual history.⁹⁷

All told, Jews were an important fixture of Frankfurt's cultural life, continuing a trend that had taken shape before the start of the First World War. Jewish politicians and bureaucrats

⁹⁴ An overview of the history of the museum can be found in Katharina Rauschenberger, *Jüdische Tradition im Kaiserreich und in der Weimarer Republik. Zur Geschichte des Jüdischen Museumswesens in Deutschland* (Hannover: Verlag Hahnsche Buchhandlung, 2002), 59-91; IFS Ortsgeschichte S3/N.448 – Museum jüdischer Altertümer.

⁹⁵ IFS Magistratsakten S/1.552 Geplante Errichtung eines Museums jüdischer Altertümer 1921-1922.

⁹⁶ "Einweihungsfeier des jüdischen Museums," *Frankfurter Israelitisches Familienblatt*, March 9, 1922.

⁹⁷ Rauschenberger, *Museumswesen*, 83-84; Friedrich Bothe, "Die jüdische Gemeinde zu Frankfurt am Main," *Frankfurter Nachrichten*, April 15, 1925.

helped set the tone of the city's cultural politics and Jewish actors and singers were a constant fixture behind the scenes or on the stage at Frankfurt's theaters. Indeed, many in the local press Jewish character actress Mathilde Einzig was almost universally beloved and proclaimed to be the embodiment of the city because of the panache she brought to performances of plays written in the city's local dialect. Moreover, Jews were a key part of the audience and membership at many of the city's most important cultural institutions.

Post-1933

Despite the strong precedent set during the preceding decades, Jewish integration in Frankfurt's cultural life evaporated almost immediately following the Nazis' takeover of the city in March 1933. Jews were quickly purged from all positions of leadership at the city's Opera house. Fearing for the future of his position, Opera General Manager Josef Turnau had a former colleague from Breslau who was a National Socialist send a letter to Mayor Friedrich Krebs on March 20th which vouched for Turnau's conservative political orientation. Unaware of Turnau's full family background, the friend said that Turnau should stay in his position because he was a born Catholic, had openly supported the creation of an *Anschluss* between Germany and his native Austria, and had worked to purge Breslau's City Theater of "unsavory elements and ne'er-do-wells."⁹⁸ The letter fell on deaf ears. Frankfurt's Nazi leaders were eager to get rid of Turnau due to his role in staging Bertolt Brecht and Kurt Weill's opera *Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny* at the Opera House in 1931. Turnau was suspended at the end of March and formally fired in May 1933.⁹⁹ By then, Turnau had already moved to Prague because he was

⁹⁸ IFS Magistratsakten 7.970 Städtische Bühnen Intendanten, Direktoren, allgemein.

⁹⁹ IFS Magistratsakten 7.965 Städtische Bühnen: Bühnenmitglieder 1930-1935; IFS Magistratsakten 5,040 Personalamt: Durchführung des Berufsbeamtengesetzes (Gesetz zur Wiederherstellung des Berufsbeamtentums vom 07.04.1933): Meldungen der einzelnen Dienststellen 1933 Bl. 173.

officially a Czechoslovakian citizen. He eventually immigrated to the United States in 1939 and finished his career teaching at Hunter College in New York City.¹⁰⁰

Hans Wilhelm Steinberg was another victim of the initial purge of the Opera House. Official documentation shows that in addition to being Jewish, Steinberg was fired because he “could not be trusted at any time to wholeheartedly commit himself to the National State because of his [musical] interpretations that are alien to Germany’s essence.”¹⁰¹ Steinberg soon became the leading conductor of the Cultural Association of German Jews and eventually continued his artistic career in Palestine and the United States. Beginning in 1955, he made sporadic returns to Frankfurt and was belatedly named an honorary member of the *Städtische Bühnen*.¹⁰²

Performers at the opera took it into their own hands to rid themselves of their lead Director, Herbert Graf. Sensing the way the wind was blowing, a group of twelve soloists and eighty members of the choir at the Opera House targeted Graf in a letter of no confidence sent to Mayor Krebs. In it, they wrote that the decision to suspend Turnau and the Steinberg had inspired them to rid the opera of “Dr. Graf, a confidante of Professor Turnau and a typical representative of those falling under the term ‘cultural Bolshevism.’ ” Additionally, they argued that Graf was not German enough because of the tasteless manner in which he had staged Wagner operas and, worst of all, that “his style of direction degrades performers into nothing more than marionettes.” They then concluded their letter by claiming that Graf was “primarily responsible for the alienation of the majority of the [city’s] population from the Opera.”

¹⁰⁰ IFS Personengeschichte S2/658 Josef Turnau.

¹⁰¹ IFS Magistratsakten 7.965 Städtische Bühnen: Bühnenmitglieder 1930-1935.

¹⁰² “William Steinberg in Frankfurt. Besuch nach 22 Jahren. Ehrenmitglied der Städtischen Bühnen,” *Frankfurter Neue Press*, March 26, 195; Alfred Baresel, “Wiederbegegnung mit William Steinberg. Gefeierte Gastdirigent im 2. Museumskonzert,” *Frankfurter Neue Press*, October 5, 1961; “Steinberg Dirigent,” *Frankfurter Neue Press*, September 8, 1964.

Curiously, the letter bore no trace of antisemitism and Benno Ziegler, Magda Spiegel, and Hans Erl were among the twelve soloists who signed the document, suggesting that the affair was primarily related to performers settling old scores and attempting to ingratiate themselves to the new regime. This suggests that the future of Jewish artists on Frankfurt's municipal stages still seemed possible at the start of April 1933.¹⁰³

Graf would not go down silently after he was suspended. In the middle of May he sent a point-by-point rebuttal of the no confidence letter to Krebs. For one, he said that it was ludicrous to accuse him of not revering Wagner because he had received a doctorate in music for a dissertation on Richard Wagner's work as a director. Graf also said that rather than alienating the city's population, his new staging of works such as Wagner's *Tannhäuser* and *Lohengrin* had increased ticket sales. If Graf was able to maintain his honor, he certainly did not maintain his career. He had already been fired several days before the letter was even written.¹⁰⁴

Turning to the soloists at the opera house, the new city government did not need to initiate any action to fire Hermann Schramm because he was already slated to officially retire at the end of the 1932-1933 season. Behind the scenes, Hans Meissner, the new General Manager of the *Städtische Bühnen*, urged Mayor Krebs not to take any additional action against Schramm "because in the past he has enjoyed extraordinary popularity and has also worked hard for the social welfare of the stage employees."¹⁰⁵ Indeed, the press coverage of Schramm's departure reveals that the change of regime had done little to dampen the degree to which local audiences

¹⁰³ IFS Magistratsakten 7.965 Städtische Bühnen: Bühnenmitglieder 1930-1935; Schültke, *Theater oder Propaganda*, 55-58.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ IFS Magistratsakten 5.040 Personalamt: Durchführung des Berufsbeamtengesetzes (Gesetz zur Wiederherstellung des Berufsbeamtentums vom 07.04.1933): Meldungen der einzelnen Dienststellen 1933 Bl. 181-182.

loved him. An article on the day of his retirement praised him for his ability to be both funny and moving on the stage and a year later, the city's theater almanac for the 1933-34 season tried to sound a conciliatory note by saying it was good that Schramm had retired before his abilities had started to fade.¹⁰⁶ Despite later being arrested by the Gestapo, Schramm went on to survive the Holocaust in Frankfurt because he was married to a non-Jewish woman.¹⁰⁷ After the war, he returned to the stage in 1946 for a final performance as Eisenstein in a special production of "The Fledermaus" in honor of his seventy-fifth birthday.¹⁰⁸

Only one out of the three remaining Jewish soloists was fired during the course of 1933: Hans Erl. As stated earlier in this chapter, Erl's contract was set to expire at the end of August of 1933 and it was once again unclear if he would manage to have it renewed. Around Easter, he gave his last performance at the opera house in a production of Wagner's *Parsifal*.¹⁰⁹ Erl underwent a medical examination in late May that revealed he was overweight and had heart and kidney ailments, leading his attending physician to conclude that Erl was too physically ill to continue regular work at the opera. Despite this diagnosis, Erl received a letter from the mayor's office in June that said he would be fired as of July 31st because he was Jewish. In a move that was perhaps indicative of the bad blood between Erl and his many colleagues, the direction of the *Städtische Bühnen* ordered him to undergo a second medical exam because they thought he was attempting to sneak his way into an early retirement at the cost of the new state. Erl was

¹⁰⁶ IFS Personengeschichte S2/918 Hermann Schramm; UB Mus 840.400 *Almanach für Opernhaus, Schauspielhaus, Neues Theater. Amtliche Ausgabe 1933-1934* Bl. 25-26.

¹⁰⁷ IFS Personengeschichte S2/4415 Else Schramm.

¹⁰⁸ IFS Personengeschichte S2/918 Hermann Schramm; "Frankfurt's älteste Künstler. Unser Freund Hermann Schramm," *Frankfurt Allgemeine Zeitung*, April 18, 1950; "'Alter ist Einbildung.' Jubiläum bei Frankfurt's populärstem Opersänger," *Frankfurter Neue Presse*, February 6, 1951.

¹⁰⁹ IFS Personengeschichte 3.609 Hans Erl.

indeed ill and he was granted a small monthly pension that he would come close to losing after taking part in a guest performance in Switzerland in February 1936.¹¹⁰

Erl would go on to have a prominent place in the memories of Jewish men and women who experienced the *Reichskristallnacht* in 1938 in Frankfurt. Beginning on November 10th, members of the *Sturmabteilung* and the Frankfurt police began to arrest large numbers of adult Jewish males and subsequently brought them to the *Festhalle*, a large arena, before sending them off on trains to the Buchenwald concentration camp.¹¹¹ Erl was among the Jewish men who were arrested. Upon his arrival at the *Festhalle*, a Nazi official processing future prisoners asked him to state his former vocation. When Erl replied that he had been an opera singer, a group of Nazi officers brought him into the rafters of the building and forced him to sing an aria. Returning to one of his best-known roles and, perhaps, attempting to calm other arrested Jewish men in the building, Erl proceeded to sing Sarastro's "*In diesen heil'gen Hallen*" from Mozart's *The Magic Flute*.¹¹² Years later, many former Frankfurters still remembered Erl's final performance when they gave oral or written testimony about what had happened to them during the pogrom.¹¹³ Erl

¹¹⁰ IFS Personalakten 1.163 Hans Erl 8.10.1882 Bl. 213, 215, 229, 230; Schültke, *Theater oder Propaganda*, 73.

¹¹¹ Scholars estimate that 2,621 Jewish men from Frankfurt went to Buchenwald during and following *Kristallnacht*. "Introduction," in "...daß wir nicht erwünscht waren. Novemberpogrom 1938 in Frankfurt am Main. Berichte und Dokumente," ed. Gottfried Kößler, Angelika Rieber, and Feli Gürsching, 13-16 (Frankfurt: Dipa-Verlag, 1993); Rachel Heuberger and Helga Krohn, *Hinaus aus dem Ghetto. Juden in Frankfurt am Main 1800-1950* (Frankfurt: S. Fischer, 1988), 180. Adolf Diamant, *Gestapo Frankfurt am Main. Zur Geschichte einer verbrecherischen Organisation in den Jahren 1933-1945* (Frankfurt: Adolf Diamant/W. Steinmann & Boschen 1988), 127-128.

¹¹² The piece includes the following lines: "Within these hallowed halls/one knows not revenge; "No traitor can lurk/because one forgives the enemy/whomever these lessons do not please/deserves not to be a human being."

¹¹³ *Georg Salzberger. Leben und Lehre*, ed. Albert H. Friedlander (Frankfurt: Waldemar Kramer, 1982), 115; Heimer, Eva. Interview 45669. Segment 67. *Visual History Archive*, USC Shoah Foundation (VHA), 1998. Accessed 17 April 2018; Jacob, Fred. Interview 39041. Segment 15. VHA, 1998. Accessed 23 April 2018; Blumenthal, Salo. Interview 39481. Segments 59-60. VHA, 1998. Accessed 18 April 2018; Adolf Diamant, *Gestapo Frankfurt am Main. Zur Geschichte einer verbrecherischen Organisation in den Jahren 1933-1945* (Frankfurt: Adolf Diamant/W. Steinmann & Boschen 1988), 127-128; LBI ME 383. MM 47 Joseph Levy "Mein Leben in DT" Bl. 74; LBI ME 180 "Rosy Geiger-Kullmann Lebenserinnerungen" Bl. 69; LBI ME 1115. MM II 32 Gerald J. Oppenheimer Bl. 17; LBI ME 561 MM 66 Ralph Sanford Bl. 9.

continued to live in Frankfurt until he was deported to Eastern Europe and was likely killed there in June 1942.¹¹⁴

Benno Ziegler, the other male Jewish soloist, briefly managed to keep his job at the opera by appealing to Hans Meissner's artistic sensibilities and masculine notions of honor. Although Ziegler had signed a new contract on January 10, 1933 that extended to the end of the 1933-1934 season, he was informed in late June that he would be fired at the end of the summer because he was Jewish. Ziegler quickly penned a letter imploring Meissner to let him remain on the stage until he reached his twenty-fifth work anniversary in January 1934, stressing that his "only wish as a German artist is to fulfill my duty and then depart in honor." After reading the letter, Meissner personally worked to create an agreement that would allow Ziegler to remain on the stage until the end of February 1934 and mollified potential objections by telling the city's Personnel Bureau that the arrangement would help the city to save 1,671.64 *Marks* because Ziegler would be leaving before the end of his full contract.¹¹⁵ By early September, however, officials at the *Städtische Bühnen* realized that the law did not in fact apply to Ziegler because of a built-in exception to the Law for the Restitution of the Civil Service that prohibited the firing of Jews who had joined the civil service before August 1, 1914. It is unclear if Ziegler knew this. Even if he did, he still decided to stick to the deal and left the Opera House for good in February 1934.¹¹⁶ A year later, Ziegler's wife, the soprano Else Gentner-Fischer, was told that she would be fired if she refused to divorce her Jewish husband. Despite protests from several members of the public to keep "a person who for nearly thirty years has given all their energy, great desires,

¹¹⁴ Schültke, *Theater oder Propaganda*, 104.

¹¹⁵ IFS Personalakten 10.333 Benno Ziegler Bl. 184, 205-207, 215.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, Bl. 216.

and abilities to the service of the city,” Gentner-Fischer gave her final performance as the heroine in Wagner’s “Tristan and Isolde” on June 23, 1935.¹¹⁷ The two singers retreated to a quiet life near the Chiemsee before Ziegler emigrated to London in 1938. Gentner-Fischer remained in Germany and died in 1943. Ziegler returned to Germany after the end of the Second World War and spent his final years living quietly in a Jewish nursing home in Munich.¹¹⁸

Magda Spiegel would be the last Jew to sing at the Frankfurt Opera during the Third Reich, remaining on the stage until June 25, 1935. There are several key reasons why Spiegel was able to remain in her position for as long as she did. First, she, like Ziegler and Mathilde Einzig, was exempt from the Law for the Restitution of the Civil Service because she had been employed by municipal theater companies since 1910.¹¹⁹ Secondly, she had signed a two-year contract extension that was not set to expire until the end of the August 1935. Third, General Manager Meissner insisted that Spiegel should remain until the end of this contract because her artistic capabilities were irreplaceable and that she was beloved by spectators, regardless of their *Weltanschauung*.¹²⁰ Meissner also argued that Spiegel should be able to stay because she had converted to Lutheranism, a claim that Spiegel’s biographer, Claudia Becker, believes was not true.¹²¹ Meissner’s lobbying worked and even moved Mayor Krebs to personally write a letter to

¹¹⁷ IFS Personengeschichte S2/306 Else Gentner-Fischer.

¹¹⁸ Ziegler died there in 1963. Ibid., IFS Personengeschichte S2/1.754 Benno Ziegler; “Vor fünfzig Jahren zum Theater. Kammersänger Benno Ziegler beging ein Jubiläum,” *Frankfurter Rundschau*, October 22, 1959.

¹¹⁹ IFS Personengeschichte S2/308 Magda Spiegel

¹²⁰ IFS Personalakten 10.333 Benno Ziegler Bl. 215; IFS Magistratsakten 5.040 Personalamt: Durchführung des Berufsbeamtengesetzes (Gesetz zur Wiederherstellung des Berufsbeamtentums vom 07.04.1933): Meldungen der einzelnen Dienststellen 1933 Bl. 181-182.

¹²¹ Becker, *Magda Spiegel*, 21-22. IFS Magistratsakten 5,040 Personalamt: Durchführung des Berufsbeamtengesetzes (Gesetz zur Wiederherstellung des Berufsbeamtentums vom 07.04.1933): Meldungen der einzelnen Dienststellen 1933 Bl. 181-182.

the Prussian Ministry for Science, Art, and Public Education stating that “Spiegel is an artist that cannot currently be replaced by anyone in Germany with approximately as much talent.”¹²²

Spiegel remained a central player at the opera house up until her final bow. Although she was increasingly placed into smaller roles, she continued to receive praise from the Frankfurt press and theater-going public. At one point in late 1933, for example, Hans Meissner received a letter from an irate audience member who thought that Spiegel should have played the leading role in a recent production of *Carmen* “because she is truly our best singer.”¹²³ In April 1934, Spiegel was invited to take part in the opera company’s propaganda tour through the Netherlands because of her talent and a desire to show that a Jewish artist could still take part in the cultural life of Nazi Germany.¹²⁴ Shortly thereafter, Spiegel was subjected to a growing campaign of harassment orchestrated by local members of the Nazi Party. Critics in the *Frankfurter Volksblatt*, the Party’s local newspaper, accused her of having a shrill tone and a rumor spread that she had sung at a circumcision ceremony for a local Jewish family, prompting her lawyer to protest that his Spiegel had not sung at any kind of Jewish family event for approximately two years.¹²⁵ At the start of 1935, Spiegel desperately wrote to the *Reichstheaterkammer* to protect herself from being summarily fired from her current position, arguing that she had an intimate relationship with German art and even claiming that she had tried to refuse to perform in the “kitschy” 1931 performance of the Kurt Weill and Bertolt Brecht opera “Mahagonny.”¹²⁶ Her appeal, it seems, went unanswered and she ended her career in a performance of Wagner’s

¹²² IFS Personalakten 40.896 Magda Spiegel Bl. 142.

¹²³ Becker, *Magda Spiegel*, 152.

¹²⁴ Ibid., 159-160; IFS Personengeschichte S2/308 Magda Spiegel.

¹²⁵ Ibid.; Becker, *Magda Spiegel*, 165-166.

¹²⁶ IFS Personengeschichte S2/308 Magda Spiegel.

Lohengrin on June 26, 1935. A day before her final performance, the *General Anzeiger* published a tribute piece praising Spiegel as an artist who had “found success during the guest performances of the *Städtische Bühnen* in Holland, [and] always elicited storms of applause from public,” showing that local theatergoers still retained some good will toward the final Jewish performer on a municipal stage.¹²⁷ As a citizen of Czechoslovakia, Spiegel remained in Germany as a foreign alien until her country was taken over in 1939. On September 1, 1942, she and the former soloist Richard Breitenfeld were part of a group of Jews that were deported to the ghetto in Theresienstadt.¹²⁸ Breitenfeld died there two months later.¹²⁹ Spiegel remained in the ghetto until she was later deported to Auschwitz in October 1944 and likely murdered upon her arrival.¹³⁰

Three additional Jews managed to remain at the Frankfurt opera house during the year that followed the Nazi takeover of the city: the musicians Ary Schuyer, Mozes Slager, and Rubin Itkes. This was because they had all joined the orchestra of the *Städtische Bühnen* before 1914, thus making them exempt from the Law for the Rehabilitation of the Civil Service. Moreover, the city had awarded them the title of “Municipal Chamber Musicians” because they were part of the orchestra that had taken part in a jubilee concert for the *Museumsgesellschaft* in late 1933.¹³¹ The city finally moved to fire them in late September 1934 according to a clause in the law that would allow the government to fire individuals “in the interest of their profession.”¹³² Almost

¹²⁷ “Magda Spiegels Abschied. ‘Ihre Stimme ist eine Jahrhundert-Blume,’” *General Anzeiger*, June 25, 1935.

¹²⁸ Personalakten 3.687 Richard Breitenfeld Bl. 26.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, 26; “Dem Widersand ein Denkmal setzen,” *Frankfurter Neue Presse*, October 27, 2006.

¹³⁰ Becker, *Magda Spiegel*, 210.

¹³¹ IFS Magistratsakten 7.979 Theaterorchester, Kulturorchester 1930-35 Bl. 220.

¹³² IFS Magistratsakten 7.996 Theater-Ruhegeldkassen, Versorgungsanstalt deutscher Bühnen 1930-1937 Bl. 1, 22.

immediately, representatives from the Dutch Consulate in Frankfurt filed complaints on behalf of Schuyer and Slager, who were Dutch citizens.¹³³ Hoping to head off future legal challenges, Mayor Friedrich Krebs and the head of the city's Personnel Bureau decided to collect denunciations from other members of the orchestra that would prove beyond a doubt that Schuyer and Slager "had impeded...general cooperation and had caused a persistent disturbance" to the work of the orchestra "through small but constant spitefulness."¹³⁴

A total of eight musicians provided city officials with statements on their relationships and opinions of Slager, Schuyer, and Itkes. Five of them said that Slager and Schuyer were bad colleagues who had negative relationships with most members of the orchestra. The most chilling of these statements came from the retired orchestra member Hermann Weinhardt, who reported that he had ended his friendship and routine walks with Slager in April 1933 after he had spoken out against the anti-Jewish policies of the new National Socialist regime.¹³⁵ However, it also seems that some member of the orchestra were still willing to stick out their necks for Jewish colleagues. Two of the men interviewed said that Schuyer and Slager had always been "pleasant comrades" and went out of their way to say that it would be a mistake to fire Itkes, who one described as "an extremely decent person that uses his income to not only support his family, but also his parents, siblings, and an in-law."¹³⁶ Ultimately, the city decided to fire the musicians. Of the three, only Itkes, who was stateless, managed to remain in in

¹³³ Ibid., Bl. 30.

¹³⁴ Ibid., Bl. 17-18.

¹³⁵ Ibid., 23-26, 29, 35.

¹³⁶ Ibid., 27-28.

Frankfurt because he had a non-Jewish wife. Schuyer emigrated to Palestine in 1939 and died in Tel Aviv two years later. Slager died in Auschwitz in 1943.¹³⁷

In comparison with the Opera House, City and Nazi party officials more effectively managed to get rid of Jews on the staff of the *Schauspielhaus* in a short timespan . Alwin Kronacher was suspended from his position on March 28th and tried in vain to protect his job and to have the city honor Einzig, Katsch, and Rewalt's contracts, which were set to expire in 1934. In a series of documents reflecting on the full scope of his career, Kronacher attempted to convince Nazi officials that he was politically reliable and should remain in his present position at the *Schauspielhaus*. In them, Kronacher described himself as a director "who had not risen through the ranks by grace of the Social Democrats during the [German] Revolution of 1918," claimed that right-wing circles in Leipzig had "valued my new staging of classics," and said that Max Michel and other Liberal and Social-Democratic politicians in the city's pre-1933 government had forced him to produce shows that went against his own political views. Kronacher was eventually fired on May 10th according to the second paragraph of the Law for the Restoration of the Civil Service and because of the "non-German" style of his theatrical programs.¹³⁸ Kronacher would soon move on to directing positions in Basel and Paris before teaching drama at the University of California, Berkeley.¹³⁹

The city decided to use the same legal mechanism to suspend and then fire three of the four Jewish actors who were part of the company of the *Schauspielhaus*. According to Nazi

¹³⁷Ibid., 23; Schültke, *Theater oder Propaganda*, 104-105.

¹³⁸ Ironically, Kronacher fired the Jewish dramaturg Arthur Sakheim for similar reasons in 1931. IFS Personengeschichte A2/657 Alwin Kronacher; IFS Magistratsakten 5.040 Personalamt: Durchführung des Berufsbeamtengesetzes (Gesetz zur Wiederherstellung des Berufsbeamtentums vom 07.04.1933): Meldungen der einzelnen Dienststellen 1933; IFS Manuskripte S6a/232 Bettina Schültke "Das Frankfurter Schauspielhaus von 1933 bis 1944" Bl. 39.

¹³⁹ IFS Personengeschichte A2/657 Alwin Kronacher.

officials, Lydia Busch's acting style was superficial and she could be fired because her Jewish and Czechoslovakian background made "her artistic capabilities entirely un-German."¹⁴⁰

Although Kurt Katsch had already renewed his contract for the 1933-1934 season, the newly appointed members of the Theater Deputation said that the law would allow them to fire him because he was Jewish and politically unreliable. Despite the best efforts of Katsch's lawyer, who claimed that the law did not apply to non-German citizens and said that Katsch was prepared "to totally and loyally stand by the new national regime," Katsch was not able to return to his job.¹⁴¹ Documents produced by City officials suggest that other members of the ensemble denounced Katsch by saying that he had previously spoken in a pro-communist or internationalist manner.¹⁴² Adding insult to injury, Mayor Friedrich Krebs personally wrote a letter to Katsch saying he had been fired because his performances were alien to the "public good" and "his non-Aryan heritage" prevented him from being a loyal subject of the new "national state."¹⁴³ Katsch would eventually immigrate to America and managed for a time to survive off of bit roles in Hollywood films. In 1956, he tried unsuccessfully to re-gain his spot as a player at the theater he had been forced out of twenty-three years earlier.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴⁰ IFS Magistratsakten 7.965 Städtische Bühnen: Bühnenmitglieder 1930-1935; IFS Magistratsakten 5,040 Personalamt: Durchführung des Berufsbeamtengesetzes (Gesetz zur Wiederherstellung des Berufsbeamtentums vom 07.04.1933): Meldungen der einzelnen Dienststellen 1933 Bl. 173.

¹⁴¹ IFS Personalakten 10.030 – Katz, Isser *28.1.1893 [Katsch, Kurt = Bühnenname] Bl. 218-219, 188, 190, 195-196.

¹⁴² IFS Magistratsakten 7.965 Städtische Bühnen: Bühnenmitglieder 1930-1935

¹⁴³ IFS Personalakten 10.030 – Katz, Isser *28.1.1893 [Katsch, Kurt = Bühnenname] Bl 191.

¹⁴⁴ Bettina Schültke makes the following claim about Katsch's Hollywood career: "Paradoxically, the Jewish emigrant had to mainly play SS-men and other Nazis," Bettina Schültke, *Theater oder Propaganda? Die Städtischen Bühnen Frankfurt am Main 1933-1945* (Frankfurt: Waldemar Kramer, 1997), 98; "Vom Ghetto ins Ghetto/Frankfurter Erinnerungen. Schauspieler Kurt Katsch und Publizisten Martha Wertheimer," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, May 3, 1994.

The city had a slightly harder time firing Lothar Rewalt. For one, officials waited until the end of April to suspend him because he was still needed as a performer in a play entitled “The Four Musketeers.” More importantly, Rewalt had fought at the front during the First World War, technically exempting him from the new Civil Service law. Nevertheless, city officials decided to bend the law and fire Rewalt by claiming that “his internationalist mentality is a hindrance to his further employment”.¹⁴⁵ Rewalt would go on to work at the *Theater in der Josefstadt* in Vienna before immigrating to the United States, where he took part in German-language stage productions in New York City.¹⁴⁶

Mathilde Einzig was the last Jew to perform at the *Schauspielhaus* until after the end of the Second World War. Although the city and the new direction of the *Städtische Bühnen* had already been able to prematurely end the contracts of other Jewish actors and had managed to get rid of Rewalt, who was technically exempt from the provisions of the new Civil Service law, they decided not to make a similar move against Einzig. Instead, Einzig decided to negotiate an exit from her own contract for two key reasons. Firstly, she did not think she would continue to receive leading roles under the new regime. Secondly, she was preparing to emigrate to Switzerland in order to reunite with the other members of her immediate family, who had already moved there after her husband had suffered a nervous breakdown in March of that year.¹⁴⁷ At the start of July, Einzig sent a letter to General Manager Meissner in which she tactfully said that she did not want “to stand in the way of the reconstruction of the theater.” She then offered to leave

¹⁴⁵IFS Magistratsakten 5.040 Personalamt: Durchführung des Berufsbeamtengesetzes (Gesetz zur Wiederherstellung des Berufsbeamtentums vom 07.04.1933): Meldungen der einzelnen Dienststellen 1933 Bl. 174; IFS Magistratsakten 7.965 Städtische Bühnen: Bühnenmitglieder 1930-1935; IFS Manuskripte S6a/232 Bettina Schültke “Das Frankfurter Schauspielhaus von 1933 bis 1944” Bl. 40-41.

¹⁴⁶ Schültke, *Theater oder Propaganda*, 63, 97.

¹⁴⁷ IFS S1/90-19 Erinnerungen von Frederic L. Brandeis.

the *Schauspielhaus* at the end of the current theater season if the city agreed to deposit 5,000 *Reichsmarks* – a number well below the amount of money remaining on her contract – into a foreign bank account. Despite some initial hesitation, officials at the theater and Mayor Friedrich Krebs soon assented to her offer because it would provide a clean end to her career and save the cash-strapped city several thousands of *Reichsmarks*.¹⁴⁸

For her final performance on August 28, 1933, Einzig played the lead role in the farce “The Master Boxer.” Newspaper articles on the event in Frankfurt’s three largest newspapers demonstrate that the Nazi take over had not yet diminished her adoring fan base. The liberal *Frankfurter Zeitung* said Einzig had managed throughout her career to create a community through performances that were “often surprising, [and] always emotionally rewarding (*gemüthhaft bereichernd*).”¹⁴⁹ An article in the *General Anzeiger* provided a brief overview of her steady rise from a lowly ensemble member to a leading player and argues that “she was always closest to other Frankfurters when she babbled in her unadulterated Frankfurt dialect and took the stage as any brassy and vigorous figure from Old Frankfurt.”¹⁵⁰ Even the conservative *Frankfurter Nachrichten* proclaimed that Einzig “had proved herself as a true artist as well as a real person in every one of her roles throughout the years.”¹⁵¹ Einzig’s legacy briefly continued after she had left Germany. The critic Rudolf Geck writes in the city’s annual Theater Almanac from 1934 that Einzig’s final performance showed off her incredible talent for bringing theatrical roles to life and, directly addressing the actress, argues that Frankfurt’s “gratitude remains for the

¹⁴⁸ Einzig never received the full promised sum from the city’s government. As late as 1961 she was still using legal channels to try to get the full amount. IFS Personalakten 45.990 Mathilde Einzig Bd. 2., Bl. 107, 109, 113, 116; IFS S1/90-8 Wiedergutmachung for Mathilde Einzig 1958-1961

¹⁴⁹ “Abschied von Mathilde Einzig,” *Frankfurter Zeitung*, August 29, 1933.

¹⁵⁰ “Abschied von Mathilde Einzig,” *General Anzeiger*, August 29, 1933

¹⁵¹ “Abschied von Mathilde Einzig,” *Frankfurter Nachrichten*, August 29, 1933.

thousands of evenings you gave us.”¹⁵² However, for all this praise, not one of these articles mentions the actual reason for Einzig’s early retirement at the prime of her career.

The removal of Jews from the *Städtische Bühnen* did not automatically mean the removal of the cultural policies and visions that Jewish figures had previously created and supported. Mayor Friedrich Krebs and Hans Meissner decided to appropriate the *Römerbergfestspiele* for Nazi propaganda purposes. Shortly after issuing orders to fire Jews working for the *Städtische Bühnen*, Krebs gave a speech to the Magistrate and City Council in which he said the city needed to continue holding the event because it had met with international attention and had the potential to bolster tourism and the local economy.¹⁵³ The event began to take place on an annual basis and continued to be a fixture of Frankfurt’s summers until the breakout of the Second World War. By 1936, Meissner was dubiously claiming that although “[the inaugural] performances were scheduled to be a one-time event, they were immediately repeated and expanded after the [Nazi] takeover of power.”¹⁵⁴

Despite the Nazi’s take-over of the *Städtische Bühnen*, the continued existence of the independently owned *Neues Theater* stood in the way of a complete Nazification of the city’s stages. Shortly after assuming his new position as Mayor of the city, Friedrich Krebs asked the Prussian Ministry for Academics, Art, and Education to forcibly place a commissar in charge of the theater because its consistent production of “shallow comedies of manners in which adultery etc. are celebrated as mere parlor games...has a corrosive influence on the public.” Moreover, he claimed that the “Jew [Arthur] Hellmer” was under-paying his employees. When no help came

¹⁵² Rudolf Geck, “Nachrufe und Jubiläen,” in *Almanach für Opernhaus, Schauspielhaus, Neues Theater. Amtliche Ausgabe 1934* (Frankfurt: Max Koebeke, 1934), 26-27.

¹⁵³ IFS Magistratsakten 7.946 Freilichttheater Römerbergfestspiele 1932-1935 März Bl. 6.

¹⁵⁴ Mohr, *Römerberg*, 208; Hans Meissner, “Der Römerberg als Festspielstatt,” in *Führer durch die kulturellen Einrichtungen der Stadt Frankfurt am Main*, ed. Richard Oehler, 32-38 (Frankfurt: Diesterweg, 1936), 36.

from the central government, Krebs and other members of the City Magistrate decided that their best course of action would be to raise the amount of taxes the theater had to pay and wait until it was no longer profitable enough to compete with the re-organized *Städtische Bühnen*.¹⁵⁵

This proved to be a false assumption because of a sharp drop in revenue at the *Städtische Bühnen* in 1933. Ironically, it seems the Nazis themselves had overlooked the degree to which Jews had been a financial motor for cultural life in the city. In 1934, city officials estimated that 550 Jews had dropped their subscriptions to the *Städtische Bühnen* during the previous year. Furthermore, the dissolution of the Patrons' Association, up to ninety-percent of whose members were Jewish, removed a reliable source of donations for larger projects that the city could not immediately afford. The deleterious effect of the drop in Jewish patronage could also be seen in other areas of Frankfurt's cultural life. Subscriptions and single-ticket sales to concerts put on by the *Museumsgesellschaft* were down by forty percent and both the *Frankfurter Kunstverein* and the *Städel* Museum lost approximately half of their members.¹⁵⁶ Meanwhile, the *Neues Theater* continued to weather the storm and in December 1933, it hosted three sold-out guest performances of the Berlin branch of the Cultural Association of German Jews' traveling production of Lessing's "Nathan the Wise" starring Katsch as Shylock.¹⁵⁷

By the middle of 1934, the *Neues Theater* was the only Jewish-owned theater remaining in Germany, infuriating City officials and local members of the Nazi Party. In a letter to *Gauleiter* Jakob Sprenger on November 11, 1934, Friedrich Bethge, the Deputy General

¹⁵⁵ IFS Magistratsakten 8.000 Neues Theater 1931-1939.

¹⁵⁶ *Dokumente*, 86-87.

¹⁵⁷ "Kulturarbeit des Monats. Nathan der Weise. Gastspiel des Kulturbundes deutscher Juden," *Gemeindeblatt der Israelitischen Gemeinde Frankfurt am Main*, December 4, 1933; LBI MF 1349 Programm Jüdischer Kulturbund (Berlin, Germany) Jahrgang 1; IFS Chroniken S5/264 – Karl Katsch (Isi Katz) "Erinnerungen 1893-1934" Bl. 187-189.

Manager of the *Städtische Bühnen*, provided a summary of the ways in which the “non-Aryan leadership” of the *Neues Theater* harmed the cultural work of the city and the Third Reich. According to Bethge the theater’s total artistic freedom meant that they could construct a schedule that included plays by Jewish authors, it still employed “a number of non-Aryan artists,” and that it was still a formidable rival to the *Städtische Bühnen* because it could put on older and newer plays that most Nazi-run theaters would refuse to produce. Bethge’s letter also had an added sense of urgency because of additional complaints that uniformed members of the *Sturmabteilung* (SA) and the Nazi Party had been spotted in the audience of performances at the *Neues Theater*. Bethge closed his letter by suggesting that the city should reach out to the Ministry of Propaganda for funds that would allow it to buy out Hellmer and take over the theater.¹⁵⁸

Hellmer was eventually called to Berlin at the start of 1935 and forced to accede to a plan which resulted in the aryanization of the theater. At the end of April, Hellmer sold the majority of the theater’s shares to the city government under the condition that its present roster of actors and actresses would remain employed until the end of June. The final independent season of the *Neues Theater* ended with a production of Lessing’s “*Minna von Barnheim*” and it re-opened three months later as the “small house” of the *Städtische Bühnen*.¹⁵⁹ Hellmer returned to Vienna where he served as the Director of the *Theater an der Wien* and later went to England after Austria’s *Anschluss* with Germany in 1938. Following the war, he became the first allied-

¹⁵⁸ IFS Magistratsakten 8.000 Neues Theater 1931-1939; Siedhoff, *Das Neue Theater*, 23-24.

¹⁵⁹ IFS Magistratsakten 8.000 Neues Theater 1931-1939; Artur Holde, “Abschied vom Neuen Theater,” *Gemeindeblatt der Israelitischen Gemeinde Frankfurt am Main*, June 11, 1935; Müller-Ruzika, “Notizen,” 29.

appointed Director of the *Deutsches Schauspielhaus* in Hamburg, where he remained until his death in 1961.¹⁶⁰

The long history of Jewish integration and involvement at the Hoch Conservatory came to a swift end during the initial wave of *Gleichschaltung* in Frankfurt. Following the resignation of Oswald Feis, the Jewish chairman of the institute's Conservatorium, a new leadership committee formed with the intention of "reorganizing" the faculty of the institute. In practice, this meant that all of the Jewish and foreign members of the faculty were informed that they had been fired shortly before the end of the school's Easter vacation. By October, the school had been renamed as Frankfurt's Higher School for Music and Theater and its new leadership committee included the Nazi Mayor Friedrich Krebs, General Manager Hans Meissner, and Willi Stöhr, an adjutant to Gauleiter Jakob Sprenger.¹⁶¹

The *Museumsgesellschaft* struggled to adhere to both the demands of the new Nazi regime and to remain as fiscally solvent as possible. The association had already been on the verge of bankruptcy and had nearly halved the number of concerts it offered during its 1932-1933 season.¹⁶² Sensing the urgency of the times, the members of its board unanimously named Mayor Friedrich Krebs as a replacement member for Ludwig Landmann and Chairmen Gustav Spieß, who had previously worked with Landmann to counter antisemitic criticism in the *Frankfurter Volksblatt*, prudently decided to join the Nazi's Militant League (Kampfbund) for German Culture.¹⁶³ Nevertheless, Spieß and other members of the board reached out to former and current Jewish members in September 1933 because of their fear of financial insolvency.

¹⁶⁰ IFS Personengeschichte S2/2227 Arthur Hellmer.

¹⁶¹ Cahn, *Das Hoch'sche Konservatorium*, 299; Hanau, *Musikinstitutionen*, 51-55.

¹⁶² Hanau, *Musikinstitutionen*, 17.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, 57-58.

Their efforts could not stem the tide and by October 24th they had lost over 17,000 *Reichsmarks* in subscription revenue. In the face of chronic financial problems, the board entered into a deal in December 1934 that essentially put the *Museumsgesellschaft* into the hands of the city.¹⁶⁴ That being said, the former Jewish City Councilor Richard Merton was still listed as the board of the association until 1936, implying that some Jews could still formally remain members of the group. By 1937, however, there was not even a trace of former Jewish members in the official published history of the organization.¹⁶⁵

Regarding municipal museums, the new city government struggled to remove Georg Swarzenski and Guido Schoenberger from their positions as civil servants. Swarzenski was suspended on 28 March 1933. In April, the city government received a vitriolic letter complaining that Swarzenski had “corroded the good collection of the *Städel* Gallery with a number of shoddy, foreign-racial (*fremdrässig*), and cultural-bolshevist works” and had neglected to add valuable contemporary works by local artists. Swarzenski was soon fired from his position as General Manager of Museums, but managed to remain the Director of the private *Städel* Institute until 1937.¹⁶⁶ He would later move to the United States and worked as a Research Fellow at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston.¹⁶⁷ Although Schoenberger was

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 58-64.

¹⁶⁵ Helene de Bary, *Museum. Geschichte der Museumsgesellschaft zu Frankfurt a.M.* (Frankfurt: H.L. Brönners, 1937).

¹⁶⁶ Six months later, a tribunal of city officials in November said that many of the charges brought against Swarzenski “have not been proven and some have even been refuted.” IFS S1-468/29 Nachlass: Alfred Wolters – Untersuchungsangelgenheit Prof. Dr. Swarzenski; IFS Magistratsakten S/1.526 Bl. 25, 44; Tanja Baensch, “Das Museum als ‘lebendiger Körper.’ Die Geschichte der Städtischen Galerie im Städelschen Kunstinstitut bis 1945,” in *Museum im Widerspruch. Das Städel und der Nationalsozialismus*, ed. Uwe Fleckner and Max Hollein, 25-95 (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2011), 69; Esther Tisa Francini, “Im Spannungsfeld zwischen privater und öffentlicher Institution. Das Städelsche Kunstinstitut und seine Direktoren 1933-1945,” in *Museum im Widerspruch. Das Städel und der Nationalsozialismus*, ed. Uwe Fleckner and Max Hollein, 93-147 (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2011), 100-103.

suspended in March and fired in April, he was soon allowed back into his position because he had received an award for being wounded while fighting in the First World War, thus exempting him from the provisions of the Law for the Restitution of the Civil Service. Indeed, the historian Sebastian Farnung discovered that Schoenberger even became a “lifelong” civil servant in 1934. A year later, however, the city used the stipulations of the Nuremberg racial laws to fire him.¹⁶⁸ Schoenberger emigrated in 1939 and went on to be a Research fellow at the Jewish Museum and an adjunct faculty member at New York University’s Institute of Fine Arts.¹⁶⁹

Conclusion

Between 1914 and 1933, Jews were thoroughly integrated into the cultural life of Frankfurt am Main. Jewish artists could be found on the stage and behind the scenes at the *Städtische Bühnen* and the *Neues Theater*. Local artists such as the opera singer Hermann Schramm and the actress Mathilde Einzig were treated like celebrities and hailed as guardians of local culture. Municipal and private theaters produced shows with Jewish themes and repeatedly hosted guest performances by the Hebrew-language theater troop *Habima*. Max Michel, Georg Swarzenski, Guido Schoenberger, and other many Jewish bureaucrats and politicians worked in the upper-level management of major cultural institutions such as Frankfurt’s Municipal Museums. The staff of the Hoch Conservatory included the Director Bernhard Sekles, Mátyás Seiber, Ludwig Rottenberg, and several other Jewish musical experts.

¹⁶⁷ Perry T. Rathbone, “Swarzenski,” 53-55; George H. Edgell and Edwin J. Hipkiss, “Preamble,” in *Essays in Honor of Georg Swarzenski*, ed. Oswald Goetz, 7-8 (Chicago: Henry Regnery Co., 1951).

¹⁶⁸ IFS S2/18.090 Personengeschichte Guido Schoenberger; IFS Personalakten 134.779 Guido Schoenberger Bl. 52; Farnung, *Kulturpolitik*, 110-111.

¹⁶⁹ IFS S2/18.090 Personengeschichte Guido Schoenberger; “Dr. Guido Schoenberger, Art Historian, 83, Dies,” *The New York Times*, August 23, 1974. The recorded testimony of Schoenberger’s daughter, Eva, is available in the Virtual History Archive of the Shoah Foundation at the University of Southern California. Heimer, Eva. Interview 45669 Segment 67. *Visual History Archive*, USC Shoah Foundation, 1998. Accessed 17 April 2018.

A key reason for this was the active involvement of Frankfurt's liberal-leaning municipal government in almost every area of the city's cultural life. Well before they municipalized the *Städtische Bühnen* in the late 1920s, the Frankfurt's Magistrate and City Council was a majority stakeholder and had the right to organize different supervisory boards that oversaw hiring practices, admissions costs, the artistic schedule, and guest performances at the Opera House and the Municipal Theater. Following the First World War, the hyperinflation of the early Weimar Republic encouraged the city to play an increasingly important role in subsidizing and supervising private institutions such as the Hoch Conservatory and the *Museumsgesellschaft*. Liberal city officials also championed Jewish cultural activities by providing loans and moral support to the creation of the Museum of Jewish Antiquities.

It also did not hurt that Jews were among Frankfurt's more avid and important patrons of the arts. Jews accounted for up to ninety percent of the Patron's Association of the *Städtische Bühnen* and fourteen out of one hundred members of the *Museumsgesellschaft*. Moreover, the decision of some Jews to retreat from public spaces following the Nazi takeover of the city government sparked or exacerbated existing revenue crises for many artistic institutions.

Although local Nazi officials quickly moved to neutralize Jewish elements during the spring of 1933, it took them nearly two years to completely purge Jews from private and municipal cultural institutions. In some cases, this was due to an actual adherence to the legal principles of the Law for the Restoration of the Professional Civil Service, which included clauses exempting Jewish bureaucrats who had been in state service before 1 August 1914, Jewish veterans of World War I, and the parents or children of Jewish soldiers who had lost their lives in the same conflict.¹⁷⁰ At the same time, however, enterprising bureaucrats could easily

¹⁷⁰ Richard Breitman, "Gesetz zur Wiederherstellung des Berufsbeamtentums (7. April 1933)," *Deutschland unter der Herrschaft des Nationalsozialismus (1933-1945), Deutsche Geschichte in Dokumenten und Bildern*

find ways to bend the law to the ideology and favor of the Nazi regime. Thus, even though the Jewish actor Lothar Rewalt had served in the German army during the war, officials fired him in May 1933 by claiming he had an internationalist world view that would not allow him to full-heartedly support the “National State.” Similarly, the city’s Personnel Bureau fired Rubin Itkes, Mozes Slager, and Ary Schuyer in 1934 because they said the three men had consistently poisoned the atmosphere at the orchestra of the Opera House.

Questions of masculine honor, utility, and popularity also slowed down the complete disintegration of Jews from Frankfurt’s cultural life. Hans Meissner, the new General Manager of the combined *Städtische Bühnen*, personally asked the mayor to allow Benno Ziegler to remain at the Opera House until he reached his twenty-fifth stage jubilee in January 1934. Perhaps fearing blow back, city officials never broached the idea of firing Mathilde Einzig due to issues of political reliability. Similarly, the alto Magda Spiegel was not only kept on at the opera because she was a crowd favorite, but also because Meissner did not think that the city would be able to find an appropriate replacement for her.

Ultimately, 1935 should be seen as a year when the local Nazi government finally succeeded in purging Jews from the city’s cultural life. Over the course of that year Arthur Hellmer was forced to sell the *Neues Theater* to the city, Magda Spiegel was fired from the opera house, and the stipulations of the Nuremberg Laws were used to push Guido Schoenberger out of Frankfurt’s History Museum. By this point in time, the intensification of municipal involvement in private artistic activities – a trend that began under the city’s former Liberal and Social-Democratic hegemony – had already ensured the full *Gleichschaltung* or municipalization of many formerly independent institutions.

(Washington, DC: German Historical Institute), http://ghdi.ghi-dc.org/sub_document.cfm?document_id=1520&language=german (accessed August 29, 2019).

In closing, let us return to the fate of Mathilde Einzig. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, Einzig joined her family in Switzerland after her final performance at the *Schauspielhaus*. While there, she found occasional work in Zurich as an understudy for the actress Therese Giehse at the renowned political cabaret troop *Pfeffermühle*, but she soon came to see Switzerland as the last stop of her theatrical career while her family prepared for further emigration to Palestine.¹⁷¹

The family arrived in Haifa in 1934 and soon decided to open a hotel and café in *Ramot Hashavim*, a kibbutz not far from Tel Aviv that specialized in chicken farming and had a population of primarily middle-class German-Jewish emigres who had arrived in 1933.¹⁷² In little time, the café at Hotel Brandeis became a magnet for Frankfurters and other exiled German Jews throughout Palestine that longed to recreate the kind of *Kaffeeklatsch* they had enjoyed in their old homeland. In fact, the café at Hotel Brandeis could be seen as an effort to recreate spaces of sociability such as cafes that were an important part of the European-Jewish encounter with urban modernity.¹⁷³ It also did not hurt that Einzig apparently knew how to bake an excellent apple strudel. The hotel even hosted the famous maestro Arturo Toscanini during two of his engagements with the nascent Israel Philharmonic Orchestra.¹⁷⁴ Despite the initial success

¹⁷¹ IFS S1/90-19 Erinnerungen von Frederic L. Brandeis. For more information on Giehse and *Pfeffermühle* see Helga Keiser-Hayne, *Beteiligt euch, es geht um eure Erde. Erika Mann und ihr politisches Kabarett die "Pfeffermühle" 1933-1937* (Munich: Spangenberg, 1990); Renate Schmidt, *Therese Giehse: "Na, dann wollen wir den Herrschaften mal was bieten!" Biografie mit Verzeichnissen der Theater-, Film- und Fernsehrollen* (Munich: Langen Müller, 2008)

¹⁷² IFS S1/90-19 Erinnerungen von Frederic L. Brandeis; *Ramoth Hashavim, 1933-1973*, edited by Nora Ullmann (Ramot Hashavim, publisher not identified, 1974); Anne Maas, "Ramot Hashavim," *The Jerusalem Post*, January 20, 1954.

¹⁷³ Scott Ury, *Barricades and Banners: the Revolution of 1905 and the Transformation of Warsaw Jewry* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2012); Sarah Wobick-Segev, *Homes Away from Home: Jewish Belonging in Twentieth-Century Paris, Berlin, and St. Petersburg* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2018).

¹⁷⁴ IFS S1/90-19 Erinnerungen von Frederic L. Brandeis; R. Loewy, "Mathilde Einzigs Hotel," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, December 5, 1958; Arnsberg, *Lexikon*, 100-102.

of her family's new enterprise, business slowed down as many Jews from city's such as Tel Aviv began to eschew longer trips in the countryside roads following the Arab Revolt of 1936.¹⁷⁵ By the end of the Second World War, Einzig's husband had died, her eldest son had moved to England, and the hotel had gone bankrupt. Due to financial hardships, Einzig moved to England in 1947 and Zurich in 1949 in order to live with members of her late husband's family.¹⁷⁶

Shortly after arriving in Zurich, her fortunes changed dramatically. Richard Weichert, who had recently returned to his old post as the General Manager of the *Schauspielhaus*, invited Einzig to return to Frankfurt for a guest performance in one of her favorite roles: Frau Funk in the dialect farce *Alt Frankfurt*.¹⁷⁷ Einzig's personal papers reveal the intense optimism occasioned by this visit that allowed her to see old friends, former colleagues, former students, and, above all, to finally return to the stage. Einzig recalls that on the night of the performance:

I actually played Frau Funk, like seventeen years ago. My beloved Frankfurt public was there and I was honored and applauded without end. I received flower after flower and, to this day I still hear the audience chanting: "come back!" Was that not glorious dream? Frankfurt should also dream this way! It should arise new and beautiful from the rubble. Surely this will come. I believe in dreams. How often they are fulfilled! All that is past is only a metaphor!¹⁷⁸

Einzig received additional invitations to star as Gudula Rothschild in several performances of Carl Rößler's play "The Five Frankfurters" at the Rémond Theater in 1952 and 1953. In 1957, she returned to Frankfurt for good and the Magistrate soon voted to name her an honorary

¹⁷⁵ The hotel had been a popular spot for German-Jewish emigres who craved the kind of *Kaffeeklatsch* they had frequently enjoyed in their homeland. Years later, at least one patron would fondly recall eating the hotel's "excellent apple strudel." R. Loewy, "Mathilde Einzigs Hotel," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, December 5, 1958; Arnsberg, *Lexikon*, 100-102.

¹⁷⁶ IFS S1/90-8 Bl. 1-2, 57-59, 62.

¹⁷⁷ IFS Personengeschichte S2/963 Mathilde Einzig. "Muffel und Compagnie," *Frankfurter Neue Presse*, February 2, 1963.

¹⁷⁸ IFS Personengeschichte S2/963 Mathilde Einzig.

member of the *Städtische Bühnen*.¹⁷⁹ Einzig died in Frankfurt on New Year's Day 1963 and a large ceremony soon took place at the city's main cemetery to honor a Jewish woman in which Frankfurters came together to honor the life of a Jewish woman who had once so perfectly embodied the spirit of the city on the stage.¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁹ IFS Personalakten 45.990 Mathilde Einzig Bl. 249; IFS S1/90-3 Bl. 3, Bl. 11-16.

¹⁸⁰ IFS Personengeschichte S2/963 Mathilde Einzig.

CHAPTER 4: FROM LESSING TO HITLER: PUBLIC EDUCATION AND INTEGRATION

The late 1920s and early 1930s were a trying time for the staff and students at public schools in Frankfurt, but perhaps nowhere more so than at the *Adlerflychtschule* and *Klingerschule*, two all-boys schools in the district of *Nordend*. The former institution had experienced a steady erosion of its new enrollment numbers for the better part of a decade. According to a 1929 report by the school's director, wealthier parents in the surrounding area preferred that their sons attend the more prestigious *Musterschule*, a classical *Gymnasium*, and Catholic and Jewish parents were increasingly apt to send their children to private denominational schools.¹ The situation grew more dire in March 1932 when the city government decided to merge the two schools into one institution at the start of the next school year, citing a nearly twenty-five percent enrollment drop at all of the higher schools in Frankfurt, the looming end of the post-World War I baby boom, and an urgent need to reduce municipal education expenditures.²

Nevertheless, classes continued as usual at the combined schools and even though the number of Jewish students was low, topics regarding the place and representation of Jews in society were still very much present in the school's curriculum. Students in German literature classes read the playwright Gotthold Ephraim Lessing's *Nathan the Wise*, a quintessential

¹ IFS Schulamts 4.506 Jahresberichte der Adlerflychtschule.

² All things considered, the situation could have been worse for the staff of the two schools. The City Magistrate simultaneously decreed that the *Humboldtschule*, an all-girls' school, would close after the Easter break that year. IFS Magistratsakten 7.692 Adlerflychtschule; IFS Ortsgeschichte S3/M 25.979 Klingerschule: Geschichte.

enlightenment era call for tolerance and respect between Jews, Christians, and Muslims. A number of students were also exposed to William Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice*. At least one teacher encouraged his students to directly engage with the play's problematic legacy by assigning an essay prompt asking if it "should be seen as a manifestation of antisemitism."³

A year later, the spirit of the school changed dramatically in the wake of the Nazi Party's consolidation of local and national power. On 22 March 1933, the school's director requested that his institution henceforth be known as the *Adolf-Hitler-Schule*, thus making it the first school in Germany to bear the name of the *Führer*. A ceremony to mark the occasion was held on May 5th.⁴ A few weeks later, one of the first eighty-three graduates of the *Adolf-Hitler-Schule* improbably went on to attend a rabbinical seminary.⁵ Given the swift evolution of the school, one has to wonder if tolerance had still factored into most school's curricula at the end of the Weimar Republic and whether all of Frankfurt's educational institutions were so easily flipped into hotbeds of Nazism's anti-Jewish animus.

This chapter looks at Jewish integration in the realm of education in Frankfurt, with a particular emphasis on the experiences of students and faculty at public schools and the Goethe University of Frankfurt. The former served as the primary space of socialization and interconfessional interaction between the city's Jewish, Protestant, and Catholic youth. This was no accident, as government officials had consciously strived to use public education and school curricula as a means for fostering tolerance since local branches of liberal political parties first took control of Frankfurt's government during the final quarter of the nineteenth century. In a

³ IFS Schulamamt 4.506 Jahresberichte der Adlerflychtschule.

⁴ It appears that the director erred in his haste. In an April 2nd letter he apologized to Mayor Friedrich Krebs for not involving the city more in the process. Krebs assented to the Director's offer to wait until April 21st, a day after Hitler's birthday. IFS Magistratsakten 7.692 Adlerflychtschule

⁵ IFS Schulamamt 4.506 Jahresberichte der Adlerflychtschule.

similar vein, the founders of the Goethe University, many of whom were Jewish, hoped to embody this new institution with a liberal ethos which, contrary to the established norms of higher education in Germany, would ensure that religion would have no impact on hiring decisions for chaired professorships. By that same token, though, schools and universities were easily incorporated into the frontline of Nazi efforts to impart their ideology into the everyday lives of impressionable students once the party came to power in 1933. Moreover, the intentions of the founders and government officials during the Weimar era could easily be circumvented by the actions of individual school directors, teachers, and university professors. Indeed, members of these groups as well as the student bodies of German universities had a reputation for nationalist conservatism or right-wing politics that opposed or barely supported the very existence of the first German Republic.⁶

To that end, this chapter considers several key questions in relation to municipal schools and the university. How did school authorities in Frankfurt develop and implement policies focused on supporting interconfessional tolerance and Jewish integration? How effective were these policies in the face of chronic economic and political instability during the Weimar Republic? To what extent did the University of Frankfurt live up to the tolerant ideals of its founders, especially in light of a Nazi student group's ability to take control of student government in the middle of the 1920s? Finally, how dramatically did the chances for Jewish integration in public education change during and after the spring of 1933? At what point was it more likely for teachers to assign a text from Hitler, rather than one by Lessing? When did a formerly integrated space transform into a segregated one?

⁶ Two works that treat this topic are Fritz K. Ringer, *The Decline of the German Mandarins: The German Academic Community, 1890-1933* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1969); Konrad H. Jarausch, *Deutsche Studenten 1800-1970* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1984); Eric D. Weitz, *Weimar Germany: Promise and Tragedy. New and Expanded Edition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013), 92, 127, 331.

Educational Structure and Student Distribution in Frankfurt

During the latter half of the nineteenth century, Frankfurt evolved from an educational backwater into a city whose very name evoked excellence in public education. This was largely due to the centrality of education policy in the ideological programs of the liberal political parties that dominated Frankfurt's municipal government after the Prussian Empire annexed the city in 1866. In particular, local liberals believed that creating non-denominational schools would combat discrimination and foster a greater degree of tolerance amongst the city's Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish youths. Beginning in 1872, the city government abolished denominational school boards and respectively placed elementary and higher schools under the supervision of a municipal School Deputation and a Curatorium for Higher Schools.⁷

Although officials used public schools to promote religious tolerance, the three-tiered structure of the educational system in Prussia tended to reify class distinctions. At the top were the so-called "higher schools," which prepared students for the *Abitur*, a series of exit exams that were a requirement for attending German universities. There were several different kinds of higher schools ranging from the humanist *Gymnasium*, which provided boys with a classical education and copious instruction in Latin and Greek, to *Oberrealschulen*, which focused more on the sciences and modern languages including French and English. Below these were *Mittelschulen*, which were less prestigious but provided students with training in French extensive exposure to different forms of math and science. At the lowest level were *Volksschulen*, which provided eight years of free public education to children starting at the age

⁷ More information on the Liberal project to create so-called *Simultanschulen* can be found in Jan Palmowski, *Urban Liberalism in Imperial Germany: Frankfurt am Main, 1866-1914* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 147-205. Looking ahead, Frankfurt's model was, generally speaking, close to the norm of most municipal school systems in Germany by the middle of the 1920s. A series of compromises in the Reichstag during the early days of the Weimar Republic and per the Reich Elementary School Law of 1920, most cities had non-denominational schools offering religious education classes that were separated by confession. Detlev J. K. Peukert *The Weimar Republic: The Crisis of Classical Modernity*, trans. Richard Deveson (New York: Hill and Wang, 1989) 141-3.

of six. In theory, any of the children at *Volksschulen* could apply to transfer to a higher school after the end of their third school year. In practice, this rarely occurred because most parents of school-aged children could not afford to pay the mandatory tuition for higher and *Mittelschulen* in Frankfurt. Moreover, before 1920, many wealthy families paid to send their children to three-year preparatory classes attached to several of higher schools which taught math, writing, and reading at an accelerated rate. This practice all but guaranteed a lack of economic diversity in most of the city's public schools by channeling poorer students into overcrowded *Volksschulen* and wealthier pupils into higher schools that had a nation-wide reputation for excellence in teaching.⁸

Frankfurt's education policy also reinforced prevailing gender norms by separating boys and girls into different schools. At the start of the twentieth century, families had to pay twice as much for their daughters to attend a higher school and female students were not allowed to take the *Abitur* until 1910.⁹

In addition to these secular public schools, Frankfurt was home to several private Jewish *Volksschulen* and higher schools affiliated with the *Israelitische Gemeinde* (IG) and the *Israelitische Religionsgesellschaft*. The oldest was the *Philanthropin*, a higher school affiliated with the IG that had been associated with liberal Judaism and educational reform since its inception during the first decade of the nineteenth century. The founders of the school believed

⁸ The inherent inequality between higher and lower schools manifested itself in many other ways. Teachers and directors at higher schools had salaries that were double what their colleagues earned at lower schools. Also, before 1914, children at higher schools had a longer Christmas vacation because bureaucrats in the city's school Bureau argued that lower class students likely did not live in buildings with sufficient sources of indoor heating. Kurt Schäfer, *Schulen und Schulpolitik in Frankfurt am Main 1900-1945* (Frankfurt: Waldemar Kramer, 1994), 26-64. It should be noted that Frankfurt's system was in line with education in the rest of Imperial Germany, where only ten percent of students went beyond a basic primary school education. Angelika Schaser, "Gendered Germany," in *Imperial Germany 1871-1918*, ed. James Retallack, 128-150 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 133.

⁹ Schäfer, *Schulpolitik*, 44-45.

that it would serve as an institution that would lead Frankfurt's Jews "to German culture and tear down the walls of spiritual division that had arisen from [Jews'] long life in the ghetto."¹⁰

Indeed, the school had attracted Christian students and teachers as early as 1808, a trend that would continue uninterrupted until the early years of the Third Reich.¹¹ In 1853, the separatist IRG opened their own *Realschule* in order to provide an alternative to the *Philanthropin*. The school was later renamed in honor of Samson Raphael Hirsch, who was a dominant force in the creation of the IRG and neo-orthodox Judaism in Central Europe during the latter half of the nineteenth century. Although the school considered itself to be a bulwark against assimilation, its commitment to Hirsch's concept of "*Thora im Derech Erez*" meant that it combined traditional Jewish education with the German humanist educational ideals of *Bildung*.¹² Like the *Philanthropin*, the *Hirsch-Schule* also had non-Jewish staff members including the school porter, a geography teacher, and a gym teacher who lived in an apartment attached to the building.¹³

By the middle of the 1920s, the number of male and particularly female Jewish students attending one of the city's *Mittelschulen* had declined and a whopping sixty-two percent of all Jewish students in Frankfurt attended one of the city's Jewish schools. Although there is a gap in

¹⁰ CAHJP D/Fr3/252 Gedenknummer "Das Philanthropin"

¹¹ More information on the history and development of the *Philanthropin* can be found in Arthur Galliner, "The Philanthropin in Frankfurt: Its Educational and Cultural Significance for German Jewry," *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book* 3 (1958): 169-186; Inge Schlotzhauer, *Das Philanthropin 1804-1942. Die Schule der Israelitischen Gemeinde in Frankfurt am Main* (Frankfurt: Waldemar Kramer, 1990). Another excellent resource on the experience of non-Jewish teachers at the *Philanthropin* is the chronicle of Wilhelm Maurer, a Christian art teacher who worked at the school from 1923 until 1933. IFS Chroniken S5/361 Wilhelm Maurer.

¹² George L. Mosse defines *Bildung* as "An inward process of development through which the inherent abilities of the individual were developed and realized." In particular, German Jews came to see *Bildung* as a force that allowed for optimism in the potential of human nature and the ability to harness knowledge for the benefit of mankind. George L. Mosse, *German Jews Beyond Judaism* (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, 1985), 3

¹³ Rachel Heuberger and Helga Krohn, *Hinaus aus dem Ghetto. Juden in Frankfurt am Main 1800-1950* (Frankfurt: S. Fischer, 1988), 74-76; *Die Samson-Raphael-Hirsch-Schule in Frankfurt am Main. Dokumente, Erinnerungen, Analysen*. Edited by Hans Thiel/Kommission zur Erforschung der Geschichte der Frankfurter Juden (Frankfurt, Waldemar Kramer, 2001), 31, 133, 159.

municipal records on school attendance in Frankfurt during the First World War, there are at least two likely causes for this dramatic shift in school choice among Jewish Frankfurters. First, the IG dramatically expanded its educational offerings over the course of the decade by opening a new girls' school and a *Volksschule* that fed directly into the *Philanthropin*. It also stands to reason that the existence of several foundations sponsoring full or partial scholarships to the *Philanthropin* made the school increasingly attractive to Jewish parents who had been hit by the hyperinflation borne out of the end of the First World War.¹⁴

Most of the Jewish students who attended neither the *Philanthropin* or the *Hirsch-Schule* were concentrated into a small number of the city's non-denominational higher schools. Although Jewish boys and girls respectively made up 7.6 and 14 percent of pupils at the city's higher schools, the overwhelming majority of them went to one of six schools. Approximately three quarters of Jewish boys went to the *Goethe-Gymnasium*, where they made up 36.8 percent of the student body, the *Musterschule*, or the *Wöhlerschule*. The concentration of female Jewish students at public schools was more extreme, with Ninety-eight percent of female Jewish pupils attending the *Viktoriaschule*, the *Elisabethenschule*, or the *Schillerschule*.¹⁵ Wealthier Jewish parents likely sent their children to these schools because of their academic prestige and their geographic proximity to more affluent parts of the city such as *Westend*.

Tolerance and the Curriculum

¹⁴ The *Philanthropin* had also increased its own educational options by rebranding itself as a *Reform-Realgymnasium*. My hunch is that this led many parents who were hit by Germany's years of hyperinflation to send their children to the *Philanthropin* because numerous foundations and charities and foundations offered partial or full tuition scholarships. CAHJP D/Fr3/262 Gedenknummer "Das *Philanthropin*."

¹⁵ *Statistisches Handbuch der Stadt Frankfurt a.M. Zweite Ausgabe. Enthaltend die Statistik der Jahre 1906/07 bis 1926/07*. Im Auftrag des Magistrats Herausgegeben durch das Statistische Amt (Frankfurt: 1928), 178-181. Half of the schools – the *Goethe-Gymnasium*, *Viktoriaschule*, and *Wöhlerschule* – were in *Westend*, two in *Nordend*, and another was in *Sachsenhausen*. Schäfer, *Schulpolitik*, 178.

Prior to 1933, officials in Frankfurt's city government took multiple efforts to ensure that schools would be an important space for promoting Jewish integration and belonging. The nature of religious education classes at public schools is a prime example of the city's pro-integration policies. Lutheran and Catholic religious education classes had long been a common feature at most public schools in Germany. Frankfurt's public schools first began to offer Jewish religious classes in 1902 and by 1916, nearly ninety-six percent of Jewish students were enrolled in these courses at thirty-eight different schools throughout the city.¹⁶ Government officials worked with representatives of the IG to develop the curriculum for these classes and Jewish religion teachers, several of whom were Rabbis employed by the IG, were considered full time members of the teaching staff of their schools. This meant that in addition to assigning official course grades, religion teachers could also serve as members on students' examination committees when they sat for major oral and written exams. The city's School Bureau also made sure that religion classes for Jewish, Catholic, and Lutheran students would always take place at the start or the end of the school day, thus ensuring that students from different confessional backgrounds spent the vast majority of their days in a non-denominational and integrated classroom.¹⁷

In spite of the financial hardships following the First World War, the city government's commitment to supporting Jewish religious education grew stronger over the course of the 1920s. For a brief period at the height of the German hyperinflation in 1923, it looked as if the city was preparing to drastically reduce the number of Jewish education hours at *Volksschulen* in an effort to cut down on municipal expenditures. Members of the Frankfurt School Deputation

¹⁶ "Generalversammlung des Centralvereins Israelitischer Gemeindemitglieder," *Frankfurter Israelitisches Familienblatt*, March 23, 1917.

¹⁷ Cäsar Seligmann, "Die Organisation des jüdischen Religionsunterrichts in Frankfurt a.M.," *Gemeindeblatt der Israelitischen Gemeinde Frankfurt am Main*, October 2, 1922; IFS Schulamt 4.167 Jüdische Religionsunterricht.

suggested this plan of action because most Jewish students were concentrated in only six of the city's many *Volksschulen*: the *Merianschule*, the *Uhlandschule*, the *Karmelitorschule*, the *Varentrappschule*, the *Schwanthalerschule*, and the *Liebfrauenschule*. Moving forward, they planned to only offer municipal financial support for Jewish religious instruction at schools that could form class sections consisting of at least twenty students. However, it appears that the School Deputaiton backed away from these plans once Weimar Germany's economy stabilized in the middle of the 1920s and even supported a further expansion of Jewish religious education classes. As of May 1929, twenty *Volksschulen* across the city offered such courses.¹⁸

The curriculum for Jewish education at *Volksschulen* at the start of the 1930s is another fine example of municipal efforts to reinforce a Jewish sense of belonging in Frankfurt. According to city officials, Jewish religious education in public schools would not only "educate Jewish youth to be religiously ethical individuals and to prepare them for participating in the life of the Jewish community," it would also introduce Jewish students to "religious establishments of their homeland (*Heimat*)" and the cultural life of the city. For example, fourth-year students spent much of their school year focusing on "local Jewish historical images" by visiting Synagogues, the site of the former Jewish ghetto, and learning about the history of the Frankfurt Purim, which commemorated the expulsion and return of the city's Jews during the Fettmilch Uprising during the seventeenth century. Seventh-year students learned about communal welfare institutions such as nurseries, orphanages, the Jewish hospital, and retirement homes. In their eighth and final year at school, the curriculum broadened its focus by teaching students about Jewish associational life in Frankfurt and Germany, having them read and analyze Jewish-

¹⁸ Ibid.; "Israelitischer Religionsunterricht in städt Simultanschulen," *Gemeindeblatt der Israelitischen Gemeinde Frankfurt am Main*, November 3, 1923; Arnold Lazarus, "Bericht über den Israelitischen Religionsunterricht in Frankfurt a. Main über das Schuljahr 1929/1930 (Auszug)," *Gemeindeblatt der Israelitischen Gemeinde Frankfurt am Main*, June 8, 1930.

religious newspapers, visit the Museum of Jewish Antiquity, and also take field trips that would introduce them to some of Germany's oldest Jewish communities in Mainz and Worms.¹⁹ Thus, Frankfurt's school officials also looked to impart a greater sense of national belonging for Jews in the Weimar Republic.

Other elements of the general curriculum at Frankfurt's higher schools incorporated ideas of integration and tolerance into the educational development of elite students. As mentioned in the chapter introduction, upper-level students at numerous schools read and engaged with the themes of Gotthold Ephraim Lessing's play "Nathan the Wise" throughout the course of the Weimar Republic.²⁰ The play, which takes place in Jerusalem during the era of the Crusades, has generally been described as a "quintessential Enlightenment play...[a] defense of rationality and religious and social tolerance," and Nathan, the eponymous hero of the drama, is one of the earliest examples of a positive depiction of a Jew in German literature. Framed as a comedy shaped around mistaken identities, the work comes to a climax when Nathan delivers the famed "ring parable" – a stirring plea to recognize the inherent and equal value of the world's three major monotheistic religions: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.²¹ Annual school reports filed with the city's School Bureau reveal that German literature teachers frequently assigned end-of-

¹⁹ *Lehrplan für die Volksschulen in Frankfurt am Main 1930* (Frankfurt: Brönnner's Drückerei, 1930), 42, 44-46.

²⁰ Municipal records indicate that the play was taught at the *Adlerflychtschule*, the *Goethe-Gymnasium*, the *Helmholtzoberrealschule*, the *Herderschule*, the *Lessing-Gymnasium*, the *Sachsenhäuser Oberrealschule*, the *Schillerschule*, the *Viktoriaschule*, and the *Wöhlerschule*. IFS Schulamt 4.506 Jahresberichte der Adlerflychtschule 1920-1932; IFS Schulamt 7.289 Goethe-Gymnasium Jahresberichte 1920-1936; IFS Schulamt 7.522 Jahresberichte der Helmholtzoberrealschule für die Schuljahre 1921/22 bis 1923/24 und 1930/31 bis 1934/35; IFS Schulamt 7.602 Herderschule Jahresberichte 1920-1936; IFS Schulamt 7.327 Jahresberichte des Lessing-Gymnasiums über die Schuljahre 1920/21 bis 1934/35; IFS Schulamt 7.313 Jahresbericht Sachsenhäuser Oberrealschule 1922; IFS Schulamt 7.839 Jahresberichte der Schillerschule über die Schuljahre 1921/22 bis 1934/35; IFS Schulamt 7.598 Jahresberichte der Vikoriaschule über die Schuljahre 1920/21 bis 1934/35; IFS Schulamt 7.329 Jahresberichte des Wöhlerrealgymnasiums für die Schuljahre 1920/21 bis 1928/29 und 1931/32 bis 1934/35.

²¹ The following is an excellent contemporary translation of the work: Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, *Nathan the Wise: With Related Documents*, trans. Ronald Schechter (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2004).

the-year essay prompts about this particular part of the play. Other essay topics encouraged students to reflect on the ways in which the play embodies the ideas of the enlightenment and how the bigoted Orthodox Christian Patriarch of Jerusalem, another character in the play, represents outdated medieval mentalities.²² Many students were also exposed to Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice* through either German and English literature classes at higher schools.²³

Students at several schools encountered a more positive portrayal of Jews in Franz Grillparzer's *The Jewess of Toledo*, a drama that depicted the doomed love affair between a Spanish king and his Jewish lover, who is cast as the heroine of the piece. The play was borne out of Grillparzer's support of Jewish emancipation and functioned as a liberal critique of Austrian society and Christian Europe in the middle of the nineteenth century. In particular, the murder of the heroine at the end of the third act demonstrates the author's fear that intolerance would win out against new promises of freedom.²⁴

In short, Frankfurt's municipal government played a conscious role in maintaining public schools as important spaces for promoting local Jewish integration and belonging. This evolved naturally out of the city's long-standing tradition of mixed confessional schooling and could be

²² IFS Schulamnt 7.289 Goethe-Gymnasium Jahresberichte 1920-1936; Schulamnt 7.522 Jahresberichte der Helmholtzoberrealschule für die Schuljahre 1921/22 bis 1923/24 und 1930/31 bis 1934/35; IFS Schulamnt 7.602 – Herderschule Jahresberichte 1920-1936; Schulamnt 7.327 Jahresberichte des Lessing-Gymnasiums über die Schuljahre 1920/21 bis 1934/35; Schulamnt 7.839 Jahresberichte der Schillerschule über die Schuljahre 1921/22 bis 1934/35; Schulamnt 7.329 Jahresberichte des Wöhlerrealgymnasiums für die Schuljahre 1920/21 bis 1928/29 und 1931/32 bis 1934/35.

²³ IFS Schulamnt 4.506 Jahresberichte der Adlerflychtschule 1920-1932; IFS Schulamnt 7.712 Jahresberichte der Elisabethenschule über die Schuljahre 1920/21 bis 1934/35; IFS Schulamnt 7.289 Goethe-Gymnasium Jahresberichte 1920-1936; IFS Schulamnt 7.839 Jahresberichte der Schillerschule über die Schuljahre 1921/22 bis 1934/35; IFS Schulamnt 7.312 Sachsenhäuser Oberrealschule Jahresberichte 1922-1934/5; Schulamnt 7.602 Herderschule Jahresberichte 1920-1936; IFS Schulamnt 7.522 Jahresberichte der Helmholtzoberrealschule für die Schuljahre 1921/22 bis 1923/24 und 1930/31 bis 1934/35.

²⁴ IFS Schulamnt 7.522 Jahresberichte der Helmholtzoberrealschule für die Schuljahre 1921/22 bis 1923/24 und 1930/31 bis 1934/35; IFS Schulamnt 7.327 Jahresberichte des Lessing-Gymnasiums über die Schuljahre 1920/21 bis 1934/35; IFS Schulamnt 7.839 Schillerschule Jahresberichte; Dagmar C.G Lorenz, "Die Jüdin von Toledo 1872," in *Encyclopedia of German Literature*, ed. Matthias Konzett (London: Routledge, 2000), 376-377.

seen in religious education and secular classes at most public schools. However, appearances and reality can be drastically different things. The following two sections of this chapter examine the experiences of Jewish teachers and students in Frankfurt’s public schools.

Jewish Teachers Before 1933

Forty-five Jewish teachers worked at public schools in Frankfurt when the Nazi Party took over the city government in March 1933. The vast majority of them were female and exactly two-thirds of them taught in either higher schools or *Volksschulen*.²⁵ An unfortunate reality of the documentary record that has survived in Frankfurt’s municipal archive is that it is far easier to chronicle and analyze these teachers’ demise, rather than their longer careers as educators. Nevertheless, the following section takes a closer look at the lives of five of these teachers in order to highlight the varied backgrounds and experiences that these Jewish men and women had before and during their time in the classroom. Jews from a plurality of religious background and with varying levels of acculturation were able to find work in every level of public schools in Frankfurt. Little stood in the way of their professional mobility and some managed to attain important administrative positions. Others actively worked to promote the city’s educational goals of promoting integration.

Table 1: Distribution of Jewish Teachers in Frankfurt’s Public Schools

Type of School	Male Teachers	Female Teachers	Total
Higher Schools	9	7	16
<i>Mittelschulen</i>	1	2	3
<i>Volksschulen</i>	2	12	14
<i>Berufs-/Fachschulen</i>	2	2	4

²⁵ IFS Schulamt 6.484 Durchführung des Gesetzes zur Wiederherstellung des Berufsbeamtentums.

Horte/Kindergartens	0	8	8
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Anna Kohn was one of the longest-serving teachers in Frankfurt's higher schools. The daughter of a Jewish doctor and a Lutheran woman, she moved to Frankfurt in 1903 to teach French at an all-girls' *Mittelschule*. During that same year, Kohn and her siblings, petitioned the government to legally take their mother's maiden name: Hoffa.²⁶ The exact reasons for this name change are unknown, but one can speculate that Anna or one of her siblings hoped that a less Jewish-sounding last name would have allowed for greater mobility in an era when Jews were still excluded from advancing within or even entering many professions in Germany. Hoffa soon moved to another position at a school in her home town of Kassel. While there, she continued her education by taking courses at the nearby University of Göttingen, acquiring the necessary credentials to teach German at higher schools, and eventually passed an *Abitur* exam at the *Musterschule* in Frankfurt. Hoffa returned to Frankfurt in 1911 to work in a full-time position teaching French and German at the *Viktoriaerschule*, a higher girls' school with an excellent reputation and a high concentration of Jewish students.²⁷ Although there is little remaining archival information on the rest of her career, it appears that Hoffa became a well-respected figure in the city. In October 1918, she was one of nine public school teachers who received a Cross of Honor for their volunteer efforts during the First World War. Over a decade later, Hoffa was promoted to be the director of the *Viktoriaerschule* in the spring of 1930.²⁸ The path that Hoffa charted through the ranks of Frankfurt's school system is a powerful example of the large degree

²⁶ IFS Personalakten 196.409 Anna Hoffa.

²⁷ By the middle of the 1920s, roughly one-third of the students at the *Viktoriaerschule* were Jewish. *Statistisches Handbuch der Stadt Frankfurt a.M. Zweite Ausgabe. Enthaltend die Statistik der Jahre 1906/07 bis 1926/07*. Im Auftrag des Magistrats Herausgegeben durch das Statistische Amt (Frankfurt: 1928), 181

²⁸ IFS Personalakten 196.409 Anna Hoffa.

of mobility afforded to Jews in Frankfurt's civil service up until the end phase of the Weimar Republic.

Although Hoffa may have tried to hide her Jewishness, Jewish teachers with a stronger connection to Judaism also managed to successfully pursue careers at Frankfurt's public schools. A prime example of this trend was Moses Breuer, the grandson of the neo-Orthodox rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch.²⁹ Breuer spent most of his twenties working at his father's yeshiva before studying for a doctorate at the University of Tübingen and earning a spot as a junior-level Latin, English, and French teacher at the *Sachenhäuser Oberrealschule* at the start of 1915. Following a two-year stint in the German artillery between 1916 and 1918, Breuer attempted to gain a more permanent position at the school.³⁰ The odds were not in his favor. This was not because Breuer was bad at his job. In fact, the director of the school had informed the Prussian Ministry of Education in April 1919 that "Herr Dr. Breuer is a hardworking teacher who takes his career seriously and most assiduously tries to fulfill his duties...[and]his leadership is impeccable." However, the director concluded the same letter by stating two reasons why Breuer would probably not be able to land a full-time job as a teacher in Frankfurt. First, there were no open positions at *Sachenhäuser Oberrealschule* and, more importantly, Breuer only had the necessary credentials to teach upper-level classes at higher schools. In the end, Breuer was saved by a stroke of luck when the same director recommended that he fill one of two new teaching positions that the City Council had created for the school in October of that year.³¹ The

²⁹ IFS Personalakten 193.514 Moses Breuer Sachsenhäuser Oberrealschule Bl. 8; IFS Schulamt 7.312 Sachsenhäuser Oberrealschule Jahresberichte 1922-1934/5.

³⁰ Ibid.; IFS Personalakten 193.514 Moses Breuer Sachsenhäuser Oberrealschule Bl. 1-2, 12. For more information on the Breuer Yeshiva and Solomon Breuer's influence on the *Israelitische Gesellschaft* see Krohn, "Erziehung," 70-71; Lowenstein, *Mechanics of Change*, 201-214.

³¹ IFS Personalakten 193.514 Moses Breuer Sachsenhäuser Oberrealschule Bl. 13; IFS Schulamt 2.893 Sachsenhäuser Realgymnasium Lehrer.

willingness of this school's director to advocate on Breuer's behalf speaks to the continued and even growing ability for Jews to work in public education in Frankfurt after the First World War. Breuer continued to teach at this school until he was transferred to the *Adlerflychtschule* in 1931 and subsequently to the *Wöhlerschule* in 1932.³²

Moving beyond the elite halls of higher schools, Emma Guthmann serves as a window onto the experience of teachers at Frankfurt's less prestigious *Volksschulen*. Originally a saleswoman, Guthmann began teaching classes at the *Annaschule* in 1928 when the city needed temporary replacements for two of the school's Jewish teachers that had been granted long-term leaves of absence, including the Social Democratic City Council Member Bertha Jourdan. Her time at this school ended two years later following a series of disastrous classroom observations.³³ Undeterred, Guthmann went on to work at two other schools, providing instruction in topics including Jewish religion and natural history. When the same city official returned to conduct classroom observations in February 1933, Guthmann passed with high marks. The final report in Guthmann's personnel file praises her ability to creatively teach children about episodes from Frankfurt's and Germany's Jewish history and, in gendered language, says that her prior lack of disciplinary rigor was the result of her having "lost connection to schools and children because of her many years working in a different vocation" (*Fremdberuf*).³⁴

³² Schulamt 7.312 Sachsenhäuser Oberrealschule Jahresberichte 1922-1934/5; IFS Personalakten 193.514 Moses Breuer Sachsenhäuser Oberrealschule Bl. 102-104.

³³ In her report, the municipal employee criticized Guthmann for lacking the necessary discipline to maintain order in a remedial classroom full of young boys and suggested that she would be better off returning to her former profession. IFS Personalakten 195.592 Emma Guthmann.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

The experiences of two Rabbis from the IG demonstrate how some of the city's thirty-three Jewish religion teachers in Frankfurt had a major impact on the culture of the city's public schools. In addition to working at two synagogues, the orthodox Rabbi Jakob Horovitz was one of the inaugural lecturers at Frankfurt's Pedagogical Academy, which opened in 1927 and trained new educators who would work at municipal *Volksschulen*.³⁵ That same year, Horovitz's colleague Rabbi Benjamin May used his position as a Jewish religion teacher to promote interfaith dialogue between Jewish and Christian students by opening a public "Tolerance Library" (*Verständigungsbibliothek*) at the *Musterschule*. May believed that the library's collection of over five hundred volumes would provide Christian pupils with a better understanding of Judaism and demonstrate the "importance of Jewish culture for humanity."³⁶ Although a small amount of archival traces leave more question than answers about how many Christian or even Jewish pupils availed themselves of the Tolerance Library, the reaction to Rabbi May's untimely death in 1929 at the age of forty-seven shows how much he had impacted the institutional culture of the *Musterschule*. At a memorial event several days after May's death, the school's Director, Peter Müller, praised the Rabbi as "a man that was a loyal and beloved colleague to myself and the faculty for many years [and] a true friend of his students." Müller further reflected on the personal friendship he had with May since their days working at another one of Frankfurt's higher schools and closed by declaring his personal desire to rename the library as the "Dr. May Library" in honor of his friend's commitment to "the true spirit of

³⁵ "Kleine Chronik," *Centralverein Zeitung*, June 3, 1927; IFS S2/12.622 Personengeschichte Rabbi Jakob Horovitz. Frankfurt's Pedagogical Academy was the only non-denominational institution of its kind in Prussia. Schäfer, *Schulpolitik*, 219-224; IFS Magistratsakten S/1.709 Errichtung einer Pädagogischen Akademie; Heuberger and Krohn, *Hinaus aus dem Ghetto*, 160; IFS S5/230 "Erinnerungen eines Achtzigjährigen" von Max Hermann Maier Bl. 56

³⁶ Schulamt 2.068 Schulfeste Musterschule; Gustav Löffliver, "Eine Verständigungs-Bibliothek," *Gemeindeblatt der Israelitischen Gemeinde Frankfurt am Main*, February 1928; "Jugendbibliothek," *Gemeindeblatt der Israelitischen Gemeinde Frankfurt am Main*, February 6, 1929.

tolerance.” The emotion of Müller’s speech speaks to the larger issue of relationships between Jewish and non-Jewish teachers, which could move beyond the stiff formality of the professional work place and morph into more intimate forms of friendships.

Jewish Students at Public Schools Before 1933

Reflecting back on their time in Frankfurt’s public schools, many male Jewish students recalled that their teachers tended to be nationalist conservatives in the mold of Kantorek, the school master in Erich Maria Remarque’s *All Quiet on the Western Front*. Most were proud of their service in the German military before or during the First World War and a number of them made a point of wearing their old uniforms to school on memorial days for fallen soldiers. Some were openly hostile to the very idea of the Weimar Republic. Wolf Elkan remembered playing warfare-like games during gym classes at the *Goethe-Gymnasium* and being laughed at by some teachers and fellow students when he wore a black, red, and gold ribbon to school on the national holiday commemorating the signing of the Weimar constitution.³⁷ Several of Fred L. Strauss’s teachers went a step further and frequently referred to the participants in the German Revolution of 1918-1919 as “November criminals.”³⁸

That being said, many of the same Jewish former students have conflicting memories of their teachers’ relationship to antisemitism and the Nazi Party before 1933. Strauss, for example, said that one of his history teachers at the *Goethe-Gymnasium* created the sobriquet “Ritter with the crooked nose” for a Jewish student who was an immigrant from Eastern Europe.³⁹ Georg Guthmann writes that a Latin teacher at the *Kaiser-Friedrich-Gymnasium* punished him for

³⁷ LBI ME 1259 Helmut Rothenberg BL. 39-40; Zentrum für Antisemitismusforschung (ZfA) Lebensgeschichtliche Sammlung bMS Gerai (56) Film 89- Elkan, Wolf My Life in Germany Bl. 7-12.

³⁸ *Berichte gegen Vergessen und Verdrängen von 100 überlebenden jüdischen Schülerinnen und Schülern über die NS-Zeit in Frankfurt am Main*, ed. Benjamin Ortmeier (Frankfurt: Protagoras Academicus, 2016), 81.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

whispering in class by assigning him an essay prompt on why he would make a good merchant.⁴⁰ However, another student who graduated from the *Goethe-Gymnasium* in 1934 said that although his teachers “were *Stahlhelm*-types,” they were “generally decent and upright people, all anti-Nazis and certainly not antisemitic.”⁴¹ Similarly, the director of the *Lessing-Gymnasium*, which had a reputation for drawing students from conservative families, served on the board of the Association for Defense Against Antisemitism.⁴² Just how present was antisemitism in Frankfurt’s classrooms and school buildings before 1933?

Most of the evidence suggests that antisemitism was never more than a minor or rare irritant for Jewish students at public schools before the Nazis came to power and that school officials ensure that Jewish pupils were not prevented from taking part in their school communities. For example, many teachers, school directors, and city officials made sure that little stood in the way of students that wanted to observe more traditional Jewish religious practices. On a macro level, the city’s School Bureau ensured that Jewish and Catholic students and teachers would have the day off from school on major religious holidays that were not part of the national or Protestant calendars.⁴³

On a micro level, individual schools enacted their own policies to assist observant Jewish students, with school Directors often setting the tone for the attitude at particular institutions.

According to a former student who went to the all-girls’ *Schillerschule*, several teachers went out

⁴⁰ Bonavita, *Assimilation, Verfolgung, Exil*, 17-18.

⁴¹ Ibid., 82-83. The *Stahlhelm* was a conservative paramilitary group that was closely tied to the far-right German National Peoples’ Party. For more information see Volker R. Berghahn, *Der Stahlhelm. Bunder der Frontsoldaten 1918-1935* (Düsseldorf: Droste, 1966).

⁴² IFS Personengeschichte S2/3.450 Ernst Majer-Leonhard.

⁴³ In 1925, for example, Jews were allowed to miss school for four days during Passover, two days for Shavuot, two days for Rosh Hashanah, on Yom Kippur, for two days of Sukkot, and two days for Simchat Torah. IFS Schulamit 2.364 .

of their way to ensure that she and her sister would not suffer academically because they observed the sabbath while the school was in session on Saturdays. The school Director gave them the day off every week, their Latin teacher made sure that class exams would take place in the middle of the week, and their drawing teacher, who usually taught on Saturdays, gave them extra lessons during a recess period.⁴⁴ A similar policy prevailed at the *Elisabethenschule*, where Jewish students were allowed to remain at home on Jewish holidays without official bureaucratic approval.⁴⁵ In 1930, the Director of the same school allowed the Jewish religion teacher Paula Rosenbaum to use the school's auditorium for a large Chanukah celebration.⁴⁶ Finally, the director of the *Viktoriaschule* made sure that Jewish girls would be provided with kosher food when their class would conduct overnight trips to the school's house in the mountains north of the city.⁴⁷

Post-Holocaust testimony and memoirs suggest generally peaceful and often positive relations between the majority of Jewish, Lutheran, and Catholic students at Frankfurt's higher schools. The internal structure at these schools generally meant that groups of approximately twenty-five to thirty students spent the majority of their time in the same classes for up to nine years of education. In some schools, the concentration of Jews was so high as to create an impression that individual classes were an equal mix of Jewish and Christian pupils.⁴⁸ Years

⁴⁴ Ortmeyer, *Berichte gegen Vergessen*, 47.

⁴⁵ Bachrach, Lucy. Interview 46518. Segment 42. *Visual History Archive*, USC Shoah Foundation, 1998. Accessed on April 17, 2018.

⁴⁶ "Religionsunterricht und Chanuckafeier," *Gemeindeblatt der Israelitischen Gemeinde Frankfurt am Main*, January 1930.

⁴⁷ Ortmeyer, *Berichte gegen Vergessen*, 67-69.

⁴⁸ At one point in the late 1920s, the Director of the *Viktoriaschule* worried, perhaps erroneously, that many well-off Christian families had started to send their daughters to the *Schillerschule* because it had a lower percentage of Jewish pupils. IFS Schulamt 7.598 Jahresberichte der Viktoriaschule über die Schuljahre 1920/21 bis 1934/35.

later, several Jewish survivors who went to these schools argued that religious difference was almost completely absent from the classroom and only tended to come up when they and their classmates would break into confessionally-specific groups for their religion courses.⁴⁹

According to Helmut Mann, who came from a working-class Catholic family, class played a much greater role than religion in shaping the everyday relations between students at the *Musterschule* at the start of the 1930s. Many of the wealthier Jewish and Christian students in his classroom clung together because they already knew one another from their neighborhood and biked together to school.⁵⁰ In one case, it even appears that the school bully at the *Wöhlerschule* was Jewish and meted out harassment regardless of his fellow students' religious affiliation.⁵¹ Wolf Elkan similarly boasted about how he and his classmates used to gang up on the few Nazi students in the *Goethe-Gymnasium* by driving them into political debates that they were not smart enough to win.⁵²

Even several students who attended higher schools with a drastically smaller number of Jews in the student body fondly remembered their educational experience prior to 1933. Recalling his time at the *Lessing-Gymnasium*, Michael Zuntz said that his classmates should have theoretically been antisemites because the school was a magnet for boys from “conservative families in *Westend* that wanted their sons to receive a humanist education and felt that the

⁴⁹ In the words of Werner Schneider, “Who even differentiated between Jews and non-Jews before 1932?” JMF A23 B9017 “Aus den ungedruckten Lebenserinnerungen von Werner Schneider,” Bl. 5, 15a; Schwab, Hank. Interview 18026. Segment 2, 6. *Visual History Archive*, USC Shoah Foundation Segment 2, 6. 1996. Accessed on April 25, 2018. ZFA Lebensgeschichtliche Sammlung bMS Gerai (56) Film 89- Elkan, Wolf My Life in Germany Bl. 1-3; Ortmeier, *Berichte gegen Vergessen*, 70-71, 72-74.

⁵⁰ Helmut Mann, “Skizzen aus der Musterschule 1931 bis 1938,” in *Festschrift zum 200jährigen bestehen des Gymnasiums in Frankfurt am Main*, ed. Dieter Kallus and Eberhard Aulmann, 83-97 (Frankfurt: RhieTime, 2003), 84, 89-90.

⁵¹ USC VHA Fred Jacob (Fritz Siegfried Jacob) Code 39041 Segment 8, accessed 23 April, 2018.

⁵² ZFA Lebensgeschichtliche Sammlung bMS Gerai (56) Film 89 Elkan, Wolf My Life in Germany Bl. 14-15.

Goethe-Gymnasium was too overrun with Jews (*verjudet*).” In practice, however, Zuntz developed close relationships with his peers over the course of his nine years at the school, despite the fact that he was the only Jew in a class of twenty boys.⁵³ Another Jewish student who went to the *Sachsenhäuser Oberrealschule* at the start of the 1930s said that he had an array of close friends even though he was “as good as the only Jewish student” in a school which mainly drew the sons of non-Jewish craftsmen, gardeners, and workers. Moreover, teachers and administrators selected the same student to receive an award in 1931 for being the best pupil in German classes at the school.⁵⁴ It was even possible for observant Jews to be integrated seamlessly into upper-level classes at the *Klingerrealschule*, which had earned a reputation for being a hotbed of anti-Republican sentiment. According to Nathan Carlebach, he and six other transfer students from the *Samson-Raphael-Hirsch-Realschule* seamlessly fit into their classroom when they changed schools in 1929. Carlebach could not recall ever experiencing any incidents of antisemitism throughout his time at the school and said that most of his schoolmates reserved their harassment and bullying for the two Catholic students who were in his class.⁵⁵

Thus, in spite of the conservative reputation of local school teachers and some students, it appears that those Jewish students who attended public schools felt comfortable at these institutions throughout the course of the Weimar Republic. Although the majority of these young Jews were concentrated in a small number of higher schools, even those at schools with small

⁵³ Ortmeier, *Berichte gegen Vergessen*, 88-89.

⁵⁴ The school had experienced a dramatic drop in Jewish enrollment over the course of the 1920s. During the 1923-1924 school year the student body was roughly seventy-five percent Lutheran, twenty percent Catholic, and 5 percent Jewish. By 1931 only eleven of the school’s five-hundred and thirty-six students were Jewish. IFS Schulamt 7.312 Sachsenhäuser Oberrealschule Jahresberichte 1922-1934/5; Ortmeier, *Berichte gegen Vergessen*, 45-46.

⁵⁵ Emil Carlebach, *Am Anfang stand ein Doppelmord. Kommunist in Deutschland. Band I: Bis 1937* (Cologne, Pahl-Rugenstein, 1988), 19, 48-49; USC VHA Nathan (Emil) Carlebach Code 17211 Segment 23, 32-33, Accessed June 12, 2018.

Jewish seem to have had few complaints before 1933. Indeed, class identity was often more influential than religious identity in determining students' school experience and social groups.

Jews at The Goethe University, 1914-1933

The University of Frankfurt, now known as the Goethe University, was an incredibly young and novel institution in comparison to most German universities.⁵⁶ Founded in 1914, it owed its creation to the pro-education policies of the city's government under Mayor Franz Adickes and the philanthropic initiative of private foundations, whose membership included some of Frankfurt's wealthiest citizens, many of which were Jews. Indeed, the first steps that led to the creation of the university began with the Jewish industrialist and philanthropist Wilhelm Merton's decision in 1895 to open the Institute for the Common Good (*Gemeinwohl*), which promoted new approaches to public welfare and higher education. Five years later, Merton and the city signed a contract to create an Academy for Social and Business Science (*Handelswissenschaft*). These and several other private and public foundations, such as the Georg and Franziska Speyer Foundation, eventually formed the basis of the Goethe university's five faculties in law, medicine, philosophy, business, and the natural sciences.⁵⁷

Apart from its organizational form as Germany's first privately founded university (*Stiftungsuniversität*), the Goethe University was also unique because of its explicit commitment to religious equality. At a time when many Jewish academics still struggled to get full time positions in Germany, article six of the Goethe university's by-laws declared that religion would not play a role in determining who would be appointed to professorships in Frankfurt. For a brief

⁵⁶ The Prussian Ministry of State changed the name of the university in 1932, the hundredth anniversary of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's death. Paul Kluge, *Die Stiftungsuniversität Frankfurt am Main 1914-1932* (Frankfurt: Waldemar Kramer, 1972), 530.

⁵⁷ Ludwig Heilbrunn *Die Gründung der Universität Frankfurt a.M.* (Frankfurt: Joseph Baer, 1915), 1, 19-20, 22-24, 31; Kluge, *Stiftungsuniversität*, 110.

moment it even looked like the Jewish Nobel laureate Paul Ehrlich would become the inaugural rector of the university. This honor eventually fell to the physicist Richard Wachsmuth after Ehrlich demurred, citing his increasingly ill health.⁵⁸

Right from the start, the fledgling university had a close working relationship with the city government. Representatives of the city including the Mayor, members of the Magistrate, and members of the City Council held seats in the university's Grand Council and Curatorium, which were responsible for passing the university budget and approving the employment of new professors.⁵⁹ The city's influence on the university grew tremendously during the early 1920s, when the German hyperinflation caused a drastic devaluation of capital invested into the endowment funds of several foundations during the First World War. In 1921, university officials asked the city government to consider transforming the Goethe University into a municipal institution. At first the plan faltered due to the skepticism of Social Democrats and Independent Social Democrats on the City Council. In their minds, the city would be wrong to provide further financial support to the institution because universities had traditionally been used to replicate existing elite structures within German society. They eventually changed their minds after three years of ongoing negotiations and in 1924, the university signed a contract whereby the city government and the State of Prussia would each provide half of the university's annual budget that was not already guaranteed by money from various foundations.⁶⁰

Jews consistently played prominent roles within the university's administration and teaching staff between its opening in 1914 and the Nazi seizure of power in 1933. After the

⁵⁸ Heilbrunn, *Universität*, 210; Kluge, *Stiftungsuniversität*, 85, 156.

⁵⁹ Heilbrunn, *Universität*, 211-213; Gerda Stuchlik, *Goethe im Braunhemd. Universität Frankfurt 1933-1945* (Frankfurt: Röderberg-Verlag, 1984), 155-156.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 36-37; Kluge, *Stiftungsuniversität*, 235-236.

University in Berlin, the Goethe University had the highest percentage of Jewish faculty members in all of Germany, including intellectual luminaries such as Theodor Adorno, Max Horkheimer, and Ernst Kantorowicz.⁶¹ Jewish citizens and politicians were also a constant presence on the university's Grand Council and the Curatorium. For example, Henriette Fürth was first elected to the Grand Council in 1923, during her one term as a member of the City Council for the Social Democratic Party. Despite not being reelected in 1924, Fürth continued to serve as one of the City Council's representatives at the university until the start of 1933. Other Jewish members of this body and the Curatorium included the Liberal City Council Member Ludwig Heilbrunn, the philanthropist Arthur von Weinberg, Mayor Ludwig Landmann, city Treasurer Bruno Asch, and the conservative City Council Member Richard Merton, who was the son of Wilhelm Merton.⁶² Additionally, the university's senate and administration awarded honorary titles to many Jews in recognition of their contributions to the Goethe University. Heilbrunn had been an "Honorary Citizen" since the university first opened its doors on 15 October 1914.⁶³ The department store owner Gustav Gerst was given the same honor in 1930 because of his generous donations to support cancer research by different institutes within the medical faculty.⁶⁴ Finally, Weinberg and Leo Gans were two of only four individuals that the university named "Honorary Senators" before 1933.⁶⁵

⁶¹ Notker Hammerstein, "Vorwort," in *Die Juden der Frankfurter Universität*, ed. Renate Hauer and Siegbert Wolf, 7-8 (Frankfurt: Campus Verlag, 1997), 7. The bulk of this helpful volume contains small biographies of almost all of the Jewish academics that worked at the university before 1933. It also has sections on academics married to female Jews, academic assistants – many of which were female – that were Jewish, and other academics that the Nazis persecuted because of their politics.

⁶² IFS Stadtverordnetenversammlung 1.548 Universität betr. U.a. Wahlen für den großen Rat; Ausbildung, technischer Assistenten 1930; UAF Abt. 2 Nr. 7; UAF Abt. 1, Nr. 201K Bl. 54

⁶³ UAF Abt. 1, Nr. 201K Bl. 44. As the footnotes to this chapter reveal, Heilbrunn was also the author of the first history on the founding of the university. See: Heilbrunn, *Die Gründung der Universität Frankfurt a.M.*

⁶⁴ UAF Abt. 8 Nr. 3 Bl. 662; UAF Abt. 1 Br. 201K Bl. 25-26.

The University also worked hard during the early years of the Weimar republic to create a professorship for Jewish Studies within its faculty of philosophy. Initially, the founders of the university had been skeptical about the place of religion in the curriculum of the new institution and consciously chose not to create a theological faculty, which was a common feature at most German universities.⁶⁶ Officials at the university changed their mind at the start of the 1920s when the philosophical faculty requested to create positions in Catholic, Jewish, and Lutheran theology in an effort to prevent “the sons of Frankfurt citizens” with an interest in the subject from having to spend a semester at a different university.⁶⁷ At the request of the IG, Rabbi Nehemias Nobel was the first candidate to fill the new position in Jewish religion until his untimely death in 1922.⁶⁸ The position was then offered to Franz Rosenzweig, a renowned philosopher and the director of the IG’s revolutionary Free Jewish House of Learning. This too fell through when Rosenzweig began to suffer from the degenerative effects of amyotrophic lateral sclerosis.⁶⁹ The IG and the university soon reached out to Franz Rosenzweig’s close friend and collaborator Martin Buber, who took over the position in the summer of 1924. Buber would remain at the university until the end of the Weimar Republic and was awarded the title of “*Honorarprofessor*” in 1930.⁷⁰

⁶⁵ UAF RO-9. More information on Jews who received university honors can also be found in UAF Abt. 50 Nr. 2587.

⁶⁶ Kluge, *Stiftungsuniversität*, 110-137.

⁶⁷ UAF Abt. 130 Theologische Vorlesungen” Akten des Philosophischen Fakultät 1916-1924 Bl. 7, 11-12, 15, Theologische Vorlesungen” Akten des Philosophischen Fakultät 1916-1924

⁶⁸ UAF Abt. 130 Theologische Vorlesungen” Akten des Philosophischen Fakultät Bl. 18-19.

⁶⁹ UAF Abt. 130 Theologische Vorlesungen” Akten des Philosophischen Fakultät Bl. 32-33, 38, 40

⁷⁰ UAF Abt. 130 Theologische Vorlesungen” Akten des Philosophischen Fakultät Bl. 43-44; “Vorlesungen an der Universität,” *Gemeindeblatt der Israelitischen Gemeinde Frankfurt am Main*, April 8, 1924; “Soziale und Kulturelle Aufgaben,” *Gemeindeblatt der Israelitischen Gemeinde Frankfurt am Main*, May 9, 1924; UAF Abt. 8 Nr. 3 Bl. 660; Kluge, *Stiftungsuniversität*, 377-381.

The Goethe University attracted a large number of Jewish students during its first two decades. In 1930 there were 364 Jews enrolled at the university, comprising approximately ten percent of the entire student body, and the university had two Jewish fraternities that developed due to the increased popularity of Zionism and the exclusion of Jews from many of the university's other fraternity chapters, which tended to have a right-wing nationalist orientation.⁷¹ Nevertheless, both right-wing and Zionist fraternities played only a marginal role in determining the social life of most Jewish university students in Frankfurt.⁷² Wolf Elkan, for example, writes that he had no problem making friends and was able to easily join a number of student associations such as the university's aviation club.⁷³

Roughly a fifth of the Jews at the university were not German citizens. Most notable among them was Jacob Katz, who would go on to become one of the preeminent historians of Jewish life in Europe.⁷⁴ Katz had moved from Hungary to Frankfurt in 1928 in order to attend the IRG's orthodox yeshiva, but quickly realized that he wanted to matriculate at the Goethe University because it would allow him to pursue intellectual endeavors beyond an intensive study of the Talmud. Katz eventually passed his *Abitur* exam at the *Liebig-Oberrealschule* and

⁷¹ Jews were 9.6 percent of the student body. This number was high in comparison with some universities, but not remarkably high in comparison with others. Jews made up 10.74 percent of the student body at the University of Berlin, 8.7 percent at the University of Heidelberg, 2.5 percent at the University of Gießen, and 0.9 percent at the University of Marburg. Kluge, *Stiftungsuniversität*, 182-183, 565; Miriam Rürup, *Ehrensache. Jüdische Studentenverbindungen an deutschen Universitäten 1886-1937* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2008), 77.

⁷² Georg Guthmann writes that the Zionist movement in Frankfurt was so small that all of its members could easily fit into the building owned by *Saronia*, his fraternity. IFS LG 280 Georg Yehuda Guthmann "Briefe an meine Kinder" Bl. 70-71.

⁷³ ZFA bMS Gerai (56) Film 89- Elkan, Wolf My Life in Germany Bl. 25-8. Elkan suspects that certain students sought his friendship because his father was the well-regarded sculpture Benno Elkan.

⁷⁴ Katz's oeuvre is large, but he is most known for his monographs on the origins of Jewish modernity in Central Europe and the history of antisemitism. Two of his best-known works are Jakob Katz, *Tradition and Crisis: Jewish Society at the End of the Middle Ages*, trans. Bernard Dov Cooperman (New York: New York University Press, 1993); Jakob Katz, *From Prejudice to Destruction: Anti-Semitism 1700-1933* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1980).

enrolled as a student in the philosophy faculty. In his telling, few obstacles stood in the way of Jewish students. Even though “sobering incidents were not lacking...the apprehensions raised by these were dispelled by more heartening signs.” Most of the right-wing professors of German and history were “unfailingly courteous” to their Jewish students. There were also pockets of left-wing activity in the classes of younger faculty members including a seminar co-taught by Theodor Adorno and Paul Tillich. The friendship and mentorship of another leftist professor, Karl Mannheim, even inspired Katz to write his dissertation on the history of Jewish assimilation in Germany.⁷⁵

Mannheim also played an important role in nurturing the career of Margarete Sallis-Freudenthal, a Jewish sociology student at the Goethe University. Born in Frankfurt, she had been one of the first female students to attend the university, but dropped out in 1917 after marrying the Jewish legal expert Berthold Freudenthal, who was the inaugural dean of the University’s legal faculty. Shortly after her husband’s death in 1929, Sallis-Freudenthal decided to return to the university to finish her degree. Despite coming from a drastically different background from most of the young male students at the university, Sallis-Freudenthal thrived upon her return to academia. Within a few short years she was able to finish her degree, write a dissertation under Mannheim’s supervision on the evolution of domestic economics in southwest Germany, and become an adjunct lecturer at the university.⁷⁶

Although Jewish students and faculty members were well integrated into the fabric of the university, antisemitic incidents were not uncommon at the Goethe University. Many took place

⁷⁵ IFS Personengeschichte S2/6.073 Jakob Katz; Jacob Katz, *With My Own Eyes: The Autobiography of an Historian*, trans. Ann Brenner and Zipora Brady (Hanover: Brandeis University Press, 1995), 68, 70, 78-79, 87-90.

⁷⁶ IFS Chronik s5/346 Margarete Sallis-Freudenthal Bl. 70-72, 84, 175, 184-185, 187-188. See also Margarete Sallis-Freudenthal, *Ich habe mein Land gefunden. Autobiographischer Rückblick* (Frankfurt: Knecht, 1977).

at moments of heightened political tension or during the election campaigns for the university's student council. During the *Kapp Putsch* and French military occupation of Frankfurt in March 1920, for example, the student council briefly considered but ultimately rejected holding a debate on an antisemitic brochure produced by students at the University of Rostock that railed "against the flooding of universities with *Ostjuden*."⁷⁷ A year later, the right-wing nationalist Patriotic-Christian Student Group won an absolute majority of student council seats after a campaign in which antisemitic pamphlets had been anonymously distributed throughout the campus.⁷⁸ Three years later, the same political group prevented Jews from taking part in a memorial ceremony for students who died during the First World war and passed a resolution banning Jews from taking part in the student council. The rector and the Curatorium reacted swiftly and prevented the politicized piece of legislation from going into effect.⁷⁹

The Frankfurt chapter of the National Socialist German Student Association was not founded until February 1926, but soon won a seat in the student council. Within a year, their leader, Gerd Rühle, had become the chairman of the entire student council. At the same time, though, the Jewish student Jans Juda was a deputy chairman of the same body and used his position to vigorously protest the anti-Jewish measures and actions taken by Nazi and right-wing groups.⁸⁰ The power of the Nazi student group did not go unchecked by university officials. Indeed, the Rector and the Academic Senate of the university voted to ban the Nazis' student group in November 1929 after they were caught handing out fliers describing the university as a

⁷⁷ Kluge, *Stiftungsuniversität*, 441.

⁷⁸ In the same election a party representing the interests of Jewish students won four of the forty seats on the student council. Magistratsakten S/1.676 Korrespondenz mit studentischen Verbindungen; "Ein Revolutionsflugblatt deutschnationaler Studenten," *Volksstimme*, November 12, 1924.

⁷⁹ Stuchlik, *Goethe im Braunhemd*, 48.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 70-1; Kluge, *Stiftungsuniversität*, 570.

“stronghold of Jewish insolence and Marxist effrontery.”⁸¹ Nazi students vigorously protested and called for unauthorized student elections, in which they and another right-wing group won a majority of seats. However, their massive victory was primarily due to Liberal, Socialist, and Communist student groups’ decision to boycott the election and the general political apathy of most students. Voter turnout was a paltry twenty-three percent.⁸² The academic senate renewed the ban on Nazi student groups in 1930, but allowed them to return to the register of student groups a year later.⁸³ Ultimately, though, antisemitism and Nazi activities rarely impeded most Jews from engaging in their studies or work on the faculty. In the words of the sociologist and Frankfurt native Leo Löwenthal, who studied and worked at the Goethe University: “Of course there was antisemitism at the universities, but it was partially hidden and also partially concentrated in smaller areas.”⁸⁴

Public Schools after 1933

The Nazi takeover of state and local power immediately impacted the lives of Jewish students and teachers at public schools in Frankfurt. Working together with government officials, leaders of the local Nazi movement used the April 1933 Law for the Restoration of the Professional Civil Service to rid municipal schools of teachers and directors that they did not think would fall in line with the new regime. By the end of the year, the city’s School Bureau had fired or demoted the directors of six of the city’s higher schools.⁸⁵

⁸¹ They also suspended the group’s new leader, Ernst Seifert. UAF Abt. 8 Nr. 3 Bl. 635-642.

⁸² Stuchlik, *Goethe im Braunhemd*, 77-78; Werner Rosenberg, “Der Wille des Volkes: oberstes Gesetz. Ein Nachwort zur Tagung des deutschen Studentenverbandes,” *Centralverein Zeitung*, January 1, 1930.

⁸³ UAF Abt. 8 Nr. 3 Bl. 668.

⁸⁴ Quoted in Notker Hammerstein, *Antisemitismus und deutsche Universitäten 187-1933* (Frankfurt: Campus Verlag, 1995), 94.

Although the IG managed to ensure that public Jewish religious education survived the initial Nazi takeover of Frankfurt and Germany, they soon lost any chance of continuing to influence the shape of public education in the city.⁸⁶ In December 1933, Hermann Göring passed a resolution that permanently banned Rabbis from serving on any school deputations or school boards in the state of Prussia.⁸⁷ Within two years, only 135 students were still enrolled in Jewish religious education classes at Frankfurt's public schools.⁸⁸ These classes technically came to an end in April 1936 when the Ministry for Science, Education, and Adult Education decided to prohibit German schools from offering Jewish religion classes or even rooms for private Jewish religious instruction. In a final attempt to advocate for the remaining Jewish students in Frankfurt's public schools, the IG asked if the city would potentially allow these pupils to attend Jewish education classes so long as they were in another location. A month later, the Director of the School Bureau replied that he had no problem with this arrangement and informed schools of the new plan. Thus, Jewish religious education remained a *de facto* element of public education in the city up until 1938 because it fit the mold of new policies of racial segregation.⁸⁹

The number of Jewish students at public schools began to drop precipitously after the passage on 25 April 1933 of the "Law Against the Overcrowding of German Schools and Universities," which said that no more than 1.5 percent of students could be Jewish in new

⁸⁵ IFS Schulamt 6.484 Durchführung des Gesetzes zur Wiederherstellung des Berufsbeamtentums; "Aus dem Reich," *Frankfurter Zeitung*, July 3, 1937.

⁸⁶ IFS Schulamt 4.897 Jüdische Religionsunterricht 1876-1961.

⁸⁷ Representatives of the Jewish community and other confessions had served as members of the Frankfurt School Deputation since 1906. IFS Magistratsakten 7.610 Gliederung und Beiräte für Volksschulen, Schulbeiräte, Gemeindeschulvorstand, Deputation 1930-1937.

⁸⁸ Schulamt 4.897 Jüdisches Religionsunterricht 1876-1961.

⁸⁹ *Ibid*; Viktoriaschule 54 Bl. 9, 11.

classes being formed at public schools, with the exception of *Volksschulen*.⁹⁰ Confusion about the implications of the law was so great that Rabbi Georg Salzberger wrote an article in the IG's newspaper reminding Jewish parents that their children would be exempt from the law if their fathers' were veterans of the First World War.⁹¹ Within a year more than sixty percent of male and fifty percent of female Jewish students were no longer in the city's higher public schools and roughly half of all other school-age Jews had left the city's *Volksschulen*, *Mittelschulen*, and *Grundschulen*.⁹²

In post-Holocaust testimony, most Jews who had been students in Frankfurt recalled a near-instantaneous change in their schools' atmospheres when the new school year started after the Easter vacation in April 1933. For many, the sudden and painful loss of non-Jewish friends heralded the start of a confusing new era. The first sign of a major shift in social relations came for Carola Doma when her class at the *Elisabethenschule* spent a week at the school's mountain house in May: "Once there, it became very militant. Back then I was the Class Speaker. Two or three girls used this occasion to state that they did not want to be led by a Jew. Consequently there was a very big argument in the class, almost a battle. The teacher let us vote and the majority decided that I should continue to be the Class Speaker." Not long thereafter, though, a number of her non-Jewish friends suddenly stopped talking to her. Others informed her that they felt they could no longer associate with her.⁹³ Walter Natt had a similar experience at the

⁹⁰ S. Adler-Rudel, *Jüdische Selbsthilfe unter dem Naziregime 1933-1939. Im Spiegel der Berichte der Reichsvertretung der Juden in Deutschland* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1974), 20-21

⁹¹ Georg Salzberger, "An die jüdischen Eltern," *Gemeindeblatt der Israelitischen Gemeinde Frankfurt am Main*, May 9, 1933.

⁹² *Ibid.*, "Der Stand des Religionsunterrichts zu Beginn des laufenden Schuljahrs," August 1934.

⁹³ Carola Doma, "...bis wir es verstehen mußten," in *daß wir nicht erwünscht waren. Novemberpogrom 1938 in Frankfurt am Main. Berichte und Dokumente*, ed. Gottfried Kößler, Angelika Rieber, and Feli Gürsching, 83-91 (Frankfurt: dipa-Verlag, 1993), 85.

Musterschule, where he quickly lost all of the non-Jewish friends he had made before 1933.⁹⁴

Marianne Stadelman was so devastated by the loss of her friends at the *Schillerschule* that she began to spend time in the bathroom during recess periods “in order to avoid running into friends from yesterday or even from being spat upon.”⁹⁵ Many other Jewish survivors similarly report having lost dear friends in the blink of an eye once the Nazis came to power.⁹⁶ Often it was unclear if this was due to either opportunism or a desire to conform to the norms of the new regime.

The Nazi Party and its ideology quickly became an ever-present feature at most of Frankfurt’s schools. Helmut Mann estimated that at least half of the boys at the *Musterschule* had joined the Hitler Youth by the end of the Nazis’ first year in power and that the number was as high as ninety-five percent by the time he left the school in 1937. According to Mann, most of them joined due to familial pressure, a desire for conformity, or a realization that membership would allow them to take part in free activities such as camping trips and organized sports.⁹⁷ Another former Jewish student from the *Musterschule* recalled the school’s standards slipping due to the constant interruption of ideological “speeches, parades, and a host of newly instituted state holidays.” Eventually, members of the Hitler Youth started skipping school because they did not expect to suffer any repercussions.⁹⁸ Students were also exposed to the Nazis’ own brand

⁹⁴ Ortmeier, *Berichte gegen Vergessen*, 64-65.

⁹⁵ Jüdisches Museum Berlin (JMB) MB 761 2010/230/80 Sammlung Willy Stern, Marianne Stern

⁹⁶ Ortmeier, *Berichte gegen Vergessen*, 55-56; JMB Sammlung Familie Kirschner K875 Mp. 1 2011/235/537 Hans Wilhelm Münzer: Persönliche Schriften, Bl. 12.

⁹⁷ Mann, “Skizzen aus der Musterschule,” 90-91.

⁹⁸ The chronicle of the *Schwarzburgschule* – a *Volksschule* – reveals that the students went to twenty-one school celebrations marking new holidays during the 1933-1934 school year. Schäfer, *Schulpolitik*, 334; JMB Sammlung Familie Kirschner K875 Mp. 1 2011/235/537 Hans Wilhelm Münzer: Persönliche Schriften, Bl. 13.

of racial science during biology classes and City officials even debated whether or not Jewish students were allowed to use the Hitler salute.⁹⁹

Antisemitic bullying soon became a part of many Jewish students' everyday lives. Bernard Werth recalls teachers and fellow students looking the other way when non-Jewish students ganged up on him and two other Jewish students by tying them to trees or tossing them into the sand pit where their gym class would practice the long jump.¹⁰⁰ Many Jewish parents responded to the wave of harassment by enrolling their children at one of the city's Jewish schools. For example, Ruth Backer's parents decided to send their daughter to the Philanthropin after she encountered a sign in front of the entrance to the basement of the *Elisabethenschule* that read " 'Jewish bicycles are not allowed.' "¹⁰¹

The pain and confusion Jewish students experienced during this period occasionally abated thanks to the kindness or basic decency of certain non-Jewish teachers. Several teachers at the *Musterschule* encouraged Han Wilhelm Munzer to remain in school and look for other funding opportunities after his tuition scholarship was canceled in the spring of 1933. Munzer eventually managed to find support from a private foundation that allowed him to finish his final three years of school.¹⁰² At the *Helmholtzschule*, a German teacher tried to comfort one of his

⁹⁹ Stadtrat Rudolf Keller, who had headed the city's School Bureau since the final years of the Weimar Republic, initially decided that "Jewish children will not be forced to use the Hitler salute, but, on the other hand, they will not be forbidden to use the Hitler salute as a form of greeting." Holocaust testimony by Vera Ansbach reveals that the School Bureau or individual schools eventually changed their minds and barred Jewish students from using the salute. Schäfer, *Schulpolitik*, 347-8. IFS Viktoriaschule 5 Schüler Bl. 31. USC VHA Vera Ansbach Code 12709 Segment 21.

¹⁰⁰ USC VHA Bernard Werth. Interview 52566. Segment 19. Accessed April 23, 2018.

¹⁰¹ Ortmeier, *Berichte gegen Vergessen*, 34-35.

¹⁰² Munzer may have received his new funding from the *Hans Hermann Bärwald-Stiftung*, a foundation formed in honor of a Jewish student at the school who had died near Verdun in 1916. The foundation alternately provided funding to Christian and Jewish students. The capital from this fund was eventually shifted to a non-Jewish foundation in 1937, when the officials at the school, the Frankfurt School Bureau, and in the regional government claimed that there were no longer any needy Jewish students attending the school. JMB Sammlung Familie

Jewish students by telling him he could write a final class essay “about the freedom fight of the Jews in their historic homeland” while non-Jewish students responded to a prompt on “National Socialism and the freedom fight of the German people.”¹⁰³ In yet another case, an English teacher at the *Musterschule* provided Hans Louis Tréfousse with private English lessons that prepared him for emigration.¹⁰⁴ Years after the Shoah, Walter Natt was still grateful that teachers at his school had helped him to study for and take his *Abitur* exam at the same school in 1935 because, after all, “Had the teachers and school director wanted it, they could have easily let me fail.”¹⁰⁵ Many more students similarly felt that their teacher had always treated them with respect in the classroom, despite the deterioration of daily life after 1933.¹⁰⁶

Other teachers, however, proved to be another source of misery or humiliation for their Jewish students. At the *Elisabethenschule*, Ruth Backer was forced to stand in the back row during her class’s Christmas choir concert in 1933 because her teacher said that audience members “should not have to see a Jewish face.”¹⁰⁷ According to Johanna Harris-Brandes, her daughter’s German teacher at the *Viktoriaschule* said she would no longer be able to get an A in the class because that grade would be reserved for a student who belonged to the Hitler Youth.¹⁰⁸

Kirschner K875 Mp. 1 2011/235/537 Hans Wilhelm Münzer: Persönliche Schriften, Bl. 13; IFS Magistratsakten 2.196 Musterschule.

¹⁰³ Hans Thiel, *Die jüdischen Lehrer und Schüler der Frankfurter Helmholtzschule 1912-1936* (Frankfurt: Verein ehemaliger Helmholtzschüler e.V. und Verein der Freunden und Förderer der Helmholtzschule e.V., 1994), 7-8.

¹⁰⁴ Hans Louis Tréfousse, “Erinnerungen an die Nazi-Zeit in der Musterschule,” in *Festschrift zum 200jährigen bestehen des Gymnasiums in Frankfurt am Main*, ed. Dieter Kallus and Eberhard Aulmann, 81 (Frankfurt: RhielTime, 2003), 81.

¹⁰⁵ Ortmeier, *Berichte gegen Vergessen*, 65-65.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 51-2.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 34-35.

¹⁰⁸ IFS Chroniken S5/317-1a Chroniken Johanna Harris-Brandes “Durch zwei Weltkriege” Bl. 7.

One of the teachers at the *Lessing-Gymnasium* showed up to work in a *Sturmabteilung* uniform after the Nazis had seized power, frequently gave antisemitic speeches in class, and “did not try to hide his desire to quickly get rid of the five Jewish students in the class.”¹⁰⁹ Finally, the director of the *Goethe-Gymnasium* refused to shake the hands of Jewish students that had successfully passed their final exams in 1936.¹¹⁰

As the Nazis cemented their power, the very act of walking to school raised the threat of violence for students that attended the *Philanthropin* and *Samson-Raphael-Hirsch-Schule*. As early as 1933, the administration of the latter changed its starting and ending times in an effort to ensure that students could safely navigate the streets between their homes and the school.¹¹¹ Esther Clifford would frequently arrive late to the *Philanthropin* because she had been forced to hide around a corner or take a longer route in order to avoid running into members of the Hitler Youth, who would lie in wait outside the building in order to harass Jewish students as they walked to and from school. Clifford eventually dropped out of the *Philanthropin* and transferred to a private vocational school in no small measure “because walking to school was so bad.”¹¹² The situation appears to have only gotten worse with time and the testimony from other Jewish former students similarly reveals how fear of violent acts and harassment on city streets became a common feature of everyday life while attending school.¹¹³ By 1936, for example, Rudolph

¹⁰⁹ Ortmeier, *Berichte gegen Vergessen*, 56.

¹¹⁰ IFS Chroniken S5/342 J. Gensichen Bl. 2.

¹¹¹ *Assimilation, Verfolgung, Exil am Beispiel der jüdischen Schüler des Kaiser-Friedrichs-Gymnasiums (heute: Heinrich-von Gagern-Gymnasium) in Frankfurt am Main*, edited by Petra Bonavita (Stuttgart: Schmetterling Verlag, 2002), 20-21.

¹¹² USC VHA Esther Clifford. Interview 22237. Segment 26-29, 35-37. Accessed April 6, 2018.

¹¹³ USC VHA Mark Horovitz Interview 52713. Segment 57-59. Accessed April 18, 2018; USC VHA Gerald Manko. Interview 55626. Segment 13-14. Accessed April 12, 2018. Ortmeier, *Berichte gegen Vergessen*, 73-74; USC VHA George Auman. Interview 42276. Segment 20. Accessed April 16, 2018; USC VHA Josef Kampler.

Moser's parents would arrange for a Christian friend to walk their son to and from school out of a fear that he would come under attack.¹¹⁴

Like Jewish Students, Jewish teachers suffered under the discriminatory policies and bureaucratic vagaries during the early years of the Nazi State. Two weeks after the Nazi Party took control of Frankfurt, the city Magistrate ordered the immediate suspension of Jewish teachers on 28 March 1933. This was part of a larger effort to purge the city of all Jewish municipal employees in retaliation for an initial wave of so-called "hate propaganda" by German-Jewish emigres who had fled Germany.¹¹⁵ Nevertheless, the passage of the euphemistically named Law for the Restoration of the Professional Civil Service on 7 April 1933 complicated any efforts to bring about a swift end to the presence of Jewish faculty at Frankfurt's schools. Although the law called for the forced retirement of all "non-Aryan" civil servants, it also contained built-in exemptions for Jewish civil servants who had entered the civil service before 1 August 1914, served at the front for Germany or one of its allies during the First World War, or had a father or son who had lost their life during that same conflict.¹¹⁶ Accordingly, the Frankfurt School Deputation was forced to allow ten Jewish teachers to return to work at the end of April.¹¹⁷

Interview 16003. Segment 47-49. Accessed April 6, 2018; USC VHA Cäcilie Peiser. Interview 12385. Segment 18-20. Accessed April 9, 2018; USC VHA Ernst Valfer. Interview 52608. Segment 10. Accessed April 18, 2018.

¹¹⁴ LBI ME 1316 Ronnie (Rudolph) Moser Bl. 17.

¹¹⁵ IFS Schulamt 1.527 Durchführung des Gesetzes zur Wiederherstellung des Berufsbeamtentums einschl. Wartegeld- und Versorgungsempfänger vom 7.4.1933.

¹¹⁶ Richard Breitman, "Law for the Restitution of the Professional Civil Service (April 7, 1933)," Nazi Germany (1933-1945), Deutsche Geschichte in Dokumenten und Bildern, https://ghdi.ghi-dc.org/sub_document.cfm?document_id=1520&language=german (accessed November 1, 2019).

¹¹⁷ IFS Schulamt 1.527 Durchführung des Gesetzes zur Wiederherstellung des Berufsbeamtentums einschl. Wartegeld- und Versorgungsempfänger vom 7.4.1933.

One of the Jewish teachers who returned to work in April 1933 was Moses Breuer, who had served at the front during the war. A few months later, city and Prussian officials tried to remove Breuer from his position at the *Wöhlerschule* by transferring him to a position at the Orthodox *Samson-Raphael-Hirsch-Schule*. This plan failed because representatives from the IRG said that the school had no open teaching positions. Moreover, they did not foresee any future openings because recent financial woes had already forced them to combine several different classes at the school. Lacking other options, the city's School Commission decided that Breuer could stay in his old position at the *Wöhlerschule* after its Director assured the city that "based on the experiences of this last school year (1933/34)," he and his colleagues had "no objections to allowing Herr *Studienrat* Dr. Breuer to remain in his position for the time being." According to the notes in Breuer's personnel file, it appears he continued to teach at the school without incident for much of 1934 and even joined his colleagues in signing an official oath of loyalty to Adolf Hitler in August of that year. That being said, Breuer was working on borrowed time. In November, the Frankfurt School Bureau informed him that he would be placed into early retirement at the start of 1935 based on another provision of the Civil Service Law stipulating that any bureaucrat could be fired if it would allow for a "simplification of [civic] administration." After he was terminated, Breuer returned to work at his father's yeshiva until he was arrested and sent to the Buchenwald Concentration Camp in November 1938. Shortly thereafter he emigrated to Palestine, but returned to Frankfurt after the war and passed away in March 1958.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁸ IFS Personalakten 193.514 Moses Breuer Sachsenhäuser Oberrealschule Bl. 49-51, 57, 59, 61, 64-65, 102-104, 105, 109; Richard Breitman, "Law for the Restitution of the Professional Civil Service (April 7, 1933)," Nazi Germany (1933-1945), Deutsche Geschichte in Dokumenten und Bildern, https://ghdi.ghi-dc.org/sub_document.cfm?document_id=1520&language=german (accessed November 1, 2019).

Breuer's trajectory under National Socialism is similar to that of Adele Strauß, who had been teaching Jewish religious education, French, history, and German at the all-girls' *Viktoriaschule* since 1907. Despite her initial suspension in March 1933, Strauß was able to return to work because of her long tenure as a civil servant. Although she was still able to teach a normal number of classes to students in lower level grades, the school administration decided in 1934 that she would no longer be able to serve as a head teacher for a specific class year. Before the start of the 1935-1936 school year, Strauß asked the city School Bureau for permission to retire. In a letter sent to her on 10 May 1935, the *Oberpräsident* for education in the state of Hessen-Nassau granted her request and perfunctorily thanked Strauß for her "many years of loyally fulfilling her duty to the state." Strauß eventually died in Frankfurt in November 1941.¹¹⁹

The remaining Jewish teachers that were still working at Frankfurt's public schools dealt with increasingly harsh opposition and harassment from their students' and the public over the course of 1935. Chief among those targeted was Julius Flörsheim, a veteran and former prisoner-of-war who had first been hired by the *Brüder-Grimm-Mittelschule* in April 1914.¹²⁰ In early 1935, Nazi Mayor Friedrich Krebs personally asked the city's School Bureau to send him copies of Flörsheim's personnel records and suggested that the city should fire him because his presence was hurting enrollment at the *Brüder-Grimm-Mittelschule*. The School Bureau struck a surprisingly defensive tone in their reply. They informed Krebs that "[Flörsheim] is a hardworking teacher who works satisfactorily in instruction. He has some difficulties maintaining discipline (*Schulzucht*), for which he receives [additional] support from the Director and other teachers; however, there has not been any resistance [to him]. It is clear that National-

¹¹⁹ IFS Personalakten 210.253 Adele Strauß Viktoriaschule; IFS Viktoriaschule 56 Organisation und Erweiterung.

¹²⁰ IFS Personalakten 194.705 Julius Flörsheim Bl. 35, 56.

Socialist parents...cannot agree in principle that their children would be taught and educated by a Jewish teacher. However, we know of no cases in which parents have refused to send their children to the school because of the Jew [Flörsheim].” During the same period, another official from the School Bureau submitted a positive evaluation of a lesson he had observed in one of Flörsheim’s science classes.¹²¹ In sum, although Flörsheim was a veteran, it still seems remarkable that he received such decorous and even kindhearted treatment from officials and colleagues after the Nazis had come to power.

Nevertheless, Flörsheim would soon be forced to leave the school. In April and May 1935, four parents sent angry letters accusing the school’s director of violating Nazism’s worldview by employing a Jewish teacher at the school. One personally requested that his daughter not suffer any disciplinary action for refusing to attend one of Flörsheim’s handwriting class. Several weeks later, an unknown group of individuals vandalized the stairs leading up to the main entrance of the school and a portion of the building’s roof with graffiti that read: “A Jewish teacher still teaches at this school. Do not tolerate this, German parents!” Fearing for Flörsheim’s safety, the director of the school issued him a brief suspension.¹²²

A similar incident occurred later in the year at the city’s higher vocational school, which employed the Jewish teacher Samuel Fröhlich. At the end of September, Fröhlich reported to the school’s director that he had discovered a sign bearing the message “Jews are not wanted here” hanging in a classroom where he was supposed to give a lesson on shorthand writing. The director of the school promptly went to the classroom and informed Fröhlich’s students that “the school authorities would soon find a solution for the Jewish Question at our school, but until then

¹²¹ Ibid., Bl. 124; *Dokumente*, 110.

¹²² IFS Schulamts 2.163 Errichtung rein jüdischer Grundschulklassen und Beschäftigung jüdischer Lehrer; *Dokumente*, 110.

all arbitrary acts must cease.” A day later, a large group of students wearing Hitler Youth uniforms held a demonstration in the halls of the school in which they threatened the Director by chanting ““if the leader of this school protects Jews, we go against him!”” The situation soon returned to normal after Fröhlich supposedly informed the director that he was willing to enter retirement.¹²³ Thus, even though Fröhlich and Flörsheim could still rely on some support from school administrators, the activism of students and teachers affiliated with the Nazi movement made it increasingly untenable for Jewish teachers to remain in their traditional roles at city schools. Grassroots pressure could easily provide the impetus for radical alterations of policies regarding Jews in the realm of education.

Nevertheless, Fröhlich, Flörsheim, and three other teachers – Aron Albrecht, Karl Beicht, and Alice Bendheim – managed to remain in the city’s civil service beyond the fall of 1935. This was a result of local and national plans to create segregated Jewish classes in public *Volksschulen* following the passage of the Nuremberg laws.¹²⁴ These plans came to fruition in Frankfurt at the start of the 1936-1937 school year, when the School Bureau created four mixed-sex and mixed-age classes of Jewish students at the *Holzhausenschule* and the *Varentrappschule*.¹²⁵ Although they had been forced into retirement in January 1936, both Flörsheim and Bendheim returned to the city civil service a month later because of the urgent need for qualified Jewish teachers who were legally eligible to work. Similarly, Fröhlich was

¹²³ Ibid., 111.

¹²⁴ “Die Rassentrennung in den Volksschulen,” *Berliner Börsenzeitung*, September 11, 1935.

¹²⁵ IFS Schulamt 2.163 Beschulung Jüdischer Kinder 1934-1938; “Jüdische Chronik,” *Gemeindeblatt der Israelitischen Gemeinde Frankfurt am Main*, November 20, 1936.

reinstated as a teacher because of the city's concurrent decision to have him teach classes to Jewish students enrolled at a business-oriented vocational school for boys.¹²⁶

The future of these classes was tenuous from the start. Julius Flörsheim was fired in March 1937 because the city government wanted to aggressively cut back education expenditures and potentially merge all Jewish students into one school due to a steady drop of Jewish enrollment at all of the city's public schools.¹²⁷ Even if Jews were still able to attend these public schools, the city government made sure that they received an educational experience that reinforced their racial difference and separation from the rest of the German population. According to Herbert Freeman, the administration of the *Holzhausenschule* decided to have separate morning recess periods for Jewish and non-Jewish students.¹²⁸ City officials also made sure that Jewish students at the vocational school received their civics lesson from "the perspective of a foreign people (*Gastvolk*) in the German state and according to German law."¹²⁹

Jewish public education in Frankfurt finally came to an end two years later. Shortly after *Kristallnacht*, the German Ministry for Science, Education, and Adult Education announced that Jews would no longer be able to attend public schools and the city informed the few remaining Jewish teachers that they were fired at the start of 1939.¹³⁰ Another national order of July 1939

¹²⁶ IFS Schulamt 3.700 Kaufmännische Berufsschule für Industrie, Banken und Versicherungen: Sonderklassen f. jüdische Lehrlinge; IFS Magistratsakten 5.399 Beurlaubung jüdischer Beamter und Lehrer und Übertritt in den Ruhestand auf Grund der Durchführungsbestimmungen zum Reichsbürgergesetz mit Ablauf des 31. Dez. 1935 Bl. 146, 150, 154.

¹²⁷ IFS Schulamt 2.163 Beschulung Jüdischer Kinder 1934-1938; IFS Personalakten 194.705 Julius Flörsheim Bl. 149-150.

¹²⁸ JMB M 26 2007/30/2 Herbert Freeman, *Cobblestones: The Story of my Life*.

¹²⁹ Schulamt 3.700 Kaufmännische Berufsschule für Industrie, Banken und Versicherungen: Sonderklassen f. jüdische Lehrlinge.

¹³⁰ IFS Magistratsakten 5.399 Beurlaubung jüdischer Beamter und Lehrer und Übertritt in den Ruhestand auf Grund der Durchführungsbestimmungen zum Reichsbürgergesetz mit Ablauf des 31. Dez. 1935 Bl. 236; IFS Personalakten 193.020 Alice Bendheim.

that year made it so that Jewish youths would only be able to schools that were administered by The Reich Representation of German Jews.¹³¹

Private Jewish education continued to exist for another three years, despite the closure of the *Samson-Raphael-Hirsch-Schule* in March 1939. That year the orthodox *Israelitische Volksschule* moved into the same building as the *Philanthropin*. The latter closed in April 1941 after the German government ordered the closure of all Jewish higher schools in Germany. All forms of officially sanctioned Jewish education in Frankfurt ceased when the *Israelitische Volksschule* closed on 30 June 1942.¹³²

University Post-1933

It took little time for the Nazis to coopt the Goethe University into their revolutionary goal of remaking Frankfurt's institutions. Between April 1933 and April 1934, one hundred and nine of the university's three hundred and fifty-five junior and senior professors were fired based upon the Law for the Restitution of the Professional Civil Service.¹³³ On at least two occasions in April and May, students and members of the SA occupied university buildings and prevented Jewish students and faculty members from entering.¹³⁴ University officials soon moved to cancel all contracts with Jewish firms and the names of Jewish philanthropists who had donated large sums of money to fund the university disappeared from plaques on the walls of the entrance hall to the main university building.¹³⁵ On 10 May 1933, newly installed Rector Ernst Krieck led a

¹³¹ IFS Magistratsakten 7.793 Isr. Volksschule and Philanthropin.

¹³² Schlotzhauer, *Philanthropin*, 119-121, 124; *Dokumente*, 117.

¹³³ The Goethe University had the second-highest number of faculty members that were fired in 1933. Nationally, fifteen percent of German academics lost their jobs that year. Notker Hammerstein, *Die Johann Wolfgang Goethe-Universität Frankfurt am Main: Von der Stiftungsuniversität zur staatlichen Hochschule Band 1: 1914 bis 1950* (Frankfurt: Alfred Metzner Verlag, 1989), 220; Stuchlik, *Goethe im Braunhemd*, 90-93.

¹³⁴ *Dokumente*, 96-97.

torch-lit procession to the square in front of Frankfurt's town hall, where students proceeded to burn books by Jewish and leftist authors including Sigmund Freud, Jakob Wassermann, and Stefan Zweig.¹³⁶

As the year went on, the Mayor and the new Rector took steps to ensure that the Nazi Party would have total control over all university affairs. Newly appointed Nazi members of the City Magistrate were given positions on the University's Great Council that had previously belonged to Social Democrats and Liberals, including the Jewish politician Max Michel.¹³⁷ Officials then moved to dissolve the Great Council and to reduce the number of private foundations that would have a say in the administration of university funds. Those that remained served in a small advisory capacity on the university's Curatorium.¹³⁸

Despite the implementation of segregationist legislation on a national level, Jewish students were not immediately prevented from attending the university. Although the proportion of Jews in the student body quickly dropped from ten to one-and-one-half percent, the Jews that remained enrolled at the university were guaranteed most of the same rights and privileges as their non-Jewish fellow students.¹³⁹ The university administration even sent out a memorandum

¹³⁵ IFS S5/346 Margarete Sallis-Freudenthal Bl. 198; UAF Abt. 13 Nr. 59 Bl. 439.

¹³⁶ Krieck had previously served as a Professor at the city's Pedagogical Academy. He was briefly removed from this position between 1931 and 1932 after he gave a speech calling for a National Socialist renewal in Germany; Stuchlik, *Goethe im Braunhemd*, 112-116; Schäfer, *Schulpolitik*, 219-224.

¹³⁷ UAF Abt. 2, Nr. 6k Bl. 187.

¹³⁸ UAF Abt. 2, Nr. 6k Bl. 201. According to the Goethe University historian Notker Hammerstein, this action "changed the character of the 'Foundation University' to the point of being unrecognizable." Hammerstein, *Die Johann Wolfgang Goethe-Universität*, 251.

¹³⁹ There were some small administrative changes for Jewish students. They could no longer receive discounts for insurance or food from the university cafeteria and, more onerously, they were no longer eligible for a remittance of university fees. Stuchlik, *Goethe im Braunhemd*, 85; Friedman, *Lion and the Star*, 130; Christoph Dorner, Lutz Lemhöfer, Reiner Stock, Gerda Stuchlik, and Frank Wenzl, *Die braune Machtergreifung. Universität Frankfurt 1930-1945* (Frankfurt: Nexus/Druckladen, 1989), 53.

in January 1934 instructing members of the five faculties that although Jews could no longer receive fee remissions, “Students of non-Aryan heritage who have been allowed to continue studying are not allowed to be handicapped in the simple teaching and studying operations of the school (giving out work places or student placement positions); they are equal to the Aryan students.”¹⁴⁰

The fate of the Jewish university students we met earlier in this chapter reveals an odd interplay of discrimination and persecution with their continued ability to enjoy most of the basic services provided to students attending the Goethe University. Reacting quickly to the new realities of life under Nazi rule, Margarete Sallis-Freudenthal managed to complete and successfully defend her dissertation by December 1933 without any major disturbances.¹⁴¹ Jakob Katz remained at the university until the summer of 1935, even though university officials had announced in February 1934 that Jewish students would only be allowed to sit for exams and complete dissertations if their fathers had fought in the First World War.¹⁴² After the university fired his supervisor Karl Mannheim, Katz also quickly found a new *Doktorvater*: the sociologist Georg Künzel, who Katz believed “saw Mannheim’s removal and the trends that it reflected as a perversion of justice.” Katz finished his dissertation in the spring of 1934. Over a year later, he finished his doctoral requirements on 31 July 1935 in no small part because he was able to take and pass an exam in medieval history with Walter Platzhoff, who by then was serving as the university’s Rector.¹⁴³

¹⁴⁰ UAF Abt. 600 Nr. 822.

¹⁴¹ IFS S5/346 Margarete Sallis-Freudenthal Bl. 198-200.

¹⁴² UAF Abt. 600 Nr. 822.

¹⁴³ Künzel advised Katz to add a disclaimer to the preface of his dissertation saying that he did not support assimilation as a proper solution to the “Jewish Question.” *With My Own Eyes*, 90-94. For more on Platzhoff see Hammerstein, *Die Johann Wolfgang Goethe-Universität*, 449-462.

Wolf Elkan had a rougher experience during his final months as an undergraduate medical student at the university in 1933 because of the stress caused by the implementation of new discriminatory laws. He and many of his Jewish acquaintances struggled to concentrate and lived in constant fear that Jews would lose their ability to attend the university. At various points in time Nazi students tried to prevent them from taking exams and from sitting in the front rows of lecture halls. However, it appears that some members of the faculty went out of their way to help Jewish students fulfill their academic obligations during this same period. For example, one professor had his assistant provide extra tutoring to Jewish students preparing for exams because they had not been able to attend classes while the university processed their new identification cards. By the time he took his exams in the late spring, Elkan still felt that he “was treated with the utmost fairness and consideration by all professors and examiners concerned and passed with good marks.” In the end, though, Elkan decided to drop out because of persistent Nazi harassment forced him to conclude that the university was no longer a safe space for him.¹⁴⁴

Beginning in 1933, the local Nazi establishment slowly worked towards ridding the university administration of its long-standing connection to the local Jewish community and German Jewry. Part of this process entailed a steady elimination of university honors that had been given to Jewish donors and cultural luminaries. Fritz Hallgarten, was kicked off of the university’s Curatorium in 1933, Otto Goldmann was stripped of his title of “Honorary Citizen,” and plans were made to strip Ludwig Landmann, the director Max Reinhardt, and several other Jewish men of the honorary doctorates they had received.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴⁴ ZfA bMS Gerai (56) Film 89 - Elkan, Wolf My Life in Germany Bl. 42-44, 53-55, 63-64.

¹⁴⁵ UAF Abt. 1, Nr. 201K Bl. 54, 9R, 10R-10V, 12-16, 34.

Other Jews, however, were harder to get rid of. At one point in 1934, Frankfurt's Mayor, Friedrich Krebs, complained to the Prussian Ministry for Academics, Art, and Adult that a number of Jewish professors from other institutions were being transferred to the Goethe University. Because of this, Krebs feared that Frankfurt would become, "a harbor for those non-Aryan Professors that are either no longer suitable or wanted at other universities."¹⁴⁶ Beyond the professoriate, the Jewish philanthropists Arthur von Weinberg and Richard Merton continued to respectively represent the Senckenberg Nature Research Society and the Institute for Common Good on the university's Curatorium.¹⁴⁷ Their tenure on this body did not come to an end in the spring of 1937, when they were informed that the Ministry had created a new division that would ensure that all Prussian universities were complying with the full stipulations of the Nuremberg laws. Although their departure was a *fait accompli*, one of the university's trustees attempted to let the two men leave with a bit of their honor intact by telling them that they would have an "opportunity to make your own decisions about your further membership on the Curatorium."¹⁴⁸ The Jewish presence at the university finally ceased, when the Reich Education Minister passed a resolution on "the removal of Jews from German universities" in December 1938.¹⁴⁹

Despite this Nazi victory, it is worth noting that the Goethe University had and continued to struggle with the ramifications of the efforts to remove Jewish students and academics. For one, the dramatic drop in Jewish students and faculty led to rumors as early as 1933 that the

¹⁴⁶ *Dokumente*, 102-103.

¹⁴⁷ Indeed, von Weinberg was invited to Kriek's investiture ceremony in 1933, which heralded the Nazi takeover of the institution. He also received multiple birthday and thank-you letters from Rectors Kriek and Platzhoff that recognized his "heartfelt support and great merit" for the Goethe University. Hammerstein, *Die Johann Wolfgang Goethe-Universität*, 245; UAF Abt. 1, Nr. 201K Bl. 229-230.

¹⁴⁸ Hammerstein, *Die Johann Wolfgang Goethe-Universität*, 251-254; Stuchlik, *Goethe im Braunhemd*, 161.

¹⁴⁹ *Dokumente*, 104.

Prussian government was planning to close the university. The persistence of these rumors prompted many students to transfer to different universities outside of Frankfurt. Moreover, the failure to quickly replace fired Jewish professors created large gaps in the normal schedule of classes and a number of non-Jewish students transferred to different universities when the Prussian government announced that they could no longer guarantee that law students would be able to complete their studies in Frankfurt after 1934.¹⁵⁰ The nervous mood of this period is captured well in an anonymous letter from that summer, in which the author begs Mayor Krebs to not let the Goethe University become “a dwarf university by liquidating faculties. No one would be happier about this than the Jews. In spite of the Jews, we should create a much better, larger, and more accomplished university than the Jews did circa twenty years ago.”¹⁵¹ Enrollment numbers eventually stabilized and the university avoided a premature closure due to new matriculations in the middle of the decade.¹⁵²

As time went on, it also became increasingly apparent that the Goethe University’s reputation continued to be tainted by its long-standing association with the city’s Jewish population. At his investiture ceremony in November 1934, Rector Walter Platzhoff made a point of informing the audience that “ ‘The old accusation that our university is a stronghold of Marxist-Jewish intellectualism can, thank god, no longer be raised. Indeed, no other university has undertaken as radical a cleansing as we have done here.’ ”¹⁵³ However, the university’s Jewish past remained a fly in the ointment and prominently resurfaced during preparations for the Goethe University’s twenty-fifth anniversary celebration in 1939. At a meeting in November

¹⁵⁰ UAF Abt 600 Nr. 823.

¹⁵¹ *Dokumente*, 103.

¹⁵² UAF Abt 600 Nr. 823.

¹⁵³ Stuchlik, *Goethe im Braunhemd*, 94.

1938, officials agreed they would need to minimize the history of the university before 1933 if they wanted to deflect attention away from the number of Jews who had become department chairs and institute directors during the Weimar Republic. Finally, during the actual anniversary festivities in 1939, speakers including the mayor, Platzhoff, and several professors were compelled to continually inveigh that the university had finally overcome the earlier threat of “Jewish subversion” when the university was coopted into the Nazi system in 1933.¹⁵⁴ Even if they had triumphed, the mere invocation of the Nazis’ success served as a reminder of the once vibrant connection between the university and German Jewry.

Conclusion

Before 1933, the Jews of Frankfurt had an almost unimpeded access to education at public schools. Their access to these institutions built on the municipal government’s long-standing position to use public education to promote peaceful relations between the three main confessional groups in the city. Officials from local schools, the City Council, and the City Magistrate enacted several specific policies to ensure that this liberal educational model continued to thrive during the course of the Weimar Republic. For one, Jewish religious education was an accepted part of the curriculum at every level of school and officials worked with the IG to put these classes into the hands of Rabbis or other professional Jewish educators. They further made sure that Jewish, Catholic, and Protestant students at public schools spent the vast majority of their time in mixed classrooms by scheduling religion classes to take place during the first or final class periods of the school day. School curricula from this era also reinforced general notions of tolerance and the important place of Jews in the local history of Frankfurt.

¹⁵⁴ Hammerstein, *Die Johann Wolfgang Goethe-Universität*, 409, 414.

Despite the dense concentration of Jewish students at specific higher schools, almost all Jewish pupils who attended school between 1914 and 1933 had fond memories of their educational experiences. Although most of their non-Jewish teachers were politically conservative, antisemitism was rarely present in classroom instruction. Indeed, many teachers and school Directors went out of their way to accommodate observant Jewish students by allowing them to be absent from school on the sabbath and major holidays. Many Jewish students also managed to form close friendships with their Christian classmates and it appears that class rather than religion was usually more important in determining the cliques and groups that could take shape at specific schools.

Jewish teachers also appear to have faced little opposition to their presence in the municipal education system. Teachers with a plurality of Jewish identities ranging from orthodox to assimilated managed to secure positions at different kinds of schools throughout the city and were generally accepted and supported by their non-Jewish colleagues. For example, Orthodox Jews such as Moses Breuer were able to secure positions at higher schools and Rabbi Benjamin May worked with the director of the *Musterschule* to create a library that would foster a greater understanding of Judaism. Additionally, gender was not a barrier to work in Frankfurt's public schools and the majority of Jewish teachers were female.

Jews enjoyed a similarly high level of integration at the Goethe University, an institution that owed its very existence to the financial support of local Jewish philanthropists. Officials at the young university held fast to the egalitarian spirit of its founding by disregarding religion when hiring professors and establishing a chair in Jewish religion that was first occupied by the famous philosopher and theologian Martin Buber. Jews eventually accounted for a tenth of the student body, roughly a third of the faculty, and many of the representatives to the

governing bodies of the institution. Although antisemitism was present in fraternity life and campus politics, the groups associated with these organizations were a marginal part of the student body. Thus, much like in public schools, antisemitism and integration took place side-by-side.

Although the Nazis quickly insinuated their antisemitic ideology into all aspects of public education in Frankfurt after they took over the city in March 1933, they did not eliminate the Jewish presence at public schools until the end of 1938. In a stroke of irony, the Law for the Restoration of the Civil Service stipulated that ten Jewish teachers could not be fired because they had either fought in the First World War, lost a father or son in the same conflict, or been state employees before 1 August 1914. Many were not forced into retirement until 1935 and the city even rehired several of them a second time to teach in segregated Jewish classes that were created at two *Volksschulen*. Concurrently, the number of Jewish students attending public schools had dropped precipitously since the start of 1933. Many Jews left because of constant stress brought about by discrimination from fellow students and teachers. By the middle of the decade, even students attending all-Jewish schools considered abandoning their education due to the constant threat of violence and harassment at the hands of members of the Hitler youth as they made their way to school.

The situation was not dissimilar at the Goethe University, which lost almost a third of its faculty and the majority of its Jewish students by the end of 1933. During the first year of Nazi rule, Jewish students like Benno Elkan and Margarete Sallis-Freudenthal dropped out or accelerated their studies because they feared that they would lose their legal standing to attend the university. However, some members of the university faculty continued to show courtesy to Jewish students and to help more advanced students to finish their degrees.

CHAPTER 5 SOCIAL INTEGRATION, 1914-1938

Joseph Levy came to Frankfurt in 1896 to serve as a religion teacher and cantor at an orthodox synagogue affiliated with the *Israelitische Gemeinde*. Over the next forty-three years, Levy built a family and established himself as a fixture within the local Jewish community. Scarcely a year after his emigration from Germany in March 1939, Levy, now living in Boston, was one of approximately 230 refugees who took part in an autobiographical essay competition in which they wrote about “My Life in Germany Before and After January 30, 1933.” The sponsors of the competition were a group of professors at Harvard University who wanted to collect materials that would allow them “to study the social and psychological effects of National Socialism on German society and the German people.”¹

Like many Jewish refugees from his hometown, Levy maintained an outsized sense of pride about the impact that Jews had once had on the political, economic, and cultural life of Frankfurt before the Nazi Party came to power. One paragraph in his essay serves as a kind of honor roll that references the contributions figures including of the Rothschild family, the chemist Paul Ehrlich, the philosopher Franz Rosenzweig. At the same time, however, Levy’s essay suggests that Jewish influence and participation in the public sphere did not necessarily translate into the basis for strong social ties and personal relationships to develop across confessional lines in the city. Per Levy:

¹ Levy was awarded fifth-place prize of \$20 for his essay. More information on the competition can be found at Harvard’s Houghton library or in the following source guide: Liebersohn and Schneider, “*My Life in Germany*”; ZfA bMS Ger 91 (135) Film 10.

This joint life and work between Christians and Jews...was limited to the present areas of science, art, public welfare, and trade. Only in rare exceptions – mostly at large public, societal, or charitable events – were there social or friendly interactions between these two religions and their members. On the whole, citizens remained divided by religion and wanted to interact within their own close circles...Even me, my wife, and my children had only a few stray, good friends in non-Jewish circles with which we occasionally met. But this did not add up to real social engagement, which neither side really wanted anyway.²

Although this excerpt appears to depict a sizeable gulf in social relations between Jews and other Germans in Frankfurt, Levy manages to undercut his own claim at multiple points throughout the rest of his manuscript. Indeed, at the end of the same paragraph, Levy strikes a more equivocal tone by suggesting that this natural separation was more common in the conservative Jewish circles he frequented, “while religiously liberal and assimilationist Jews also found their way into Christian families, a fact that often led to mixed marriages in the preceding decades.”³ The remaining sections of Levy’s essay that touch upon the period between the First World War and his emigration in 1938 are littered with numerous instances of relationships he developed with non-Jews he had met in both his professional and private life. Given the dissonance in Levy’s recollections, we are left to wonder what the true quality of social relations was between Jews and non-Jews in Frankfurt am Main between 1914 and the early months of 1933. Just how intimate were the ties between Jewish and gentile Frankfurters and how often did they extend beyond the public sphere? To what degree can we say that Frankfurt’s Jews enjoyed a level of social integration that was comparable with Jewish integration in the realm of politics, education, and cultural life? Finally, how much of this form of integration survived and how much of it was altered once the Nazi Party came to power?

² LBI ME 383 Joseph levy Bl. 13-14.

³ Ibid., Bl. 14.

Few historians have done more to address the complicated topic of Jewish social integration in Germany than Marion Kaplan. At the turn of the twenty-first century, Kaplan published two articles which used published and unpublished memoirs to reconstruct the nature of social relations between Jews and non-Jews in the final decades of Wilhelmine Empire from the perspective of *Alltagsgeschichte*. One of Kaplan's key findings mirrors the earlier passage from Joseph Levy's autobiographical sketch: while Jews and other Germans increasingly formed new social relations with one another during the *Kaiserreich*, these relationships tended to be within the realm of the public sphere, less intimate, and more formal when contrasted with the relationships that individuals had with the members of their own confession, especially their own families. This line existed not only between Jews and Christians, but also between Protestants and Catholics in areas with larger populations of religious minorities.⁴ Although her work on this topic does not venture into the years of the Weimar Republic, Kaplan argues that the First World War "exposed and hardened the fault lines between Jews and non-Jews, critically estranging both sides."⁵

This chapter zeroes in on the social relations between Jews and gentiles in Frankfurt following the outbreak of the First World War, with a particular eye towards the Weimar Republic and the first five years of the Third Reich. During this era, Jews and gentiles formed relationships in myriad places including wartime kitchens, businesses, schools, neighborhood streets, department stores, apartment buildings, and athletic clubs. Still, it is important to remember that many different factors, such as class and gender, could readily impact either the

⁴ Some of Kaplan's key conclusions are influenced by the theoretical work of Georg Simmel as well as Werner Cahnmann's study of rural German Jewry. Marion Kaplan, "Unter Uns: Jews Socialising with other Jews in Imperial Germany," *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book* 48 (2003): 41-65; *Ibid.*, "Friendship on the Margins: Jewish Social Relations in Imperial Germany," 471-501; Werner J. Cahnman, "Village and Small-Town Jews in Germany: A Typological Study," *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book* 19 (1974): 107-130.

⁵Kaplan, "Friendship on the Margins," 495.

limits or depth of such relationships before the Nazis came to power. Beyond personal relationships with gentiles, Jews' ability to engage in the civic events such as memorials for the First World and to access spaces of public sociability such as parks and public baths further defined the extent of their social integration in the city.

After 1933, the Nazis, like other totalitarian regimes, aspired to create a new order that would hinge on revolutionizing the practices of inclusion and exclusion in everyday life.⁶ As the second half of this chapter will show, the erosion of Jewish social integration and the estrangement of Jews from their gentile neighbors in Frankfurt dramatically increased after the passage of the Nuremberg laws in 1935 and the efforts of city officials to enforce the spatial segregation of Jewish Frankfurters from their gentile neighbors. Ultimately, few of the social bonds between Jews and gentiles were still viable by the time of the *Kristallnacht* pogrom in 1938.

Jewish-Gentile Relations in Frankfurt, 1914-1932

Some of the strongest social bonds between Jews and non-Jews in Frankfurt took shape within the private confines of Jewish homes. During this era, it was commonplace for upper as well as middle-class households in Germany to employ servants to manage everyday tasks including cooking, cleaning, chaperoning children, or even driving an automobile. Christian servants employed in Jewish households usually came from towns and villages in the Hessian countryside.⁷ Numerous oral testimonies and memoirs written by Jewish holocaust survivors from Frankfurt speak to the warmth and longevity of the relations between these servants and

⁶Sheila Fitzpatrick and Alf Lüdtke, "Energizing the Everyday: On the Breaking and Making of Social Bonds in Nazism and Stalinism," in *Beyond Totalitarianism: Stalinism and Nazism Compared*, ed. Sheila Fitzpatrick and Michael Geyer, 266-301 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

⁷Mile Braach, *Rückblende. Erinnerungen einer Neunzigjährigen* (Frankfurt: Fischer, 1992), 18; Carlebach, *Doppelmord*, 17; IFS LG 280 Georg Yehuda Guthmann Bl. 90-91.

their Jewish employers. Ernst Flersheim and his wife, for example, first hired a nanny to look after their children in 1900 and she proceeded to work in their household until the family emigrated in 1938.⁸ Several other Jews described servants as honorary members of their families. Georg Guthmann noted that his family's servant, Hanny Mueller, "lived like one of the children in our house, took part at communal meals, went with us to the theater and concerts, read our books, discussed and debated with us and our friends."⁹ Mile Braach's nanny arranged for two of her sisters to find positions as servants in the households of members of Braach's extended family.¹⁰ It was not uncommon for Jewish children to spend time with the family and friends of their non-Jewish nannies. This took the form of extended stays with servants' families in the countryside or, in the cases of Dorothy Kaufman and George Auman, invitations to Christmas celebrations.¹¹ Some Christian servants even played a key role in maintaining the strictures of Jewish ritual observance in orthodox households. Rudolph Moser's grandparents had a non-Jewish cook named Mahle who cooked their kosher meals and the maid for the Steinlaufs, a family who had relocated to Frankfurt from Galicia, learned how to join her employees in reciting the Hebrew-language blessings after each of their meals.¹²

The memoirs of several holocaust survivors from Frankfurt suggest that it was not too uncommon for non-Jews to visit the homes of their Jewish friends and acquaintances. Max Maier

⁸ LBI ME 131 Ernst Flersheim BI 21.

⁹ LBI ME 383 Joseph Levy BI 36-37; IFS LG 280 Georg Yehuda Guthmann BI. 90-91.

¹⁰ Braach, *Rückblende*, 18.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 18-19; Eilbott, Benjamin. Interview 39921. Segment 30. *Visual History Archive*, USC Shoah Foundation, 1998. Accessed 23 April 2018; Auman, George. Interview 42276. Segment 36-37. *Visual History Archive*, USC Shoah Foundation 1998. Accessed April 16, 2018; LBI ME 1638 Dorothy Kaufman BI. 7-9.

¹² LBI ME 136 Ronnie (Rudolph) Moser BI. 6; Steinlauf, Elisabeth. Interview 5831. Segment 2. *Visual History Archive*, USC Shoah Foundation, 1995. Accessed on 25 April 2018.

recalls that his family often opened up their household to the company of friends from a variety of religious backgrounds, including clergymen. Their connection with this extended network was based upon an open and “a spiritual kinship wherein no one even tried hide anything about their membership in a particular religious community.”¹³ Margarete Sallis-Freudenthal and her husband, a professor at the Goethe University, similarly made a deliberate point of inviting a mixed crowd to events at their home in a modern development in a northern suburb of the city. Such occasions, however, could serve as a reminder of the invisible cognitive boundaries and self-consciousness that could affect social relations between Jews and gentiles. In particular, Sallis-Freudenthal believed that she needed to put on a more modest and quieter persona when she socialized with Protestant friends that “bespoke the old Prussian ideals of frugality and simplicity,” lest she should appear too gauche for non-Jewish company¹⁴

That being said, a number of orthodox Jews, especially those that belonged to the secessionist IRG, lived within a subculture that encouraged only minimal contact with non-Jewish Frankfurters. Edith Halpern’s father, for example, began his career by working his way up in the ranks of a financial firm that primarily catered to orthodox clients. Apart from their maids, the Halperns had almost no relations with gentiles.¹⁵ Eastern European immigrants such as the Steinlaufs similarly had few interactions with non-Jews in *Ostend* and their daughter only played with Jewish children from their neighborhood.¹⁶ Some orthodox Holocaust survivors even recalled longstanding antagonism with the gentile neighbors that lived in their apartment

¹³ IFS S5/320 “Erinnerungen eines Achtzigjährigen” von Max Hermann Maier Bl. 41.

¹⁴ IFS S5/346 Margarete Sallis-Freudenthal Bl. 130-131.

¹⁵ Halpern, Edith. Interview 25504. Segment 5, 12-13. *Visual History Archive*, USC Shoah Foundation, 1997. Accessed on 16 April 2018.

¹⁶ Steinlauf, Elisabeth. Interview 5831. Segment 1, 4. *Visual History Archive*, USC Shoah Foundation, 1995. Accessed on 25 April 2018.

buildings. In the words of Lisa Baer, whose non-Jewish neighbors often admonished her to be quiet: “you just weren’t friendly with gentiles. You said hello and you were glad when they didn’t bother you.”¹⁷ Indeed, some conservative and orthodox Jews appear to have deliberately chosen not to form too close of a bond with the gentile they encountered in the realm of academic life, art, charity, and trade because they feared that greater social contact might increase the rate intermarriage rate between Jews and gentiles.¹⁸

Still, one can hardly argue that all of the orthodox Jews in Frankfurt maintained a strict separation from non-Jews. Bertha Katz met her best friend Gretel Sieber, a gentile, shortly after her family transferred her from the *Lyzeum* of the *Philanthropin* to the all-girls *Viktoria* school after Easter in 1920. Their relationship grew to encompass the members of both of their families, who began holding joint Christmas and Passover celebrations until the Siebers moved away to Stuttgart in 1924.¹⁹ Younger Jewish and gentile children often befriended each other while playing on the streets of their neighborhoods, occasionally fomenting bonds which, like the case of Bertha Katz, included family gift exchanges and home visits during Christmas and Chanukah.²⁰ Josef Kampler, for example, developed a strong bond with the parents of one of his

¹⁷ Baer, Lisa. Interview 6329. Segment 16-17. *Visual History Archive*, USC Shoah Foundation, 1995. Accessed on 17 April 2018.

¹⁸ LBI ME 383 Joseph Levy Bl. 13-14.

¹⁹ Katz emigrated to Palestine in 1933. Curiously, many of her warm memories of life in Frankfurt stand in stark contrast with harsh statements she made about Jewish life in Germany before the Holocaust. For example, despite Gretel being her best friend, “There was no lack of opportunities to emphasize the difference between Jews and gentiles and there was no possibility whatsoever for integration [at the *Viktoria* school].” She also writes that “The tragedy of the German Jews lay in the one-sided love they felt for Germany and its culture.” JMF A162 B86/287 Bertha Katz Bl. 18-20, 29.

²⁰ Clifford, Esther. Interview 22237. Segment 20. *Visual History Archive*, USC Shoah Foundation, 1996. Accessed on 6 April 2018; Schwab, Hank. Interview 18026. Segment 7. *Visual History Archive*, USC Shoah Foundation, 1996. Accessed on 25 April 2018; Lichtenberg, Irma. Interview 12936. Segment 5-6. *Visual History Archive*, USC Shoah Foundation, 1996. Accessed on 16 April 2018.

best friends, a gentile he met while playing on the streets of *Ostend*. Years later, Kampler wrote that these adults were more like an aunt and an uncle than casual acquaintances.²¹

It appears that many members of the IRG not only eschewed close contact with gentiles, but also with less religiously observant Jews that lived in the city. Education was one of the key factors behind the social separation between members of the IRG and the IG. Families from each community that wanted their kids to get a more thorough Jewish education generally sent their children to different schools that were located in different neighborhoods and run by the two communities. The IRG's *Samson-Raphael-Hirsch-Schule* was in the heart of *Ostend* and the IG's *Philanthropin* was in *Nordend*.²² To some degree, though, this lack of connection may have reflected a finely engrained sense of superiority on the part of members of the IRG. Lore Hirsch, whose parents sent her to the IRG's school because they thought it was better than the *Philanthropin*, constantly felt that her fellow students looked down upon her because she was from a less-than-strictly observant Jewish household that belonged to the IG.²³ Similarly, when giving postwar testimony, Cäcilie Peiser admitted that she and other IRG students had held a negative opinion of students at the *Philanthropin* because they "were not pious enough for us."²⁴ By that same token, numerous *Ostjuden* believed that they were more tolerated than welcome at the IRG because they were not sufficiently enmeshed in German cultural practices.²⁵

²¹ Kampler, Josef. Interview 16003. Segment 4, 47-49. *Visual History Archive*, USC Shoah Foundation, 1996. Accessed on 6 April 2018.

²² Baer, Lisa. Interview 6329. Segment 7. *Visual History Archive*, USC Shoah Foundation, 1995. Accessed on 17 April 2018.

²³ Hirsch, Lore. Interview 42428. Segment 5-6. *Visual History Archive*, USC Shoah Foundation, 1998. Accessed on 16 April 2018.

²⁴ Peiser, Cäcilie. Interview 12385. Segment 31. *Visual History Archive*, USC Shoah Foundation, 1996. Accessed on 9 April 2018.

Professional life often proved to be fertile ground for friendships and acquaintanceships between Jews and gentiles in Frankfurt. Simon Isaac, for example, formed lasting bonds with many of the colleagues and co-workers he encountered during his tenure at the Institute for Biological Chemistry as well as the staff of other nearby clinics that were affiliated with the newly formed university and Frankfurt's main municipal hospital in *Sachsenhausen*. Per Isaac, doctors from individual institutes would commonly have dinner together a few times a month and, up until the outbreak of the First World War, a coterie of younger physicians had a coffee club that met before the start of their afternoon shifts. Isaac's professional contacts with non-Jews continued even after he became the head physician at the Jewish hospital in the district of *Bornheim*. While there, he continued to have a steady stream of gentile patients due to the hospital's excellent reputation and had cordial relations with non-Jewish doctors who referred their patients into his care.²⁶

A similar amount of collegiality and bonhomie could be found within many of the professional associations in Frankfurt. David Friedrich Weill was part of a group of independent merchants who banded together to form the League of Frankfurt Wine-sellers and Weill ended up serving on the group's board until the spring of 1933.²⁷ Wolfgang Lauinger, a financial reporter for the *Frankfurter Zeitung*, was unanimously elected to serve as the president of the Frankfurt Press Association and was also active in Frankfurt's Chamber of Commerce, which served as a social hub for the city's bureaucrats, businessmen, doctors, academics, school directors, bankers, journalists, jurists, and artists. Lauinger even spearheaded the creation of a

²⁵ Steinlauf, Elisabeth. Interview 5831. Segment 3. *Visual History Archive*, USC Shoah Foundation, 1995. Accessed on 25 April 2018; Kampler, Josef. Interview 16003. Segment 5, 8-11, 32-34. *Visual History Archive*, USC Shoah Foundation, 1996. Accessed on 6 April 2018.

²⁶ LBI ME 1366 Simon Isaac Bl. VII-VIII., 92, 100-104, 170-173, 180-182, 200.

²⁷ CAHJP P241/9 David Friedrich Weill Bl. II.

smaller circle of approximately twenty younger men that held weekly gatherings at the city's Industry Club. Over time, this subset gained enough renown for members of the Chamber's board to make occasional appearances.²⁸

The experience of Felix Rothschild presents a case whereby professional life led to the creation of long-lasting relationships across both class and religious lines. As a surrogate and probate court judge, Rothschild frequently handled issues related to juvenile delinquency, divorce, child custody, adoptions, and orphans in the proletarian district of *Bockenheim* as well as several northern suburbs and villages. Over time, Rothschild won the approbation and friendship of several local Catholic priests and many local parents for his work with boys from working-class families. However, Rothschild's prominent position did not necessarily mean that he was loved so much as feared by some of the children in the district. According to his daughter, it was not uncommon for mothers in *Bockenheim* to point to him on the street and inform their children, not without a slight hint of menace, that "Over there goes Rothschild. He'll get you if you don't behave."²⁹

Of course, it is important to note that professional and business life were overwhelmingly masculine spaces of social interaction. To that end, the patriarchal nature of German-Jewish life likely meant that many Jewish women in Frankfurt had fewer social ties to non-Jews because their primary focus in life was maintaining a Jewish household.³⁰ Reflecting on his youth in the bourgeois neighborhood of *Westend*, Han Salfield perceptively writes that "people lived in concentric spheres; the inner-most circle, the family, belonged to the woman, and she could

²⁸ JMB LBI-2011/1/1-3 Schenkung Wolfgang Lauinger Karton 835 Bl. 128-129, 134-135.

²⁹ LBI ME 1159 Felix Rothschild Bl. 3-4.

³⁰ For more on women's role preserving Jewish culture and facilitating a bourgeois lifestyle see Kaplan, *Making of the Jewish Middle Class*.

hardly get out of it. Men had a larger circle and interacted more with the periphery, but in the end they were also stuck within a finite border.”³¹

Soccer fandom and athletic associations were another almost entirely male space that encouraged the development of strong ties between male Jews and other Frankfurters. There were two dominant athletic clubs in the city: *Fußballsportverein Frankfurt* (FSV) and *Eintracht*, which has gone on to have many storied seasons in the German *Bundesliga*. Over the course of the 1920s, *Eintracht* developed a reputation for having a large number of Jewish fans. Rival teams colloquially referred to *Eintracht* supporters as “Jew boys” (*Juddebubbe*) – a phrase that fans such as Karl Heinemann claimed was not meant as an insult – or the “*Schlappekicker*” in reference to their main sponsor J. & CA Schneider, a Jewish-owned Frankfurt shoe company that had over 3,000 employees. Internally, Hugo Reiss, the club’s Jewish treasurer, won praise for his ability to help *Eintracht* survive the economic turmoil of the postwar hyperinflation and the great depression. Moreover, the club ethos of *Eintracht*, whose very name translates to “unity,” reflected the multi-confessional tolerance that had long defined Frankfurt’s local culture. In 1921, the club’s board fired a track and field coach who had engaged in “antisemitic propaganda” and seven years later, the club adopted a constitution which stated that political and religious neutrality were important features of membership in the club. However, *Eintracht* hardly had a monopoly on attracting Jewish supporters and members. The Jewish doctor David Rothschild was the Chairmen of FSV’s board from 1924 until 1929. His successor Alfred Meyers, a director at IG Farben, and the club’s longtime Treasurer Siegfried Wetterhahn were also Jews.³²

³¹ LBI ME 548 Hans Salfeld Bl. 79.

The esoteric world of freemasonry was another area of male sociability which, unlike sports clubs, highlighted both the potential and limits for Jewish social integration in Frankfurt before 1933. Frankfurt had a storied masonic tradition dating back to the eighteenth century, but the city's main masonic lodge enacted a strict prohibition on Jewish membership shortly after it came into existence. Inspired by the currents of revolution and a nascent liberalism coursing through Europe at the start of the long nineteenth century, members of the intellectual and financial elite within the local Jewish community banded together during the Napoleonic occupation of the city to create a rival masonic institution: the "Lodge of the Rising Dawn." The lodge soon picked up a handful of gentile members, but it was not accepted into one of the German masonic covenants until the heady days of the Frankfurt parliament during the "springtime of nations" in 1848. By then, Jewish masonic elites from "Rising Dawn" and "Frankfurt Eagle," a second Jewish lodge, had left a tremendous impact on the local movement for Jewish religious reform in the city.³³

While Jews continued to play an active part in the city's masonic scene during the first decades of the twentieth century, they tended to only do so within the confines of the two lodges that had first offered a space for Jews to engage in freemasonry. Simon Bischheim belonged to the "Frankfurt Eagle" as well as Frankfurt's chapter of the Jewish mens' group B'nai B'rith, generally spending at least one night a week engaged in the activities at either of the two

³² Matthias Thoma, "Wir waren die Juddebubbe." *Eintracht Frankfurt in der NS-Zeit* (Göttingen: Verlag Die Werkstatt, 2007), 12, 19-25; Matthias Trautsch, "Als die Eintracht-Kicker noch Schlappen schneiderten," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, June 18, 2008.

³³ Members of the two lodges included Ludwig Börne and Sigismund Geisenheimer, the founder of the *Philanthropin*. Jacob Katz, *Jews and Freemasons in Europe 1723-1939*, trans. Leonard Oschry (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1970), 4, 7, 16, 21-23, 55-63, 82-94. More information on masonry, Jews, and the ambivalences of *Bildung* can be found in Stefan-Ludwig Hoffmann, "Brothers or Strangers? Jews and Freemasons in Nineteenth-century Germany," *German History* 18, no. 2 (2000): 143-161.

lodges.³⁴ Artur Lauinger, the aforementioned financial journalist with the *Frankfurter Zeitung*, received an invitation to join the “Rising Dawn” lodge in the middle of the 1920s. His curiosity to learn about secret or dark rituals was soon quashed when he learned that most of the lodge was merely a social outlet for a mix of businessmen, doctors, lawyers, and teachers who wanted to occupy their spare hours outside of the home and work.³⁵ More notably, rabbi Arnold Lazarus of the IG was the long-time “Worshipful Master” of the “Rising Dawn” lodge and a “Grand Master” of the Eclectic Covenant of German lodges, facts which several local newspapers mentioned in obituaries after his untimely death in mid-June 1932.³⁶ However, one can easily speculate that there were still masonic lodges that Jews were not welcome to join in Frankfurt. According to the Association of German Freemasons, three thousand Jews belonged to German lodges affiliated with humanistic masonry in 1928. That same year, zero Jews were recorded as members of the substantially larger group of lodges affiliated with Prussian masonry.³⁷ Thus, it appears that freemasonry only created bonds between Jews and a self-selecting group of gentile men who were explicitly committed to building ecumenical ties.

There were other forces that sought to foster social ties between Jews and gentiles in the city. Weimar-era Frankfurt bore witness to the creation of the “Henry and Emma Budge Foundation,” which sought to use welfare as a novel tool to strengthen social relations between

³⁴ LBI ME 59 Simon Bischheim Bl. 46.

³⁵ JMB LBI-2011/1/1-3 Schenkung Wolfgang Lauinger Karton 835 Bl. 131-2, 198-200.

³⁶ Lazarus was also a member of the city’s School Deputation, a religious teacher at several schools, and a decorated Chaplain for his service during World War I. Ibid., Bl. 204; LBI AR 4497 Leo Baerwald Collection Box 1 “Arnold Lazarus Collection”; *Gemeindeblatt der Israelitischen Gemeinde Frankfurt am Main*, “Arnold Lazarus zum Gedächtnis,” July 1932; *Gemeindeblatt der Israelitischen Gemeinde Frankfurt am Main*, “Dr. Walter Rosenmeyer,” July 1932; IFS Schulamt 2.321 Zuständigkeit, Stellung, Organisat. u. Mitglieder der Schuldeputation 1922– ; IFS S3/T 354 Ortsgeschichte Römerbergfestspiele; IFS Schulamt 7.839 Jahresberichte der Schillerschule über die Schuljahre 1921/22 bis 1934/35; IFS Schulamt 4.860 Religionslehrer at Goethe-Gymnasium 1903-1953.

³⁷ Katz, *Jews and Freemasons*, 189-190.

Jews and gentiles in the city. One of its two namesakes, Henry Budge, was born in Frankfurt and had made his fortune abroad in the United States by working closely with two of Frankfurt's favorite Jewish sons: the bankers Jakob Schiff and Charles Hallgarten. Despite his many years' absence and decision to live out his retirement in his wife's home town of Hamburg, Budge had become one of the foremost benefactors of cultural and welfare projects in Frankfurt at the start of the twentieth century, including a donation of 250,000 *Marks* towards the creation of the University of Frankfurt and a donation of 500,000 *Marks* to the cash-strapped city government in March 1922.³⁸ Budge was, understandably, much beloved by the city establishment and even the editors of the conservative *Frankfurter Nachrichten* newspaper felt compelled to write that "the Frankfurt poor can only wish many more years for this philanthropist, whose interest for his father city has never ended, despite his absence."³⁹

In November 1920, Budge announced that in honor of his eightieth birthday, he and his wife, Emma, were creating a foundation that would provide aid to needy men, women, and children "without regards to sex, age, or religion; albeit, with the stipulation that half of the monetary aid and other good works of the foundation should respectively go to Jews and Christians." Up to half of the new foundation's resources would be directed toward the creation of a rest home that would serve as a quiet destination for Frankfurters of every confession who could not afford to pay for a trip to sanatorium. The Budges had also designed the foundation's structure in a way that would continually cultivate warm relations between the city government

³⁸ The city government honored Budge's donations by giving him the city's "badge of honor" in 1924 and naming a street after him in 1927. It bears mentioning that the city government did not feel compelled to similarly recognize the generosity of Emma Budge. "Ein treuer Sohn Frankfurts. Henry Budge in Hamburg," *Frankfurter Nachrichten*, December 7, 1927; Heilbrunn, *Gründung der Universität Frankfurt*, 211-213; IFS Magistratsakten V/691 Henry und Emma Budge Stiftung Bl.16, 37-38, 42, 58-59, 70, 76; IFS Stiftungsabteilung 54 Henry-und-Emma-Budge-Stiftung Bl. 7.

³⁹ Ein treuer Sohn Frankfurts. Henry Budge in Hamburg," *Frankfurter Nachrichten*, December 7, 1927.

and officials from the local Jewish community. Five of the nine seats on the foundation's board would be reserved for representatives of the IG and Israelite Community Trust (*Almosenkasten*). The remaining four seats would go to Christian representatives from the City Magistrate and the city's Orphan and Poor Bureau.⁴⁰ Shortly before the end of decade, the Foundation started working on its crowning achievement by laying the cornerstone in 1929 for the "Henry and Emma Budge Home," a nursing home dedicated to helping middle class Christians and Jews who had lost their savings due to the economic vicissitudes of the 1920s.⁴¹ Thus, welfare itself provided an opportunity for fostering increased cooperation between Jews and other Germans of all ages in the final years of the Weimar Republic.

Finally, the memory of First World War and public commemorations were another force that encouraged greater social interaction between Jews and gentiles in Frankfurt during the Weimar Republic. Reflecting the strength of bonds formed under fire in the trenches, a number veterans who had served in the same unit maintained their friendships into peacetime life. Emil Carlebach's father, for example, spent most of his free afternoons eating cake, drinking coffee, and smoking at Café Goldschmidt with a non-Jewish member from his former regiment.⁴² Jews also played an active part in the city's official war commemoration events, which aimed to define the legacy of the war in pro-Republican terms.⁴³ For example, the future Mayor Ludwig Landmann and Julius Hülsen, a Jewish expert on Frankfurt's history and local culture, were members of the committee formed to in 1921 to commission a new war memorial for the city.

⁴⁰IFS Magistratsakten V/691 Henry und Emma Budge Stiftung Bl. 3.

⁴¹ Ibid., Bl. 128; "Ein neues Altersheim," *Frankfurter Post*, July 4, 1929.

⁴² Carlebach, *Am Anfang stand ein Doppelmord*, 33.

⁴³ For more on the contested nature of World War I commemorations during the Weimar Republic see Benjamin Ziemann, *Contested Commemorations: Republican War Veterans and Weimar Political Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

The committee decided to give the commission to Benno Elkan, a local Jewish sculptor whose final product was erected amidst a segment of the park ring surrounding the historic center of the city.⁴⁴ In subsequent years, Rabbis, lay leaders from the IG, and representatives from groups such as the Jewish Women's Association and the Reich's Association of Jewish Front Soldiers were frequently members of the planning committee or included amongst the guests of honor at the city government's events that took place on the Weimar Republic's National Day of Mourning.⁴⁵ There was also at least one Jewish member on the board of the city's chapter of the *Reichsbanner* Black-Red-Gold, a center-left veterans' organization.⁴⁶

Concurrently, the city government and local veterans' groups made a point of honoring the graves of fallen soldiers at the Jewish cemetery on *Rat-Beil-Straße*. Representatives from the city government, veterans' groups, and a Catholic Priest were among the speakers at the dedication of the IG's "cemetery of honor" on 9 November 1925. At the event, Rabbi Arnold Lazarus used his keynote address to stress the interconfessional nature of the German war effort between 1914 and 1918: "German Jews also played their part and from Frankfurt along no less than 467 soldiers of the Jewish faith proved their loyalty by giving up their lives."⁴⁷ During subsequent years, the City Magistrate and veterans groups ensured that wreaths would be laid in

⁴⁴The sculpture was funded on a subscription basis, indicating the poor financial health of the city government in the early 1920s. Although it was taken down when the Nazis came to power, it was restored to its former place in 1954. IFS Magistratsakten S/201 Bd. 1 Kriegsgräbern 1914-1925; Paul Arnsberg, *Die Geschichte der Frankfurter Juden seit der Französischen Revolution Band III: Biographisches Lexikon der Juden in den Bereichen: Wissenschaft, Kultur, Bildung, Öffentlichkeitsarbeit in Frankfurt am Main* (Darmstadt: Eduard Roether Verlag, 1983), 106-107; Becker, *Stadtkultur*, 115-116; LBI ME 383 Joseph Levy Bl. 13.

⁴⁵ IFS Magistratsakten S/201 Bd. 1 Kriegsgräbern 1914-1925; IFS Magistratsakten S/201 Bd. 2 Kriegsgräbern; *Salzberger. Leben und Lehre*, 97-98; IFS Magistratsakten 3.763 Kriegergedächtnisfeiern, Volkstrauertag und Heldengedenktag, Bl. 14-15, 23, 32, 54, 83-85; IFS Stadtverordnetenversammlung 1.592 Volkstrauertag 1925-1933.

⁴⁶ LBI ME 956 Margot Frohmann Bl. 20.

⁴⁷ "Einweihung des jüdischen Ehrenfriedhofes," *General Anzeiger*, November 9, 1925.

the Jewish cemetery while the city's official events took place just to the north in Frankfurt's main cemetery, a tradition that continued until 12 March 1933.⁴⁸

The leaders of the IG were fully aware of the potential that memorial events had for strengthening ties between Gentiles and Jews in the city and acted accordingly. In February 1930, for example, they organized a memorial event for the First World War that was held in the *Westendsynagoge*. The event, which took place on a Sunday, drew a packed crowd and many attendees ended up standing in the galleries. According to the IG's newspaper, gentiles accounted for at least one third of the large crowd and the community had achieved its goal of giving non-Jewish Frankfurters "a chance to visit a Jewish house of prayer and to gain an insight into the richness and beauty of" Judaism and Jewish culture.⁴⁹

Altogether, it appears that the First World War had minimal if any impact on Jewish social integration in Frankfurt up until the end of the Weimar Republic. Several key factors often set the parameters for relationships to form between Jews and gentiles. For one, men were more likely to form relationships in the public sphere because of the patriarchal nature of professional and much of associational life in the city. While some associations such as soccer clubs were thoroughly mixed, the local history of freemasonry shows how Jews were still kept out of more conservative and nationalist circles. As in the imperial era, families tended to be the primary vector for socialization for most of the city's Jews. In fact, Jews from more religiously observant households may have consciously striven to circumscribe their lives in an orthodox subculture that could serve as a shield from the perceived threat of assimilation. The open or closed character of neighborhoods or even individual apartment buildings could even determine

⁴⁸ IFS Magistratsakten 3.763 Kriegergedächtnisfeiern, Volkstrauertag und Heldengedenktage Bl. 23, 32, 54, 83-85.

⁴⁹ "Verein Westendsynagoge," *Gemeindeblatt der Israelitischen Gemeinde Frankfurt am Main*, February 1930.

whether or not younger Jews established relationships with their non-Jewish peers. Finally, even the private sphere of Jewish homes could still serve as a space for developing deeper emotional bonds between Jews and their gentile guests or servants.

Social relations post-1933

At first, it appeared that some Jews had formed social ties with gentiles that were strong enough to survive the initial onslaught of state-sanctioned persecution during the dawn of the Third Reich. Bertha Katz writes that none of her gentile friends abandoned her in the early days of 1933. Indeed, all of them “showed their opposition and disgust for the new regime and everybody tried to comfort me with the wishful thinking that this period would be over as soon as possible.” However, Katz’s recollections should be taken with a grain of salt. She, her husband, and their two daughters emigrated to Palestine before the year was out, sparing them the indignities of broken friendships and social snubs as the Nazi dictatorship consolidated power.⁵⁰

This became much more commonplace for Jewish Frankfurters as time marched on apace from the spring of 1933. In June of that year, for example, the city bore witness to the unveiling of a new memorial dedicated to fallen soldiers from a local regiment that had fought in the First World War. However, the dedication festivities were held on non-consecutive days, as the local Jewish and Christian communities had decided to put on their own events to mark the occasion.⁵¹ Against this backdrop, a number of Jews noticed that former friends and acquaintances no longer acknowledged them when they were out walking in the streets.⁵²

⁵⁰ JMF A162 B86/287 Bertha Katz Bl. 1, 51.

⁵¹ “Denkmalsweihe der 81er,” *Gemeindeblatt der Israelitischen Gemeinde zu Frankfurt am Main*, June 1933.

Frankfurt's soccer and athletic clubs quickly moved to adapt themselves to the realities of life under the new regime. On 4 April 1933, *Eintracht* and FSV were among the 14 southern German sports clubs that were signatories of the "Stuttgart Declaration." The document stated that the teams were eager to put their services at the disposal of the newly installed National-Socialist government, "especially in regards to the expulsion of Jews from athletic associations." Alfred Meyer, the Jewish president of FSV, soon resigned from his club. Around this time, the Jewish lawyer Paul Blüthenthal also made the hard choice to resign from his membership in *Eintracht Frankfurt*. It must have been an acutely bitter decision because Blüthenthal had drafted the section of the club's 1928 constitution that stated *Eintracht's* commitment to fostering religious and political neutrality. On 11 April, the members of *Eintracht's* board sent him a letter in which they expressed their "deep regret" at Blüthenthal's resignation. Addressing Blüthenthal in the formal "you," the board wrote that "'your decision also appears to us to be the only right option for the current situation. Despite all this we believe we will allow ourselves to continually keep you abreast of developments in the track and field section [of the club].'" Blüthenthal responded in a more informal and, perhaps, sardonic key: "In a time of deep spiritual distress it is a strong bit of solace to know that the external barriers of inner unity cannot be broken. Thus, I once again offer you my hand – over all artificially constructed barriers – and remain what I always was: your innerly devoted [colleague] who thinks and feels German." (*Euer Euch innerlich verbundener Deutsch denkender und Deutsch fühlender*). Less than a month later, *Eintracht's* May newsletter announced the official *Gleichschaltung* of the club and proudly proclaimed that its professional soccer team had only "Aryan" players.⁵³

⁵² Hess, Werner. Interview 31259. Segment 8. *Visual History Archive*, USC Shoah Foundation, 1997. Accessed on 17 April 2018; Werth, Bernard. Interview 52566. Segment 33-34. *Visual History Archive*, USC Shoah Foundation, 1990. Accessed 23 April 2018.

In at least two cases, Jewish men realized that gentiles who they considered to be friends or acquaintances had been longstanding members of the Nazi Party during the final years of the Weimar Republic. While walking in the street one day, Max Kirschner spied a friend who had often visited his house and played mahjong with Kirschner and his wife. As they began to talk, Kirschner noticed a Nazi Party pin on the lapel of his friend's jacket and soon learned that the man had been an active party member for years. Unsurprisingly, their friendship ended immediately that day.⁵⁴ Joseph Levy had a similar encounter with a former female co-worker who waved at him from afar and motioned for him to come over and have a conversation. Right when he noticed the Nazi Party pin on her lapel, the woman suddenly appeared to remember that Levy was Jewish and quickly walked away without saying a word. Levy experienced other, more casual forms of antisemitism when gentile acquaintances described him as a "respectable Jew," in marked contrast to the other members of his confession. All too frequently he would suffer the indignity of hearing people proclaim, "Oh, if only all [Jews] were like you!"⁵⁵

Broken friendships were not merely the purview of adults. Plenty of Jewish children experienced the sudden end of friendships they had made with gentiles they knew from school or the streets of their neighborhood. This was often the result of adult intervention, such as when the parents of Werner Hess's friend, Hans, instructed their son that he was no longer allowed to play with Jews. Around the same time, a boy in Werner's apartment building stopped saying hello when the two passed by each other in the hallway. Elisabeth Reinhuber-Adorno confided in a friend that she had a Jewish grandmother, making her a second-class *Mischling*. The friend

⁵³ Thoma, "Juddebubbe," 38-40, 47-51.

⁵⁴ Max Kirschner, *Weinen hat seine Zeit und Lachen hat seine Zeit. Erinnerungen aus zwei Welten* (Frankfurt: Jüdischer Verlag, 2004), 127-128.

⁵⁵ LBI ME 383. MM 47 Joseph Levy "Mein Leben in DT" Bl. 41-42.

betrayed her confidence and told her mother about the secret. As a result, the mother told Elisabeth that she could no longer attend her friend's upcoming birthday party.⁵⁶

A curious phenomenon whereby gentiles informed their Jewish friends and associates about their anger with the Nazis' antisemitic policies became a common occurrence for many Jewish Frankfurters between 1933 and 1938. More often than not, these sentiments were expressed in private. There are two probable reasons for this. For one, many Jews were understandably chagrined when gentile acquaintances informed them of their disagreement with the Nazi's anti-Jewish policies in public spaces. Those on the receiving end of such statements would become visibly Jewish to all who were within earshot. Some Jews rightly feared that they would be seen as provocateurs for openly engaging in rhetoric that was critical of the new government. In one instance, a Jewish attorney riding a tram in 1933 "started to shake from anxiety" when he ran into a member of the City Council who proceeded to launch into a vocal anti-Nazi tirade.⁵⁷ However, it is far more likely that gentiles tended to offer their true opinions in private because they themselves feared some form of retribution if they were caught critiquing the new regime. At one point in 1933, Max Maier received a surprise house call from an old schoolmate. Before that moment, the two had enjoyed only a casual acquaintanceship. Once inside, though, the man, who had become a Lutheran pastor, let loose his anger at the Nazis' persecution of the Jews.⁵⁸ In 1935, David Friedrich Weill heard similar statements from his gentile friends and business acquaintances after he was released from a stint in prison stemming from a minor tax offense. Weill writes that most said that they were only going along with the

⁵⁶ As a small consolation, Elisabeth was told she could come by the day after the party and pick up a piece of birthday cake. Reinhuber-Adorno, Elisabeth. Interview 41733. Segment 3, 15-16. *Visual History Archive, USC Shoah Foundation*, 1998. Accessed on April 12, 2018.

⁵⁷ LBI ME 29 Elisabeth Bamberger Bl. 11-12.

⁵⁸ IFS S5/320 "Erinnerungen eines Achtzigjährigen" Max Hermann Meier Bl. 83-84.

new regime for fear of going “breadless” if they evinced any opposition.⁵⁹ Such behavior continued up until the period after *Kristallnacht* in the winter of 1938-1939. Prior to his emigration, Joseph Levy visited a gentile notary who he had met through his past volunteer work in the city. When he arrived, the notary shut the door to his office so his secretary would not hear him bang his fists on his desk and proclaim his anger, shame, and guilt that a man like Levy was being forced to leave his own fatherland.⁶⁰

These admonitions appear to be consistent with a larger trend whereby remaining social relations between Jews and gentiles were relegated to the private sphere after the passage of the Nuremberg laws in the fall of 1935. Jewish homes increasingly became the one safe space where these kinds of relationships could take place. On one occasion, the Weill family received an anonymous evening phone call from a woman who wanted to know if they were at home. A knock on their door at 10PM that night revealed that the call was from a married gentile couple, one of whom worked for IG Farben. The couple visited until the wee hours of the morning and, if Weill is to be fully believed, apologized profusely for the actions of ordinary Germans under Nazism.⁶¹ A gentile veteran continued to make regular trips to the Werth household in order to socialize with a Jewish comrade whom he had fought with during the First World War.⁶² Similarly, a non-Jewish carpenter would come to the home of Edith Abrahams’s family every Sunday for several hours of conversation while having *Kaffee und Kuchen*. This continued until the carpenter’s son denounced him to the Gestapo for socializing with Jews.⁶³ After Jewish

⁵⁹ CAHJP P241/9 David Friedrich Weill “My Life in Germany” Bl. 6.

⁶⁰ LBI ME 383 Joseph Levy Bl. 43.

⁶¹ CAHJP P241/9 Bl. 18.

⁶² Werth, Bernard. Interview 52566. Segment 33-34. *Visual History Archive*, USC Shoah Foundation, 1990. Accessed 23 April 2018.

doctors were no longer allowed to practice medicine in 1938, a young Christian doctor offered to conduct house calls at a moment's notice for Joseph Levy's ailing wife. Asked about his rate, the doctor replied that he would not accept money from Jewish patients because he was carrying out his "human duty" and wished "to atone for how others have transgressed against you [Jews]." Nevertheless, Levy points out that this and "all other not too uncommon evidence of sympathy towards us was done furtively. In public it was concealed, even denied. Even our clear friends were suspicious of one another and would disclaim anti-Jewish views."⁶⁴

During this same period, a number of gentile servants remained loyal to their Jewish employers. Joseph Levy and his wife had a servant who openly commiserated with them about the hardships and distress that Jews faced under the new regime. Despite numerous instances of harassment and warnings that she would face serious consequences for working in "a Jew house," she remained in their service until the Nuremberg Laws of 1935 banned Jews from employing "Aryan" maids under the age of 45. Thereafter she continued to visit the Levys, albeit in a secretive manner that would prevent her from jeopardizing her job security with her new employers.⁶⁵ Reacting to the same stipulation from the Nuremberg Laws, a servant who had worked for the Frohmann family moved into an apartment two buildings down the same block as them in order to regularly check on and help out her former bosses.⁶⁶ The nanny who had raised Rudolph Moser similarly kept tabs on her one-time employers and made a point of never

⁶³ Abrahams, Edith. Interview 4670. Segment 20-21. *Visual History Archive*, USC Shoah Foundation, 1995. Accessed on 6 April 2018.

⁶⁴ LBI ME 383. MM 47 Joseph Levy "Mein Leben in DT" Bl. 42-43.

⁶⁵ LBI ME 383 Joseph Levy Bl. 36; "The Reich Citizenship Law (September 15, 1935) and the First Regulation of the Reich Citizenship Law (November 14, 1935)," Nazi Germany (1933-1945) (Washington, DCL German Historical Institute, 2019), http://ghdi.ghi-dc.org/sub_document.cfm?document_id=1523 (accessed on August 21, 2020).

⁶⁶LBI ME 956 Margot Frohmann Bl. 29.

forgetting to annually send a letter to Rudolph on his birthday even after he had emigrated to London.⁶⁷ In one case, a maid even emigrated to the Netherlands to stay close to the family she had been working for and eventually saving one of them from deportation to a concentration camp by hiding them in a Catholic hospital.⁶⁸

Servants, however, could also become a threat to the safety of some Jewish families. In 1934, the tranquility of the Halpern family's Passover seder was interrupted when a drunken neighbor barged into their apartment and threatened to denounce them to the Gestapo for having an "Aryan" maid.⁶⁹ When Elisabeth Bamberger and her husband, a prominent member of the orthodox IRG, decided to burn incriminating papers and letters in their house they waited to gather the items after their maid had fallen asleep. Their plan was to burn the items in the furnace of the Jewish hospital because their own fireplace could not handle the volume of paper they planned to get rid of. Their caper failed because their chauffeur, who had noticed them leaving the house with a stuffed suitcase and returning with an empty one, denounced them to the local authorities.⁷⁰

Professional Life

As the first section of this chapter made clear, businesses, commerce, and professional life had long served as key spaces for social interaction between male Jews and gentiles in Frankfurt. In addition to an outsized presence in professions such as law and medicine, Jews

⁶⁷ LBI ME 1216 Ronnie (Rudolph) Moser Bl. 29.

⁶⁸ IFS LG 280 Georg Yehuda Guthmann Bl. 90-91.

⁶⁹ The family quickly got rid of the maid, who had been living in a spare room in their apartment. Curiously, the mother of the drunken man who had ruined the evening may have stopped by later to apologize for her son's behavior. Halpern, Edith. Interview 25504. Segment 20-21. *Visual History Archive*, USC Shoah Foundation, 1997. Accessed on 16 April 2018.

⁷⁰ LBI ME 29 Elisabeth Bamberger Bl. 15.

owned a number of the most prominent businesses and department stores on the *Zeil*, Frankfurt's equivalent of Fifth Avenue. The historian Benno Nietzel has shown that while it was more common for independent Jewish businessmen to do their apprenticeships, form new firms, and work with fellow members of their faith, many established Jewish firms had gentile partners and larger firms often had a large number of non-Jewish employees.⁷¹ The strength of these ties was immediately put to the test when high officials within the Nazi Party called for a national boycott of Jewish businesses and professionals to take place on 1 April 1933. The campaign was designed to appease the revolutionary zeal within the ranks of the *Sturmabteilung* and subsequently justified as an effort to counter Jewish and foreign "atrocious propaganda" that defamed the actions of Germany's new Nazi regime.⁷²

Some businesses were more apt than others to get rid of their Jewish employees in the face of the looming boycott. During the middle of March, the Jewish businessmen Arthur Abelmann resigned from his position as the head of a chemical and pharmaceutical firm that he had helped to create in 1920. Although the members of the firm's workers' committee and board of directors sent letters expressing their gratitude for the "selfless and fatherly manner" in which Abelmann had steered the firm through periods of growth and economic distress, no one at the firm expressed any opposition to the larger initiative of the anti-Jewish boycott. Indeed, the board offered Abelmann a position as the firm's representative in Switzerland – an offer he readily accepted – under the condition that he would "always maintain a pro-German (*deutschnational*) attitude...and, in particular, do all he [could] to counter atrocious propaganda

⁷¹ Benno Nietzel, *Handeln und Überleben. Jüdische Unternehmer aus Frankfurt am Main 1924-1964* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2012), 337-338.

⁷² For more on the boycott see: Karl A. Schleunes, *The Twisted Road to Auschwitz: Nazi Policy Toward German Jews, 1933-1939* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1970), 74-91.

and smear campaigns directed against Germany.” This was only one element of the firm’s greater efforts to fall in line with the new Nazi regime, which also included a series of public statements including one stressing that the firm had been founded “largely with German capital” and another arguing that “one cannot say that the [company’s] finished chemical compounds were created under Jewish influence.” In other words, it took less than a month for Arthur Abelmann to be written out of the history of the very firm he had founded.⁷³

Some gentile professionals demonstrated their sympathy and genuine concern for their Jewish colleagues in the face of the approaching boycott. A few days before the boycott was set to begin, the Vice President of Frankfurt’s influential Chamber of Commerce called together a meeting of Jewish businessmen to discuss whether or not they should close their shops on the day of the boycott and to dissuade them from preemptively firing any of their employees. Shortly after the event began, a troop of SS members swooped in, broke up the meeting, and arrested a large contingent of attendees who were forced to engage in a humiliating march through the streets to the city’s police headquarters.⁷⁴

The April boycott ultimately proved to be relatively anticlimactic in Frankfurt and did little to disrupt the normal pattern of commerce. According to the *Frankfurter Zeitung*, most of the crowds that flocked to the center of the city on the day of the boycott did so more out of curiosity, than out of any ideological fervor to boycott Jewish stores.⁷⁵ Although many of the large Jewish-owned department stores decided in advance that they would take the day off, *Bamberger & Hertz* remained open on the day of the boycott. Years later, Elisabeth Bamberger,

⁷³ LBI AR 25372 Arthur Abelmann Collection Series IV: Chemiewerk, Box 2, Folder 13.

⁷⁴ *Dokumente zur Geschichte der Frankfurter Juden*, 21-22; CAHJP P241/9 David Friedrich Weill Bl. 2; IFS S5/249 Ludwig Heilbrunn Bl. 333-334; LBI ME 383 Joseph Levy Bl. 33-34.

⁷⁵ *Dokumente zur Geschichte der Frankfurter Juden*, 23-24.

the wife of one of the store's owners, wrote that "a few courageous people including some Jews dared to go" into the store that day and that one Catholic employee went out of their way to escort a Jewish customer and make sure they felt comfortable while shopping. By the Monday of the following week, the pickets in front of the store were gone and business in downtown Frankfurt appeared to have returned to its usual levels.⁷⁶

The initial period of boycotts and decrees aimed at barring Jews from certain professions could quickly reveal the tenuous or even superficial nature of Jews' social integration into professional life. An illuminating case can be found at a branch of Frankfurt's regional court in *Höchst*, an industrial district where Bruno Asch had been mayor in the early 1920s. On March 31st, the regional court decreed a temporary prohibition on Jews appearing in court. A week later, a group of gentile lawyers filed a petition with the presiding justice wherein they asked that the ban be lifted for their Jewish colleague *Justizrat* Schreiber. The authors of the letter referred to Schreiber in glowing terms as "a shining role model as both a lawyer and a person," and argued that their branch of the court would suffer if Schreiber, who had a high profile in the district, were permanently banned from practicing law. While it is heartening that so many gentile attorneys would stick up for Schreiber, the group's goodwill did not extend to their other Jewish colleagues. In no uncertain terms they expressed their desire "that this petition only be put in place for *Justizrat* Schreiber, and that it should not become a precedent that could be used by another Jewish lawyer."⁷⁷

During the following years, it appears that gentiles gradually pulled back from engaging with Jewish businesses and professionals. Often there was no uniform pattern. Former City

⁷⁶ LBI ME 29 Elisabeth Bamberger Bl. 10-11.

⁷⁷ *Dokumente*, 76.

Councilman Ludwig Heilbrunn received numerous letters during the spring of 1933 in which clients assured him of their desire to retain his services as an attorney, “But these were empty words.”⁷⁸ At the same time, Max Maier, another Jewish attorney, was astounded at the number of his “Aryan” clients that continued to work with him until it became nearly impossible for them to continue to do so in the mid-1930s.⁷⁹ Until the city government forbade its municipal employees from seeing Jewish doctors, Max Kirschner was still the primary care physician for a number of gentile police officers, teachers, and tram conductors. Thereafter, Kirschner’s business withered away as Christian patients became increasingly worried they would be seen entering his home office for their appointments.⁸⁰ Elisabeth Bamberger similarly believed that fewer and fewer gentiles shopped at her family’s and other Jews’ stores due to increased surveillance and scrutiny from the security organs of the Nazi government.⁸¹ Nevertheless, other Jews recalled that it was not uncommon for gentiles, including the wives of Nazi Party members, to frequent Jewish shops up until the second half of 1938.⁸² Some Jewish business owners even contrived new strategies that would prevent them from losing their gentile customers. For example, one Jewish businesswoman whose store catered to upper middle-class patrons began to pack sold goods in neutral wrapping paper so patrons would not readily broadcast that they

⁷⁸ IFS S5/249 Ludwig Heilbrunn Bl. 336.

⁷⁹ IFS S5/320 Max Hermann Maier Bl. 78.

⁸⁰ Kirschner’s memoir also relates an instance in which he was called upon to provide medical care after an accident at a nearby copper factory, only to be removed from the premises because authorities believed that a Jewish doctor should not be allowed to help the members of a firm that had undergone the process of Gleichschaltung. Kirschner, *Weinen*, 146.

⁸¹ LBI ME 29 Elisabeth Bamberger Bl. 20.

⁸² LBI ME 383 Joseph Levy Bl. 34.

shopped at her store and instructed her delivery boys to not park their company bicycles in front of the buildings where they were dropping off packages.⁸³

As time went on, the integrated nature of certain firms could pose new liabilities for Jews because of the compulsory introduction of Nazi party cells in large German businesses, including those owned by Jews. In the spring of 1933, one gentile chemist attempted to parlay his membership in the Nazi Party into a hostile takeover of a Jewish-run cosmetics firm.⁸⁴ The chair and vice-chair of the Nazi Party cell at *Bamberger & Hertz* took over a breakroom and transformed it into a kind of Nazi clubhouse where they would freely listen to Hitler's radio speeches and sing Party songs over the course of the work day. Sometimes it took years for problems to bubble to the surface. For example, almost all of the employees in the Flersheim family's exotic goods store were non-Jews, but the family had few problems because most of the workers had been there for years. Nevertheless, the Flersheims eventually decided to hasten their immigration plans after a young male employee denounced them to the Gestapo in 1935.⁸⁵

Although the 1933 boycott had little initial impact on the social integration of Jews within the sphere of Frankfurt's economy, loyalties to Jewish colleagues, workers, and owners had definite limits. More often than not, gentiles offered little resistance to discriminatory legislation that banned Jews from taking part in the civil service, law, or medicine. Over time, Jewish-owned businesses fizzled out not only because of a surge in government-directed aryanization, but also because of gentiles' fear of negative consequences if they were seen

⁸³ ZFA bMS Ger 91 (3) Film 89 Erna Albersheim Bl. 16-17.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, Bl. 10-11.

⁸⁵ LBI ME 131 Ernst Flersheim Bl. 17-18.

frequenting Jewish businesses. Furthermore, some gentile employees sought to leverage their position as members of Hitler's *Volksgemeinschaft* to gain power over their Jewish employers.

Spatial Segregation

Beginning in 1934, the local government started to consider actions aimed at segregating Jews from non-Jews in public spaces throughout Frankfurt. Over time, this would become an effective strategy for hastening the erosion of the remaining traces of Jewish social integration during the first phase of Nazi rule in Frankfurt.

Municipal pools and bath houses were a proving ground for these new policy approaches. At first, officials working for the City Magistrate merely collected newspaper articles and other information on the measures enacted by other local and southwestern German cities which barred Jews from entering these spaces of social interaction.⁸⁶ The machinations of the Frankfurt Magistrate shifted into a higher gear and took on a greater sense of urgency when Frankfurt's outdoor municipal baths prepared to open for the spring and summer season of 1935. In early April, the city's Sports Bureau sent Mayor Friedrich Krebs a letter asking if it would be possible to ban Jews from all city baths, with the exception of a beach along the Main River. The letter mentioned that their agency was experiencing increased pressure to do so from local cells of the Nazi Party, who accused the city government of paying for Jews to have the privilege to use this particular city service and darkly hinted at future disruptions of service if the situation was not soon remedied. Despite this pressure, the Sports Bureau informed the mayor that they were unsure if an outright ban would be the best course of action. In particular, they worried that they might lose a large amount of their revenue stream if new restrictions would cause Jews to eschew public bathhouses and instead frequent private baths and river beaches in the surrounding area.⁸⁷

⁸⁶ IFS Magistratsakten 9.082 Städtische Strandbäder, Baden im Main und in der Nidda 1931-1954.

The city's willingness to enact a bathing ban was put to the test at the end of May, when a Nazi Party member posing as a member of the local press demanded that the director of one of the city's bath houses kick out a group of Jewish guests. One of the Jews was an American citizen and subsequently complained about the incident to the local United States Consulate. Perhaps due to a fear of international embarrassment, the mayor's office responded by issuing a statement that there should be "no special treatment of non-Aryans in municipal baths."⁸⁸ Behind the scenes, however, Krebs contacted government officials in Trier and other German cities to find out more about their recent decisions to prohibit Jews from using public baths. A lawyer by training, Krebs decided after further investigation that Frankfurt still lacked a proper legal way to enact a bathing ban. Jews were thus allowed to attend municipal baths for the remainder of the summer of 1935. The city government even ensured that they could do so unmolested via an official policy that called for police to break up unpleasant incidents like what had happened at the end of May.⁸⁹

Official and grassroots efforts to prevent Jews from freely accessing public spaces increased dramatically during the following year. At the start of May 1936, the city government announced that "non-Aryans" would only be allowed to access a segregated bathing site along the Main River in the *Niederrad* district, effectively ending the days of mixed bathing in Frankfurt.⁹⁰ Around the same time, a growing number of stores, restaurants, and bars began to put signs in their front windows which said that Jewish patrons were no longer welcome. In one

⁸⁷ *Dokumente zur Geschichte der Frankfurter Juden*, 360-361.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 361-362.

⁸⁹ IFS Magistratsakten 9.082 Städtische Strandbäder, Baden im Main und in der Nidda 1931-1954.

⁹⁰ City officials said that at least one City Councilor would work to ensure that local Nazi cells would not attempt to disrupt this new situation. *Dokumente zur Geschichte der Frankfurter Juden*, 365; IFS Magistratsakten 9.001 Sportbetrieb Juden und sonstige Nichtariern.

case, Benjamin Eilbott, aged nine, was thrown out of a downtown branch of the Woolworth department store after a man asked him if he was Jewish.⁹¹

Jews continued to seek new ways to adapt to this and other evolving features of everyday life. According to Elisabeth Bamberger:

At first, one became upset when one wanted to enter into a store and saw the sign starting back at them. Later, it had become so common that one, initially with some reluctance, grew accustomed to [still] buy from these stores so long as you knew that the owner personally separated themselves from these things or, at the very least, conducted themselves politely...in front of Jewish customers.⁹²

Movie theaters became one of the few options for Jews who wished to briefly escape from the pressures of everyday life. As it became harder for Jews to go to museums, theaters, or concerts which were not produced by the Jewish *Kulturbund*.⁹³ Other public spaces continued to be on the table for Jews to use. According to Sydney Baumann, the city government helped to arrange a weekly hour during which children from a Jewish orphanage could go swimming in a public pool. It also appears that students from the orthodox *Samson-Raphael-Hirsch-Schule* and the *Philanthropin* were allowed to make frequent summer excursions to the grounds of the *Palmengarten*, a botanical garden in *Westend*.⁹⁴ Things began to change more rapidly over the course of 1938. In the middle of July the city banned Jews from using the beach in *Niederrad* and the *Palmengarten* became off limits to them shortly before or after the events of *Kristallnacht*.⁹⁵ During the same period, the owners of two of the city's remaining "Jew-

⁹¹ Werth, Bernard. Interview 52566. Segment 31-32. *Visual History Archive*, USC Shoah Foundation, 1990. Accessed 23 April 2018; Eilbott, Benjamin. Interview 39921. Segment 52-53. *Visual History Archive*, USC Shoah Foundation, 1998. Accessed 23 April 2018.

⁹² LBI ME 29 Elisabeth Bamberger

⁹³ LBI ME 383 Joseph Levy Bl. 40.

⁹⁴ This lasted until 1938. LBI ME 238 Bl. 2; Peiser, Cäcilie. Interview 12385. Segment 31-2. *Visual History Archive*, USC Shoah Foundation, 1996. Accessed on 9 April 2018.

friendly” cafés felt enough pressure to hang signs saying that Jewish patrons were no longer welcome at their businesses.⁹⁶

The simple act of going out on the street could even be dangerous in the period following the passage of the Nuremberg Laws. Small gangs of teenagers often hurled insults at or beat up young Jewish boys and girls they encountered on the streets of *Ostend* and *Westend*. Many Jewish children started to avoid spending their free time outside, to cross the street when they saw groups of other children, and to keep a watchful eye whenever they were headed to school or returning back home.⁹⁷ In some cases, violence came at the hands of gentile adults. While outside in 1937, Ellen Frenkel accidentally bumped a non-Jewish girl with a ball she had been playing with. A day later, that girl’s mother came up to Frenkel on the street and slapped her in the face. From then on, Frenkel stopped riding around on her bicycle and would only leave the house if her grandfather accompanied her.⁹⁸

Conspicuous signs of ritual observance turned many adult Jews into targets for verbal or physical harassment. Paul Birnbaum-Rawer, for example, was heckled while walking through the center of the city while carrying a *lulav*, a traditional bouquet of leaves used during the fall harvest holiday of *sukkot*.⁹⁹ Many orthodox men avoided walking at all in Frankfurt’s downtown area during periods of the Jewish calendar when they were not allowed to shave their facial

⁹⁵ *Geschichte der Frankfurter Juden*, 366. LBI ME 383 Joseph Levy Bl. 38.

⁹⁶ LBI ME 1095 Wilhelm Herzfeld. Bl. 233-234.

⁹⁷ Amkraut, Alfred. Interview 52578 Segment 94. *Visual History Archive*, USC Shoah Foundation, 1993. Accessed on 16 April 2018; Eilbott, Benjamin. Interview 39921. Segment 28. *Visual History Archive*, USC Shoah Foundation, 1998. Accessed 23 April 2018; Paul Birnbaum-Rawer, “Aus meinen Kindheitserinnerungen,” in *Ostend. Blick in ein jüdisches Viertel*, ed. Helga Krohn and Ernst Benz, 96-123 (Frankfurt: Societäts Verlag, 2000), 108-109; *Berichte gegen Vergessen*, 28, 52-54.

⁹⁸ Frenkel, Ellen. Interview 30527. Segment 5. *Visual History Archive*, USC Shoah Foundation, 1997. Accessed on April 25, 2018.

⁹⁹ Birnbaum-Rawer, “Aus meinen Kindheitserinnerungen,” 106-107.

hair.¹⁰⁰ On several occasions, young men and boys were attacked in the streets because they were wearing a *kippah* or another kind of head covering that marked them as Jews.¹⁰¹ In response to rising risks, religious leaders looked for methods that would make it easier for men to travel to and from synagogues for religious services. One such policy was the introduction of boxes in Synagogues where men could store *kippot*, top hats, or other head coverings they would wear while praying on the sabbath and other holidays..¹⁰² By the fall of 1938, the IG was placing notices in the Jewish community newspaper asking community members to avoid standing outside of synagogues and prayer halls before or after services during the high holidays.¹⁰³ Violence and the fear of violence, it would seem, had managed to become a common features of everyday life for Jewish Frankfurters even before the devastation of *Kristallnacht* in November 1938.

Urban Migration under the Third Reich

Frankfurt's Jewish population began to contract almost as soon as the Nazi Party came to power in 1933. By the end of that year, officials with the IG estimated that more than 3,400 of their members – more than ten percent of their community's total membership – and as well as a large number non-affiliated Jews had left the city.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰⁰ IFS Ortsgeschichte S3/H 5.453 Synagoge Friedberger Anlage.

¹⁰¹ Manko, Gerald. Interview 55626. Segment 25. Visual History Archive, USC Shoah Foundation, 2012. Accessed on 12 February 1927; Baer, Lisa. Interview 6329. Segment 17-18. *Visual History Archive*, USC Shoah Foundation, 1995. Accessed on 17 April 2018.

¹⁰² JMB M 26 Herbert Freeman Bl. 15-16.

¹⁰³ In the same announcement they decreed that no Jews under the age of 18 were barred from attending services until further notice. "Amtliches Anzeigen des Gemeindevorstandes," *Gemeindeblatt der Israelitischen Gemeinde Frankfurt am Main*, October 1938.

¹⁰⁴ The IG had an estimated 30,300 members as of 1929. Lothar Bauer, "Die Bevölkerungsbewegung der Israelitischen Gemeinde Frankfurt a.M. Fünf Jahre Statistik des Gemeindeblattes," *Gemeindeblatt der Israelitischen Gemeinde zur Frankfurt am Main*, May 1934; "Begrüssung der Zugezogenen," *Gemeindeblatt der Israelitischen Gemeinde zur Frankfurt am Main*, January 1938.

Although the number of Jews emigrating from Frankfurt steadily increased over the next few years, a growing influx of Jews leaving the Hessian countryside staved off a truly radical drop in the city's Jewish population. These so-called "*Landjuden*" came from over 400 small to medium-sized Jewish communities. Male Jews had long worked as peddlers, butchers, cattle dealers, middle men, and owners of general stores in the small towns and villages of Hesse.¹⁰⁵ Before the Weimar Republic, these communities had enjoyed a centuries-long history of peaceful coexistence with their gentile neighbors. However, the continued presence of Jewish life in rural communities became an increasingly untenable proposition under Nazi rule. Beginning in 1933, numerous efforts were made to exclude Jewish merchants from small-town cattle markets and Nazi Party activists threatened to take retaliatory action against any gentiles engaging in commerce with Jews.¹⁰⁶ Moreover, antisemitic violence committed or the threat thereof soon became a regular feature of everyday life in the countryside. For example, a 1934 report by the Reich Association of Jewish Front Soldiers from the village of Rhina, where Jews had comprised one-third of the local population in 1932, said that, " 'One cannot venture to pass through the villages streets during the evenings without being showered with stones.' " The

¹⁰⁵ Paul Arnsberg writes that at the end of 1932 there were 198 Jewish communities in *Volkstaat Hesse-Darmstadt*, 200 in *Hesse-Nassau*, and 3 in *Kreis Wetzlar*. These three states are constituent parts of the postwar state of Hesse. Hermann Schwab, *Jewish Rural Communities in Germany* (London: Cooper Book Company, 1957), 34-36; Menahem Kaufman, "The Daily Life of the Village and Country Jews in Hessen from Hitler's Ascent to Power to November 1938," *Yad Vashem Studies*, 22 (1992): 148-149; Paul Arnsberg, *Die jüdischen Gemeinden in Hessen. Anfang, Untergang, Neubeginn* (Frankfurt: Societäts-Verlag, 1971), 10; "Die Jüdische Landbevölkerung in Hessen-Nassau," *Jüdische Wohlfahrtspflege*, 1935.

¹⁰⁶ Gestapo reports from 1935 reveal a deep dissatisfaction with the fact that many gentiles were still buying goods from Jewish cattle traders. laws passed that year and in 1937 ended Jewish participation in this segment of the economy. Wolf-Arno Kropat, "Die Hessischen Juden im Alltag der NS-Diktatur 1933-1939," in *Neunhundert Jahre Geschichte der Juden in Hessen. Beiträge zum politischen, wirtschaftlichen und kulturellen Leben*, ed. Kommission für die Geschichte der Juden in Hessen, 411-446 (Wiesbaden: Kommission für die Geschichte der Juden in Hessen, 1983), 420-421; *Die Lageberichte der Geheimen Staatspolizei über die Provinz Hessen-Nassau 1933-1936. Teilband I: A und B*, ed. Thomas Klein (Cologne: Böhlau Verlag, 1986), 423, 455, 477; Christhard Hoffmann, "Verfolgung und Alltagsleben der Landjuden im nationalsozialistischen Deutschland," in *Jüdisches Leben auf dem Lande*, ed. Monika Richarz and Reinhard Rürup (Tübingen, JCB Mohr, 1997), 385.

threat of violence was similarly high in other towns because anonymity was virtually impossible for Jews who lived in the intimate world of small rural communities.¹⁰⁷

Younger Jews were in the vanguard of this final wave of Jewish urban migration in Germany which began in 1933 and Frankfurt was a natural destination for rural Jews from Hesse.¹⁰⁸ In addition to availing themselves of the more robust job market in the city, many rural Jews could capitalize on their ties to near or distant relatives who had moved to the city during the preceding decades. Lisa Baer's grandparents left their home in a small Hessian village because of the increasingly untenable presence of antisemitism in their daily lives and came to Frankfurt in 1936. After their arrival, they were able to procure an apartment in the same building as their daughter and her family, thus facilitating an easier transition to urban life.¹⁰⁹ For new arrivals like the thirteen-year-old Manfred Moses, Frankfurt offered something that had become impossible to find in his hometown: “‘Anonymity. I could go around on the streets without being attacked or insulted. I went to museums, galleries, the theater, and the opera without any obstacles.’” It also could serve as a launching point for emigration plans to leave Germany.¹¹⁰

The IG soon began to take measures to support the new arrivals. These included the creation of a workshop that instructed male Jews in handcrafts and gardening, a school to train

¹⁰⁷ Local thugs eventually attacked Rhina's synagogue in March 1935. Kropat, “Hessischen Juden im Alltag der NS-Diktatur,” 436-438; Michael Wildt, *Hitler's Volksgemeinschaft and the Dynamics of Racial Exclusion: Violence Against Jews in Provincial Germany, 1919-1939*, trans. Bernard Heise (New York: Berghahn Books, 2012), 4.

¹⁰⁸ Urban migration had been a key feature of German-Jewish life at the start of the twentieth century. By 1933, 54.5 percent of German Jews lived in ten cities that had populations greater than 100,000. Barkai and Flohr, *Renewal and Destruction*, 33.

¹⁰⁹ Baer, Lisa. Interview 6329. Segment 14. *Visual History Archive*, USC Shoah Foundation, 1995. Accessed on 17 April 2018.

¹¹⁰ Monica Kingreen, “‘Ihr in Frankfurt habt's gut! Ihr habt euch gegenseitig. Wir auf dem Land sind allein.’ Jüdische Menschen aus dem weiten Umland suchten Zuflucht in Frankfurt am Main,” in *Und Keiner hat für uns Kaddisch gesagt... ' Deportationen aus Frankfurt am Main 1941 bis 1945*, ed. Georg Heuberger, 52-77 (Frankfurt: Stroemfeld Verlag, 2004), 63.

female Jews for service work and kindergarten teaching, and opening a new nursing home for elderly rural Jews.¹¹¹ In late 1937, the IG even began to host a series of welcome events at local synagogues to introduce rural newcomers to the history and culture of the Jewish life in the city, belying Jewish elites' continued belief that Jewish life would exist in Frankfurt into the foreseeable future.¹¹²

Only after the passage of the Nuremberg Laws in the fall of 1935 did the influx of rural Jews become large enough for the local Nazi hierarchy to finally take notice of it. In an angry letter dated to November 15th, *Gauleiter* Jakob Sprenger requested that his political rival Mayor Friedrich Krebs contact the Chief of Police about creating an order that would prevent more future arrivals. The wheels of Frankfurt's bureaucracy turned slowly, and it took eight months before the Chief of Police informed Krebs that barring a general ban on "Aryan" and "non-Aryan" movement into the city that would undoubtedly hurt the local economy, the police could not implement a targeted ban on Jewish migration because it was a legal issue beyond the city's jurisdiction. Turning to the source of the problem at hand, the Police Chief added that, "In my opinion, the influx of Jews is decisively related to the attitudes of the Aryan public and the authorities' attitudes on the Jewish question," an important reminder that Jewish integration continued to be stronger in the city than in the countryside. In the meantime, there had been months such as January and May 1936 in which the number of new Jews arriving in the city was higher than the number of Jews who were leaving the city. Indeed, between October 1935 and October 1937 the departure of 3,648 Jews was largely offset by the arrival of 3,079 new Jews. In

¹¹¹ Arnsberg, *Gemeinden in Hessen*, 19; Hoffmann, "Verfolgung," 393-396; LBI ME 76 Henry Buxbaum Bl. 15, 59-61; Kropat, "Hessischen Juden im Alltag der NS-Diktatur," 431-432.

¹¹² "Begrüßung der Zugezogenen," *Gemeindeblatt der Israelitischen Gemeinde zur Frankfurt am Main*, January 1938; "Neue Menschen in alter Gemeinde. Begrüßung der Zugezogenen," *Gemeindeblatt der Israelitischen Gemeinde zur Frankfurt am Main*, March 1938.

the long run 14,700 Jewish Frankfurters emigrated from Germany, 10,800 new Jews arrived in the city, and 7,300 Jewish Frankfurters moved to other parts of Germany between 1933 and the German government's ban on Jewish emigration in October 1941.¹¹³ Thus, despite major declines in social integration and growing fears amongst local Jews about antisemitic violence, it appears that many German Jews continued to view Frankfurt as a more tolerant space within the Nazi Germany during the final years of the 1930s.

Conclusion

Although the First World War appears to have had little impact on Jews' relations with their gentile neighbors in Frankfurt, social integration varied. In many cases it was affected by questions of age, gender, and class. Some of the intimate friendships between families were formed on the basis of the relationships that their children had formed in school or on the streets of their neighborhood. The overwhelmingly male nature of the bourgeois working world meant that it was rarer for middle and upper-class Jewish and gentile women to establish relationships on the basis of professional life. It should also be noted that many of the city's orthodox Jews had little or no desire for increased social interaction with non-Jews or, for that matter, even more acculturated Jews because they feared it might lead their children down a false path of assimilation.

Civic and associational life during this era revealed both the opportunities and limits of social integration. Beginning in the early 1920s, the city government encouraged Jewish politicians, religious leaders, women's associations, and many others to play a prominent role in public memorial activities that commemorated the First World War. Athletic clubs such as *Eintracht* and *FSV* were comprised of Jewish and gentile fans from a cross section of the city.

¹¹³ IFS Magistratsakten 5.897 Meldewesen, Paßwesen, Ausländerverkehr, Führungszeugnisse, Zuzug von Juden nach Frankfurt; Kingreen, "Ihr habt's gut," 69.

The former club even took conscious steps to vocally and visibly align itself with the Weimar Republic's spirit of tolerance. At the same time, freemasonry continued to be a largely segregated space due to the long-standing split between lodges affiliated with the humanistic and Prussian branches of the masonic movement.

While social interaction may have been more common in the public sphere, there were plenty of instances of what Joseph Levy would term "real social engagement" between Jews and gentiles in the private sphere of Jewish homes. This happened most notably in the warm, lifelong relationships that developed between many Jewish families and their gentile servants. During the summer, it was not uncommon for Jewish children to spend time with one of their servant's families in the countryside. Many servants also took part in their employers' religious traditions, ranging from preparing kosher meals to joining in post-meal blessings.

While social integration was hardly uniform before 1933, it proved particularly susceptible to the immediate pressures of the newly installed Nazi dictatorship. For one, the Nazi take over the city government also brought about the swift end of Jewish participation in municipal efforts to commemorate the legacy of the First World War. Numerous businesses and associations were more than eager to coordinate themselves with the policy prerogatives of the new regime. This explains how an athletic club like *Eintracht* Frankfurt went from embracing the label "Jew boys" for their fans to full heartedly supporting a call to ban Jews from athletic clubs in southwest Germany. some gentile-owned businesses appear to have kept Jewish employees until the end of 1938 and certain Jewish businessmen were able to maintain professional relationships with their non-Jewish partners until the advent of forced "aryanizations" in the city after 1935. However, integration in the workplace could also morph

into a liability when gentile colleagues or employees attempted to wield the power of the racial state against their Jewish colleagues or employers.

The personal relationships and friendships between Jews and gentiles that survived the beyond 30 January 1933 increasingly retreated into the private sphere of Jewish homes. Many gentiles feared that they would draw the ire or retribution of the Nazi Party by continuing to openly or even privately associate with Jewish friends and acquaintances. Curiously, it appears that the relationships that persisted the longest were the ones that had been forged between Jews and their female Christian servants. Perhaps as a result of the familial bonds formed before 1933, many of these servants continued to support their Jewish employers even after the stipulations of the Nuremberg Laws prohibited Jews from employing servants under the age of 45.

The ultimate demise of social integration was further hastened by the local government's efforts to enact new policies of spatial segregation and the specter of antisemitic street violence during the latter half of the 1930s. Even though sites such as the *Palmengarten* remained open to Jews, it is entirely possible that the city's decision to ban Jews from sites such as public bath houses in 1936 encouraged to individual initiatives to no longer allow Jews to shop in certain stores or dine at many of the city's' restaurants and cafes. By the end of 1937, it had become increasingly dangerous to be conspicuously Jewish on Frankfurt's street, prompting officials at the IG to consider new strategies to ensure the safety of its more religiously observant members. Still, for as horrible as the situation had become for Frankfurt's Jews, it was mild in comparison to the pressures faced by Jews in the surrounding Hessian countryside. Thus, as of 1938, Frankfurt was seen as a promising destination for thousands of rural Jews who believed that the promise of employment anonymity on the city's streets would bring them a modicum of everyday security during increasingly dire times.

CHAPTER 6: THE CITY OF KOHN, HIRSCH, MEYER, WEINTRAUB, AND STRAUß: THE DEPICTION OF FRANKFURT AS A JEWISH SPACE IN LOCAL LITERATURE, 1914-1938

In 1930, the *Piper Verlag* published a travel guide of Frankfurt am Main by the humorist Hans Reimann as the tenth volume in an ongoing series entitled *What You Won't Find in 'Baedeker.'* The title was a reference to the famous Baedeker publishing house, which had established itself as a titan of the guidebook and tourism industries by marketing its works toward Europe's burgeoning bourgeoisie over the course of the nineteenth century.¹ Although the volumes in *Piper's* series most certainly provided useful information to German-speaking tourists during the interwar period, the works themselves had an overtly humorous and, in some cases, even salacious attitude that mocked "the arid tone and seriousness" that many consumers had grown to associate with Baedeker and similarly high minded guidebook companies.² At the start of a chapter that presents an extended who's who list of local notables in Frankfurt, Reimann pauses in order to provide his readers with a brief statement about the large number of Jews on his list and, more generally, in the city of Frankfurt. Reimann writes the following:

Whoever is of the opinion that one hundred and three out of every one hundred Frankfurters are Jewish and that the majority of the city is comprised of Levy, Kohn, Hirsch, Meyer, and Strauß errs in doing so. It is very similar to the triumphal march in [the opera] "Aida": the same people always wander across the face of the stage, thus giving the impression that there are ten times as many of them. For every hundred Frankfurters there are fifty-seven

¹ By the end of the century, Baedeker had become a shorthand term for all guidebooks. Rudy Koshar, " 'What Ought to be Seen': Tourists' Guidebooks and National Identities in Modern Germany and Europe," in *Journal of Contemporary History* 33, 3 (July, 1998): 330. More information on Baedeker's history can be found in Helmut Frühauf, *Das Verlagshaus Baedeker in Koblenz: Katalog zur Ausstellung der Rheinischen Landesbibliothek Koblenz. 12.10.1992-30.11.1992* (Koblenz: Rheinisches Landesbibliothek, 1992).

² Unlike the fairly chaste guide to Frankfurt, volumes on Vienna and Berlin can be seen as early examples of the more systematic development of sex tourism in Europe. The authors of these works included information on raunchy night clubs and all-nude reviews that their readers might attend. Koshar, "What Ought to Be Seen," 337.

Lutherans, thirty-one Catholics, a scattering of six others, and six Jews and the Aryan names Becker, Koch, Schäfer, Schmidt, Schneider, and Wagner are exceptionally common. They generally say that Frankfurt is a Jewish city. In reality, Frankfurt has neither Jews nor Christians nor antisemites...Naturally, the bearers of Semitic names catch one's eyes on a personal level as well as on the signs of businesses. In the streets, in the theaters, in concerts...One gets a different sense from the address book than from the much more oriental-sounding telephone book.³

This humorous excerpt from Reimann's guidebook speaks to a larger truth about the portrayal of Jews in local literature about Frankfurt before 1933. During this period, numerous pieces of local literature positively depicted Frankfurt as a space whose past and present had continually been defined and enriched by its Jewish population. By casting Frankfurt as a Jewish space, the numerous books, local histories, essays, and guidebooks of this era both reflected and helped to reinforce the tremendous gains of Jewish integration in the Frankfurt since the start of the local Jewish community's long road to emancipation during the nineteenth century. Furthermore, although many of these works came about because of the generous funding associated with local history initiatives that were sponsored by the city's Liberal-minded local government, a number of independent authors and voluntary organizations similarly concurred that one could not talk about Frankfurt without referencing the importance and positive historical influence of its Jewish community.

There are a number of common images and themes that can be traced across these works that argue that the city's Jews had long played an important role in financially and culturally enriching Frankfurt. A prominent example is the history of the Frankfurt *Judengasse*, whose existence was portrayed as a symbolic of ignorance and prejudice of the medieval era. By that same token, a number of authors also celebrated Jewish emancipation as a key milestone in

³ Hans Reimann, *Was nicht im Baedeker Steht. Frankfurt, Mainz, Wiesbaden* (Munich: R. Piper 7 Co. 1930; repr., Leipzig: Connewitzer Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1995), 138-139. All subsequent citations from Reimann's work are from the reprinted edition.

Frankfurt's development into a modern city. The *Judengasse* also tended to crop up in discussions of the city's transformation into a major commercial and financial center, not the least because it served as the first base of operations for the Rothschild banking dynasty. Other themes include architectural praise for Jewish ritual spaces such as the old Jewish cemetery and several synagogues as well as the more recent history of wealthy Jewish individuals that had played a leading role in philanthropic causes designed to benefit the city's intellectual life and poorer citizens.

Amazingly, the Nazi seizure of power in Frankfurt did not bring about a swift end to this long-standing trope in local literature and many works of local literature produced after 30 January 1933 continued to have positive words for the ways in which Jews had helped to shape the development of the city. In particular, the period between 1933 and the passage of the Nuremberg Laws in 1935 bore witness to the publication of a number of works of local literature and history that were imbued with a profound degree of cognitive dissonance vis-à-vis the impact and significance of the city's Jewish population for the historical development of the city. Thus, even though it is clear that a number of local authors enthusiastically espoused and began to embrace the ideological projects and outlook of Nazism, it took several years for them to choose to either embrace an unabashedly antisemitic tone or efface Jews from their works on the city.

The depiction of Jews in Works of Local Literature, 1913-1932

Few works better demonstrate the degree to which local literature both reflected and reinforced Jewish integration in Frankfurt than Friedrich Bothe's massive one-volume history of the city. Bothe, an expert on medieval and early modern history, had first arrived in Frankfurt in

1900 to work as a history and German teacher at the *Liebig-Oberrealschule*.⁴ Shortly thereafter, the members of the Municipal History Commission hired him to write a book on the Fettmilch Uprising of the early seventeenth century. After conducting preliminary research in the city's main archive, Bothe decided to ask the Commission if he could first write a broader history of Frankfurt before producing a larger, two-volume work devoted just to the Fettmilch Uprising. The Commission consented to his request and the first edition of Bothe's *History of the City of Frankfurt am Main* came out in the fall of 1913.⁵

In the introduction to the first edition, Bothe quickly reveals his firm belief that Jews played an integral role in the history of the city and its development into a major urban center in Germany. Bothe writes that, "My work will provide much new information about the activities and economic disposition of the Jews. I have had to devote special attention to this segment of the population in every era because the Jews have played an important role in Frankfurt for centuries." Speaking to one of the other major themes in his work, Bothe further adds that the Jews were one of several groups that reflected a longer arc of social mobility in different eras of Frankfurt's history, thus favorably putting them on the same plane as the patrician and mayor "Jakob Heller, the great-grandchild of a shoemaker...[and] Goethe, the grandson of a tailor."⁶ The long list of acknowledgements at the end of this introduction also shows that Bothe had cultivated scholarly relationships with the two most prominent Jewish historians in Frankfurt: the architectural expert Julius Hülsen, who had long been the editor of a series devoted to examining

⁴ IFS Personengeschichte S2/317 Friedrich Bothe; *Frankfurter Biographie. Erster Band A-L*, ed. Wolfgang Klötzer (Frankfurt: Waldemar Kramer, 1994), 94.

⁵ Friedrich Bothe, *Geschichte der Stadt Frankfurt am Main* (Frankfurt: Moritz Diesterweg, 1913), VI-XI.

⁶ *Ibid.*, VIII.

a number of Frankfurt's historic buildings, and Isidor Kracauer, who would later write a massive history of the Jews in Frankfurt until 1824.⁷

During the middle of the First World War, the Historical Commission published a companion volume of images compiled by Bernard Müller that sought to compliment Bothe's history by providing a visual history of the city up until the Prussian annexation of Frankfurt in 1866. Although the Commission's initial plan for Bothe to provide detailed captions for the images could not come to fruition because Bothe had been called up for service in the German army, this second volume did not differ dramatically in tone from the 1913 history. In addition to sections featuring images of figures such as Goethe and prominent examples of the city's architecture, Müller's book also contained a two pages dedicated to the history of the history of the Frankfurt ghetto. The section included images of the Rothschild family's house on the *Judengasse*, the old Jewish cemetery on *Battonstraße*, the birth house of the writer Ludwig Börne, and a drawing of men in top hats and overcoats standing outside of one of the synagogues on *Börnestraße*. Further images also referenced the role of the *Judengasse* during several important moments in the city's history such as the plunder of the *Judengasse* during the Fettmilch Uprising and the bombardment of the same street during the first Napoleonic invasion in 1792.⁸

Following the end of the First World War, Bothe received additional commissions to publish two updated and significantly shortened versions of his history of the city in 1923 and 1929. This was chiefly because the Historical Commission wanted to include more information on contemporary events in the official history of the city as well as an urgent need to reduce

⁷ Ibid., IX.

⁸ Bernard Müller, *Bilderatlas zur Geschichte der Stadt Frankfurt am Main* (Frankfurt: Moritz Diesterweg, 1916), III, 82-84, 86, 92.

printing costs in an era when the city government frequently teetered on the edge of financial crisis.⁹ The remainder of this section will focus on the portrayal of the Jews in the final, 1929 edition of Bothe's *History of the City of Frankfurt am Main*.

Much like the original volume, the 1929 edition unambiguously claims that Jews had played an important role in the economic history of Frankfurt. Whereas other scholars might have crafted a negative, antisemitic narrative about long-standing connections between Jews and finance, Bothe's history presents a more positive picture of Jewish economic development in Frankfurt, beginning with his sections on the city during the middle ages. For example, even though Jews first appear in Bothe's text it is because of their role in trade and money lending under the Carolingian dynasty, Bothe quickly tries to dispel any false belief that only Jews were involved in this practice. He argues that many Christians in medieval Frankfurt actively took part in the money lending business, thus violating the religious precepts of the Church. To further support this claim, Bothe cites the fact that at one point in time "West-Frankish bishops complained to Ludwig the German, who lived in Frankfurt, that the administrator of the royal villas had personally wanted to engage in money lending with the king."¹⁰ Bothe also contends that the economy of both Frankfurt and the Holy Roman Empire suffered during the short period of Jewish absence that followed the first *Judenschlacht* in 1241 because the Kaisers had lost a dependable set of creditors that could honestly provide loans "without such intense conditions and at low interest rates."¹¹

⁹ IFS Personengeschichte S2/317 Friedrich Bothe; *Frankfurter Biographie*, 94; Friedrich Bothe, *Dritte Auflage* (Frankfurt: Englert und Schlosser, 1929).

¹⁰ Bothe, *Dritte Auflage*, 18.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 42-44.

More importantly, Bothe's book consistently recognizes the humanity and, very frequently, the suffering of Frankfurt's Jewish community at the hands of intolerant or greedy Christians during the middle ages. Returning to the issue of the *Judenschlacht*, Bothe argues that its origins were not merely the result of economic resentment and an intense "greed for the treasures that people assumed were amongst the Jews."¹² They were also the result of an intense religious fanaticism coursing through Europe during the era of the Crusades. Thus, Bothe claims that imported religious intolerance was the key reason for the second *Judenschlacht* in 1349. After informing readers that Frankfurt's new Jewish community had spent several years living peacefully amongst their non-Jewish neighbors in the area around the city cathedral, Bothe claims that a new wave of intolerance began when, "a raw and fanatical flock of 'flagellants,' who traveled through Germany during the days of the 'black death'... burst into the city along with a gang that had probably committed atrocities against other Jewish communities along the Rhine River." Bothe further denigrates this group of fanatics by suggesting that their *modus operandi* depended more on their "blood lust" and a desire to plunder Jewish goods than on their commitment to the teachings of the New Testament, implying that true Christianity called for the kind of tolerance that had prevailed in Frankfurt at earlier points in the fourteenth century. Bothe goes on to lament the fact that, "the myth of Jews poisoning wells found open ears" amongst Frankfurt's many non-Jewish citizens and that a large number of them took part in a second pogrom that killed most of the city's Jews, reversing decades of progress during which the Jewish community had once again financially benefitted the city.¹³

¹² Ibid., 29-30.

¹³ Ibid., 42-44.

From there, Bothe goes on to describe the construction of the *Judengasse* and the implementation of the first *Stättigkeit* in the fifteenth century as developments that are not only indicative of Jewish suffering, but also the resilience of Frankfurt's Jews in the face of renewed adversity. Once again, Bothe's empathy for the Jewish community shines through when he narrates the immediate consequences of ghettoization:

Thus began a dark time for the...[inhabitants of] this prison they named 'New Egypt,' whose gates had to remain closed not only during the night, but also the entire day during Sundays and holidays. They could only leave the street through a small gate with the permission of the mayor and with the payment of a tax. All Jews had to wear markings, a gold ring on their clothes and on their jacket and a pointed grey hat. In 1480 they were strictly prohibited to call themselves *Bürgern*, even though they had once been passive citizens.¹⁴

Yet despite his emphasis on the oppressive conditions of the ghetto and the uniformly anti-Jewish sentiment of Frankfurt's non-Jewish population, Bothe is keen to demonstrate that the Jews of Frankfurt, "visibly thrived in the ghetto despite the high walls they were enclosed within and despite the unhealthy life in the gloomy atmosphere," and that they "did not allow themselves to be depressed, but toughly bore it all and even preserved a great love of life." He even suggests that a constant stream of Jews tried to enter Frankfurt because they could easily find refuge there from the more oppressive conditions in other German cities and to enter the financial and money lending business based within the *Judengasse*.¹⁵

It is important to note, however, that despite the positive slant of much his narrative of the early days of the *Judengasse*, Bothe also strikes a mildly ambivalent tone about Jewish financial success and influence in Frankfurt during the sixteenth century. For one, he claims that although the majority of Jewish lenders charged interest at rates much lower than the maximum

¹⁴ Ibid., 96.

¹⁵ Ibid., 140-141, 151.

12.5% interest rate they could legally charge, “there were inhabitants of the ghetto that took advantage of the desperation of many debtors and charged much higher rates.” He also points out that the sheer amount of debt owned by Jewish lenders meant that they soon had a disproportionate influence on areas of trade that they were not legally allowed to pursue. Thus, as the financial situation of many artisans and workers began to deteriorate in a way that was not dissimilar to what many contemporary Frankfurters had experienced during the hyperinflation of the early 1920s, rumors began to spread that the Jews and the patricians that dominated the city council were “in cahoots with one another.”¹⁶

Nevertheless, Bothe still maintains his sympathy for Frankfurt’s Jews in his climactic section on the Fettmilch Uprising, a topic that had long been at the center of his life’s work as a historian. Like many non-Jewish historians before him, Bothe characterized the revolt as a populist uprising against the oligarchic power of city patricians and as a forerunner of future calls for democratization of the city in the nineteenth century.¹⁷ At the same time, though, he questions the motivations of Vinzenz Fettmilch, the leader of the uprising and quickly concludes that Fettmilch did not lead the revolution because of any sense of idealism. In actuality, Fettmilch, who had often been cast as a “pioneer for the rights of the citizenry,” likely pushed along the revolution because he received monetary remuneration for every day that he was in power.¹⁸ Moreover, Bothe presents the plunder of the *Judengasse* as the work of a wild, drunken mob and praises the brave manner in which the city’s Jews struggled to prevent the crowd from

¹⁶ Ibid., 149-151.

¹⁷ Christopher R. Friedrichs has written an excellent historiographical overview of how Jewish and non-Jewish historians have often made drastically different conclusions on the origins and significance of the Fettmilch Uprising. Whereas Jewish historians before and after the Holocaust have tended to depict the event as one of many violent episodes in the long, “tragic history of German-Jewish relations,” gentile historians, more often than not, have depicted the events of 1612-1616 as a popular rebellion against tyranny. Friedrichs, “Politics or Pogrom,” 188.

¹⁸ Bothe, *Dritte Auflage*, 161.

bursting into the ghetto. In the end, Bothe narrative depicts the Holy Roman Empire's eventual suppression of the uprising, its decision to execute Fettmilch, and the return of the Jews to Frankfurt under renewed imperial protection more as a well-needed return to order than as a tragic end to a pure revolutionary struggle.¹⁹

As Bothe's history proceeds to Frankfurt during the age of Enlightenment and the long nineteenth century, both Jewish emancipation and the rise of religious tolerance are depicted as benchmarks of progress towards modernity. According to Bothe, the relaxation of legal restrictions on Jews and other religious minorities in Frankfurt such as members of the Reformed Protestant Church echoed the ideas of "tolerance and civilization" promoted by Frederick the Great of Prussia, the Habsburg emperor Joseph II, Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, and the Jewish philosopher Moses Mendelssohn. In a nod to local patriotism, he also points out that despite his shock at the drab conditions of the *Judengasse*, the great German poet and son of Frankfurt Johann Wolfgang von Goethe positively referred to the city's Jews as "'appealing and interesting people.'"²⁰ Furthermore, in passages about the budding reform movement in the local Jewish community, Bothe directly connects the creation of the Philanthropin School to larger initiatives to foment educational reform in Frankfurt.²¹

Bothe contextualizes the first period of Jewish emancipation in the Grand Duchy of Frankfurt by describing it as a part of the philosophical and economic promise of the Napoleonic era. He then goes on to cite the Congress of Vienna's reactionary decision to re-implement the harsh rules of the *Stättigkeit* as a harsh blow to the humanism of the Dalberg era. Bothe further

¹⁹ Ibid., 168-172.

²⁰ Ibid., 244-245.

²¹ Ibid., 252.

states that this first experiment in Jewish emancipation failed because most of Frankfurt's Christian inhabitants continued to be stuck in the outmoded mentalities of the pre-Enlightenment era. He also criticizes the Frankfurt Senate of the post-Napoleonic era for believing that unbridled Jewish economic competition would bring about the financial ruin of Christians and erroneously claiming that the Jewish community hoped to harness their economic power "to make Frankfurt into a Jewish city." In later sections of the book, Bothe continues to directly relate the long road to Jewish emancipation in Frankfurt with what he views as a positive arc of nineteenth century German history that also led to greater emancipation for the city's Catholic minority and inspired the liberal spirit of the first German Parliament in Frankfurt during the revolution of 1848.²² Finally, Bothe applauds the municipal government's decision to demolish the last traces of the *Judengasse* during the 1880s because it allowed Frankfurt to physically rid itself of one of a space that had continued to embody, "the last trace of the reign of medieval illiberality and intolerance."²³

In the final, updated section of his book, Bothe depicts Frankfurt as a place that continued to be positively impacted by the presence of a large Jewish community during the Weimar years. In particular, the *Israelitische Gemeinde* (IG), the main Jewish community, is presented as an important part of the interconfessional tapestry that has served as a moral backbone to the city in an era of great uncertainty following the end of the First World War. Bothe writes:

From time immemorial, the *Israelitische Gemeinde* in Frankfurt has had an important position in the realm of Judaism. Tolerance and attention reign between the different religions and confessions in the city. They frequently make an effort to stress what they have in common with the intention of lifting the people of the metropolis out of the clutter...of modern life and teaching that there are better things than earning money and leisure.²⁴

²² Ibid., 260-262, 271-272, 304.

²³ Ibid., 330.

It would appear, then, that Bothe's comments here about the anti-materialist nature of all three of the major religious groups in the city suggest that several decades of emancipation have freed Frankfurt's Jewish community from the once peculiar relationship they had with money and finance because of the harsh restrictions of the medieval and early modern periods.

Bothe's final section also has words of praise for the ways in which newer Jewish architectural projects since the start of the twentieth century have added to the aesthetic charms of Frankfurt. He specifically singles out the *Israelitische Religionsgesellschaft's* (IRG) Synagogue on the *Friedberger Anlage* and the IG's *Westendsynagoge* as prime examples of the ways in which "capable architects turned away from the unspiritual, formulaic design that took hold everywhere as a result of materialist attitudes." Moving beyond the realm of religious architecture, he puts forward the Rothschild family's house on *Börnestraße*, the location of the now-defunct *Judengasse*, as an example of the city's older architectural style and even has kind words to say about the monumental, Jewish-owned Wronker department store in the center of downtown Frankfurt.²⁵

This last section also includes a series of short encomiums to a number of Jewish individuals who had dutifully given back to both the city that they called home and to the larger world of German culture. For example, Bothe mentions that the Jewish chemist and Nobel Prize winner Paul Ehrlich discovered a number of important medical treatments in Frankfurt's Institute for Experimental Therapy, which had been created thanks to the largesse of the Jewish

²⁴ Ibid., 347.

²⁵ Ibid., 368. Strangely, it would seem that Bothe's personal strain of anti-materialism did not include the massive department stores such as Wronker, which many antisemites believed was one of the larger manifestations of how Jewishness threatened German society and culture. See Lerner, *Consuming Temple*.

philanthropists Georg and Franziska Speyer.²⁶ Moreover, in addition to discussing the role of Jewish philanthropy in the foundation of the University of Frankfurt and the city's decision to name the IG Farben executive Leo Gans an honorary citizen of the city, Bothe laments the fact that the city's struggling welfare programs presently lack the presence of generous prewar benefactors such as Charles Hallgarten and Wilhelm Merton.²⁷

Ultimately, then, the 1929 edition of Bothe's history of Frankfurt is an excellent example of how the city government continued to commission historical works after World War I that depicted the city as a multi-confessional, tolerant, and, in many ways, Jewish space. According to Bothe, the history of the local Jewish population was part and parcel of Frankfurt's evolution into a Liberal metropolis and important trading center. Despite occasional comments about the peculiar connection between Jews and finance, Bothe crafts a narrative in which Jews consistently served as a motor of economic development from the thirteenth century until the dawn of the twentieth century and the long struggle for Jewish emancipation is depicted as a part of larger emancipatory and Liberal movements of the nineteenth century. Furthermore, Bothe argues that the destruction of the *Judengasse* and the end of economic and legal restrictions targeting Frankfurt's Jews should be seen as major turning points in Frankfurt's transition from the medieval to the modern era. Finally, Bothe looks at how other secular and religious Jewish spaces such as Synagogues and department stores can serve as positive architectural landmarks and as reminders of past optimism and progress during a period of great uncertainty.

Beyond Bothe, the 1920s bore witness to the publication of a number of other works commissioned by the city government that, in addition to advertising the city to potential tourists

²⁶ Bothe, *Dritte Auflage*, 324.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 323-324, 350, 344.

and outside investors, aimed to reinforce liberal values in the local population by making them aware of the multifaceted elements of Frankfurt's history and culture. Unsurprisingly, these books often reinforced a number of ideas and themes that had already appeared in the first edition of Bothe's history of the city: namely that the local Jewish population had and continued to play an important role in the city's evolution from a medieval trading center into a modern metropolis.

For example, two essays in the *Yearbook of Frankfurt's Citizenry* from 1926 stress the importance of Jewish individuals for the development of Frankfurt's economy, politics, and culture. Moritz Feibel's entry on the development of Frankfurt's modern banking sector at the start of the nineteenth century pays particular attention to the success of the Rothschild banking dynasty. In it, Feibel strikes a complimentary tone about the honor and character of this family, writing, "Although the five brothers lived in different places on the [European] continent, they diligently took account of their father until his last wish," thus presenting the Rothschilds as an example of positive Jewish and family values. Speaking to their scruples as businessmen, Feibel also claims that one of the guiding tenets "that they revered was not to seek excessive profit from any enterprise and to honorably treat their clients in order to continually hold on to them." Feibel goes on to praise Wilhelm Carl von Rothschild, one of Mayer Amschel Rothschild's grandchildren, for being "a strictly religious man that held tight to the old traditions of his religious community and who devoted his entire time to work in his business and religious practice; he strictly made sure that his bank would remain closed on Saturdays and Jewish holidays."²⁸ Elsewhere in the volume, Julius Rothenberger opines that "hardly any other citizen

²⁸ Moritz Feibel, "Erinnerungen aus den Glanzzeiten des Frankfurter Bankierstandes," in *Jahrbuch der Frankfurter Bürgerschaft 1926*, ed. Ludwig Landmann and Prof. Dr. Trompler, 131-136 (Frankfurt am Main: Römerverlag, 1926), 131.

supported the development of our city” than the Jewish politician and journalist Leopold Sonnemann, citing Sonnemann’s role long tenure as a member the Reichstag and the Frankfurt City Council, as well as his efforts to create municipal goods such as the opera house and different kinds of public works projects.²⁹

Another example of the city government’s efforts to demonstrate the culture of integration and confessional cooperation is *Frankfurt: The Book of the City*, a large promotional volume on the city that was published in 1927. This book should be seen as a prime example of ongoing efforts to broadcast Frankfurt as a cosmopolitan center for post-World War I economic development in Europe. The editor of the book was Otto Ruppertsberg, who had worked at Frankfurt’s main City Archive since 1909 and had become its director in 1925.³⁰ In his brief introduction, Ruppertsberg broadly states that the goal of the book

Is to show both locals and strangers how things look here in Frankfurt, how the authorities look after their citizens, how people live and speak here, how people pray, and how people work with their heads and hands, what Frankfurt means in scientific and artistic life, in trade and in transportation. And not only how it is now, but how it was in past times, how and why Frankfurt developed from its original conditions to its present splendor... This book is not only meant for Frankfurt’s citizenry, but also for those outside of it in German states and abroad. For those who do not know Frankfurt, it should arouse their desire to visit the old Imperial City on the Main. For those who are already familiar with it, it should awake lovely memories and invite them to visit very soon and very often in order to get to know Frankfurt better.³¹

A few pages later, Leonhard Heißwolf, the Chairmen of the Frankfurt City Council and a member of the Social Democratic Party, also stressed that the book’s emphasis on local culture and urban development reflected the ongoing need for all segments of the city’s population to

²⁹ Julius Rothenberger, “Von Miquel bis Adickes (1880-1912),” in *Jahrbuch der Frankfurter Bürgerschaft 1926*, ed. Ludwig Landmann and Prof. Dr. Trompler, 121-130 (Frankfurt am Main: Römerverlag, 1926), 126-127.

³⁰ IFS S1-40 Ruppertsberg, Otto: Nachlass.

³¹ Otto Ruppertsberg, “Vorwort,” in *Frankfurt. Das Buch der Stadt*, ed. Otto Ruppertsberg, 3 (Frankfurt: A. Schulze & Co., 1927), 3.

band together to help “reinvigorate the *Volk* and the country (Reich).”³² Regarding the actual contents of the book, it contains forty-six entries on a number of different topics related to the city that are divided into four sections: “the city and its inhabitants,” “the government and its concern for physical well-being,” “spiritual life,” and “the economy.”

In an early entry on local dialect and literature, Hans Ludwig Rauh makes a strong argument for the ways in which the city’s dialect of German had benefited from the inclusion of a number of words that had Hebrew or Yiddish origins. In stark contrast to the inclusion of French words that serve as a living reminder of the French occupation of the city during the Napoleonic era, Rauh claims that the everyday usage of Hebrew and Yiddish words is indicative “development of a close coexistence” between Jews and non-Jews in throughout the history of Frankfurt. Rauh cites examples including the phrase “*e chutzbe bonem*,” which refers to either an ugly or a cheeky face and the terms “*Massel* and *Schlamassel*” in reference to good or bad luck. He also adds that while other German speakers may also be familiar with Jewish words such as “*koscher*,” “*trefe*,” “*Zores*,” and “*Schmus*,” “their general prevalence, their large number, and their frequent and idiosyncratic use are distinctly part of our vernacular.” Rauh further states that even if many Frankfurters may not realize that they frequently employ Hebrew or Yiddish words, “they [the words] carry a significant variety and nuance of meaning and are an asset for vernacular expression.”³³

Elsewhere, several other authors point out a number of ways in which Frankfurt’s Jewish community enriched the geography of the city in both the past and the present. For example, in

³² Leonhard Heißwolf and Ludwig Landmann, “Zum Geleit,” in *Frankfurt. Das Buch der Stadt*, ed. Otto Ruppertsberg, 6-8 (Frankfurt: A. Schulze & Co., 1927), 8.

³³ Hans Ludwig Rauh, “Der Frankfurter in Sprache und Dichtung,” in *Frankfurt. Das Buch der Stadt*, ed. Otto Ruppertsberg, 32-39 (Frankfurt: A. Schulze & Co., 1927), 34-35.

an essay on parks and green space in Frankfurt, Max Bromme describes the old Jewish cemetery on BörnesträÙe as “an island of extraordinary charm in the old city...which is also famous for its valuable cultural historical memorials.”³⁴ Gustav Schauman’s essay on churches and public buildings similarly praises the aesthetically pleasing elements of recent Jewish architecture in Frankfurt. Schaumann informs his readers about the charming elements of both the interiors and exteriors of the IRG’s synagogue on the *Friedberger Anlage* and the IG’s more modern synagogue on *Königsteiner Straße*.³⁵

Regarding the former, it is worth noting that both essays also feature photographs of the *Friedberger Anlage* Synagogue that reflect an overall sense that Frankfurt was a Jewish space. In Schauman’s essay, a photograph of the main entrance and façade of the synagogue occupies the same page as an image of the *Paulskirche*, a Protestant Church that famously served as the meeting place of the first German parliament during the revolution of 1848.³⁶ This dual placement would seem to imply that both buildings symbolize unique features of Frankfurt’s history and culture. The second photograph is a snapshot of a tree-lined alleyway leading directly from a section of the city’s park ring to the entrance of the Synagogue.³⁷ In the photo, the architectural style of the Synagogue appears to be in complete harmony with the green space that it abuts. A closer look also reveals a number of people standing in front of the building. Thus, the warm image in the photograph appears to beckon readers to approach the building and find out more about the community that it belongs to.

³⁴ Max Bromme, “Das Grün im Stadtbild,” in *Frankfurt. Das Buch der Stadt*, ed. Otto Ruppertsberg, 66-74 (Frankfurt: A. Schulze & Co., 1927), 72.

³⁵ Gustav Schaumann, “Kirchen und öffentliches Gebäude,” in *Frankfurt. Das Buch der Stadt*, ed. Otto Ruppertsberg, 40-48 (Frankfurt: A. Schulze & Co., 1927), 42.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ Bromme, “Stadtbild,” 74.

Later in the volume, the Lutheran pastor Johannes Kübel showers the Jewish community with effusive praise in an essay about religious life in Frankfurt. The fact that Kübel wrote anything about Jews in an official city volume would have come as a surprise to many in Frankfurt, especially members of its Jewish community. On New Year's Eve 1917, Kübel had delivered a sermon alleging that several Jews had unjustly profited from the First World War.³⁸ A decade later, it appears that Kübel had reacted to this earlier, opprobrious incident by embracing an apparently enthusiastic brand of philosemitism. Not mincing words, Kübel begins his section with the following paean on the evolution and importance of Frankfurt's Jewish community for both city history and Jewish history writ-large:

Frankfurt's Jews have experienced centuries of oppression and persecution, as well as resilient vigor; the nineteenth century gave them the possibility for uninhibited development. One cannot possibly overstate the importance that Jews have had for the economic, philanthropic, and political life of the city of Frankfurt. Throughout the Jewish world Frankfurt has long enjoyed the honorable title of a "*Mutterstadt in Israel*."

Kübel then proceeds to provide his readers with detailed information on the number of synagogues, Rabbis, religious teachers, and employees affiliated with both the IG and the IRG. Kübel also mentions the names of important religious, educational, and welfare institutions such as the Philanthropin, the *Freies Jüdisches Lehrhaus*, the Jewish orphanage, and the Association of Jewish Nurses. Additionally, Kübel points out that several prominent Jews from Frankfurt serve on the boards of German and International Jewish groups including the Academy for the *Wissenschaft des Judentums* and the Jewish Colonization Association as well as the fact that Frankfurt's Jewish community served as an incubator for a number of national Jewish women's associations. Like Bromme, Kübel describes the old Jewish cemetery as "one of Frankfurt's most unique cultural monuments." His article also includes an image of the arc inside the

³⁸ More information on this episode can be found in chapter two of this dissertation: "The Politics of 'Confessional Peace.'"

sanctuary of the synagogue on *Königsteinerstraße* and another of Rabbi Jakob Horovitz of the IG. Although the yarmulke on Horovitz's head in the photograph immediately communicates his religious difference, he is also wearing a suit that is similar to those worn by Protestant ministers in another section of the chapter, suggesting an element of commonality and shared humanity between the members of these two different faiths.³⁹

Another entry on the educational landscape of Frankfurt succinctly lays out the local government's continued desire to craft policies that would buttress Jewish integration the long-standing confessional peace between the city's different religious communities. The author of this particular essay was Otto Liermann, the director of the *Wöhlerschule*, a combined *Vorschule* and *Realgymnasium* located in Westend that had several Jewish teachers as well as a consistently high Jewish enrollment.⁴⁰ During his discussion of the public school system in Frankfurt, Liermann states that the majority of parents in Frankfurt had voiced their continued approval of the city's policy to have public school classes that bring together students from different religious backgrounds. Liermann then argues that the primary benefit of this educational model is that it ensures that "from the very beginning, students are accustomed to tolerance and an amicable" coexistence between different religious groups that live in the city.⁴¹ Ruppertsberg, the editor of the volume, echoes the importance of tolerance for the Frankfurt's development in his brief sketch of the city's history. In a discussion of political changes before Prussia annexed the

³⁹ Kübel, "Religiöses und Kirchliches Leben," 212-219.

⁴⁰ Liermann had assumed leadership of the school in the fall of 1901 and remained in this position until his retirement at the end of March 1932. In 1921, 36.2% of students in the *Vorschule* and 24.2% of students in the *Realgymnasium* of the *Wöhlerschule* were officially listed as Jewish. IFS Schulamt 7.329 - Wöhlerschule Jahresberichte 1921-1933.

⁴¹ Otto Liermann, "Universität, Schulwesen und Volksbildung," in *Frankfurt. Das Buch der Stadt*, ed. Otto Ruppertsberg, 223-232 (Frankfurt: A. Schulze & Co., 1927), 225. More information on the longer history of non-denominational education in Frankfurt can be found in Palmowski, *Urban Liberalism*, 151-160, 163-164, 173-176.

city, he describes the emancipation of the city's Jewish population in 1864 as the height of mid-century reform efforts that helped to further empower the local population.⁴²

Frankfurt's government also oversaw the publication of several other texts during the 1920s that helped to promote the idea that Frankfurt was a space that had been positively impacted by its Jewish history and culture. In 1930, the city's Historical Commission published Arthur Galliner's biography of Sigismund Stern, who had served as the director of the Philanthropin from 1855 until 1867, as the twelfth volume in a larger series of biographical works of important figures in Frankfurt's history. Other works in this series included a volume on the city's former mayor Franz Adickes, which featured essays by the Jewish politician Ludwig Heilbrunn and the legal expert Berthold Freudenthal, as well as a biography of Mayer Amschel Rothschild. Curiously, by the time the Stern's biography was published, the Rothschild biography was already on its third printing and cost only 1.5 Marks, substantially less than most of the other works in the series.⁴³

A number of independent associations in Frankfurt printed books during the Weimar Republic that proudly emphasized the positive influence of Judaism on the city. In 1924, the Frankfurt Art Association published a collection of photographs of Frankfurt taken by Carl Abt and other photographers between 1853 and 1922. The members of the association did so with the belief this "important piece of local culture" could "guide the widest of circles [of people]

⁴² Otto Ruppertsberg, "Die Reichsstadt und die freie Stadt," in *Frankfurt. Das Buch der Stadt*, ed. Otto Ruppertsberg, 87-105 (Frankfurt: A. Schulze & Co., 1927), 103.

⁴³ Arthur Galliner, *Sigismund Stern. Der Reformator und der Pädagoge* (Frankfurt: Englert und Schlosser, 1930), 1, 191-192; *Franz Adickes. Sein Leben und sein Werk*, ed. Frankfurt Historisches Kommission (Frankfurt: Englert und Schlosser, 1929); Christian Berghoeffler, *Mayer Amschel Rothschild. Der Gründer des rothschildischen Bankhauses* (Frankfurt: Englert und Schlosser, 1922). Much of the funding for the *Frankfurter Lebensbilder* series that these works appeared in came from a 1906 donation of 100,000 Marks from a foundation belonging to the local Jewish-owned bank Jacob S.H. Stern. IFS Magistratsakten S/2.761 Systematische Erforschung der Stadt Frankfurt 1903-1930 Bl. 17a-17b.

through the lost or ever-present treasures of our city.” The middle of the book features six photographs of the *Judengasse* and the old Jewish cemetery on *Battonstraße*. Striking the same tone of essays written by Kübel and Bromme, a caption for the latter proudly refers to the cemetery as a “venerable place whose approximately six thousand gravestones are still maintained to this day in a picturesque tangle of bushes and trees.”⁴⁴

A similar book by the local author Fried Lübbecke appeared in 1932. Beginning in the period immediately following World War I, Lübbecke had been at the forefront of efforts to preserve buildings and promote urban renewal in Frankfurt’s medieval center and in 1922 he helped create an organization called the Active Association of Friends of the Old City.⁴⁵ In the introduction to his book, Lübbecke tells his readers that Frankfurt was an exceptionally German city because of its tolerant attitude and open embrace of outside groups that had come to the city. Thus, even though Frankfurt was one of the first cities where a majority of the population embraced the theology of Martin Luther, the local citizenry tolerated and accommodated the continued presence of Catholics and Jews as well as the arrival of Dutch Calvinists during the early modern period. Turning to the present, Lübbecke also praises the ingenious way in which city officials led by the Jewish architect and city architect Ernst May had helped to create new housing unit for over forty thousand of Frankfurt’s citizens under the reign of Mayor Ludwig Landmann during the late 1920s.⁴⁶

Another contemporary example of a work that highlights the positive portrayal of Frankfurt as a Jewish space is *Frankfurt Then and Now (Frankfurt Einst und Jetzt)*, a 1931

⁴⁴ *Das schöne Gesicht von Frankfurt am Main*, ed. Guido Schoenberger (Frankfurt: Verlag des Frankfurter Kunstvereins, 1924), 1, 49-54.

⁴⁵ Wolfgang Klötzer, “Vorwort” in *Die Frankfurter Altstadt. Eine Erinnerung*, ed. Wolfgang Klötzer, 7-9 (Frankfurt: Waldemar Kramer, 1983), 7-9.

⁴⁶ Fried Lübbecke, *Frankfurt am Main* (Leipzig: Velhagen & Klasing, 1932), 3, 9.

publication put together by the Teachers' Association of Frankfurt am Main. In an essay on the early history of religious life in the city, Wilhelm Seydler voices great sympathy for the suffering of Jews at the hands of their non-Jewish rulers and neighbors during the medieval and early modern periods. Echoing Friedrich Bothe's narrative of city history, Seydler describes the first *Judenschlacht* of 1241 as the "darkest event of the era" and points out that the second *Judenschlacht* in 1349 was the work of not only wandering flagellants, but also a "misguided mob" of local citizens. Seydler also stresses that the peculiar relationship between Jews and money-lending in Frankfurt was the result of them being treated as "objects of exploitation" by the Holy Roman Emperor as well as other members of imperial and local governments.⁴⁷

Several other essays in the volume reference the intimate connections between the local Jewish community and Frankfurt's past and present. In an essay on architectural landmarks in Frankfurt's historic center, Julius Hülsen favorably compares the Rothschild banking house on the former *Judengasse* to the city's cathedral and city hall, calling it "an excellent example of the worthy architectural style of Old Frankfurt."⁴⁸ Another essay echoes the sentiment seen elsewhere that Jewish philanthropists including Charles Hallgarten and Wilhelm Merton as well as the Budge and Speyer family played an indelible role in the development the social welfare programs in Frankfurt at the turn of the twentieth century.⁴⁹ Merton's, the Speyers', and the chemist Paul Ehrlich's connections to the creation of the Goethe University also appear in an entry on academic and educational culture in contemporary Frankfurt. The same entry counts the

⁴⁷ Wilhelm Seydler, "Die kirchlichen Verhältnisse im alten Frankfurt," in *Frankfurt Einst und Jetzt*, ed. Lehrerverein zu Frankfurt a.M., 34-47 (Frankfurt: Moritz Diesterweg, 1931), 37-38, 47.

⁴⁸ Julius Hülsen, "Die Baudenkmäler Alt-Frankfurt," in *Frankfurt Einst und Jetzt*, ed. Lehrerverein Frankfurt a.M., 70-83 (Frankfurt: Moritz Diesterweg, 1931).

⁴⁹ Heinz Kromer, "Soziale Fürsorge: Einrichtungen und Aufwendungen der Stadt Frankfurt a.M. – Gemeinnützige Anstalten – Frankfurter Philanthropen," in *Frankfurt Einst und Jetzt*, ed. Lehrerverein Frankfurt a.M., 155-164 (Frankfurt: Moritz Diesterweg, 1931), 163.

IG's Museum of Jewish Antiquity and the Judaica collection at the main city library among the chief cultural gems of Frankfurt and praises the excellent educational pedigree of the Philanthropin School.⁵⁰

The volume closes with an essay by Alfons Paquet, a noted pacifist and journalist at the liberal *Frankfurter Zeitung*, which, among other things, serves as a *cri de coeur* for the local population to remember and warmly embrace the impact that Jews have had and continue to have on Frankfurt.⁵¹ In the middle of the piece, Paquet argues that the city's liberal tradition actually began with the Talmudic scholarship of the *Judengasse*. Paquet writes that even though the walls of the ghetto crumbled in the modern era, its critical intellectual spirit can be seen in the work of Ludwig Börne, who was a prominent member of the ideological discussions of Young Germany, an influential circle of democratically-minded German writers during the first half of the nineteenth century. Paquet further points out that the contrast between the assimilated, bourgeois Jewish families in *Westend* and the traditional Torah study that still went on in *Ostend* demonstrated that, "the spiritual legacy of the Jewish diaspora is not as strongly or uniquely preserved in any other Western city," than it is in Frankfurt. Paquet also mentions that the circles associated with the *Freies jüdisches Lehrhaus* play an important role in contemporary discussion of Judaism and claims that Martin Buber and Franz Rosenzweig's new German translation of the Old Testament will be as important for Jews as Martin Luther's translation of the bible was for Christians.⁵²

⁵⁰ Wilhelm Sadler, "Wissenschaft und Bildung in gegenwärtigen Frankfurt," in *Frankfurt Einst und Jetzt*, ed. Lehrerverein Frankfurt a.M, 194-212 (Frankfurt: Moritz Diesterweg, 1931), 195, 202, 204, 208.

⁵¹ More information on Paquet's fascinating life can be found in Oliver M. Piecha, *Der Weltdeutsche. Eine Biographie Alfons Paquets* (Wiesbaden: Spreesand Verlag, 2016).

⁵² Alfons Paquet, "Wort und Geist in Frankfurt: Seit Langem bis Heute," in *Frankfurt Einst und Jetzt*, ed. Lehrerverein Frankfurt a.M, 234-252 (Frankfurt: Moritz Diesterweg, 1931), 238, 249-50. A number of scholars have written about the *Freies Jüdisches Lehrhaus* as an important sight for the renaissance of Jewish culture during the Weimar era. The extended intellectual circle of the school included a number of influential Jewish intellectuals

During this same period, travel literature on and tour guides of Frankfurt and the surrounding region also reinforced the idea that Frankfurt was a Jewish space. For example, a number of Jewish sights and spaces can be found in a guide to Frankfurt published in 1920 by *Grieben Verlag* publishing house.⁵³ The guide's list of recommended cafés and restaurants includes Café Goldschmidt, which was located close to the sight of the old *Judengasse* in the heart of *Ostend* and consistently drew a large number of Jewish patrons. Later in the book, a walking tour with information on the heart of the city instructs readers about the treasures of the former *Judengasse* and even recommends paying a small amount of change in order to glimpse the majestic interior of the IG's *Hauptsynagoge* on *Börnestraße*. Another walking tour suggests pausing for a few moments in front of a memorial to the poet Heinrich Heine on the *Friedberger Anlage* which the authors believed appropriately represented the beauty of his poetry. Furthermore, a section dedicated to listing out important local libraries spoke positively of the Jewish Library and Reading Hall that was located in the headquarters of the IG on *Langestraße*.⁵⁴

The 1929 edition of the *Grieben's* guide to Frankfurt similarly points out a number of Jewish sights and spaces in the city. In fact, Jewish sights are prominently included in the book's first suggested tour route through downtown Frankfurt: "The Old City between the *Zeil* and the *Main*." After pointing out the *Hauptsynagoge* on the *Börnestraße*, the guide suggests that

including Franz Rosenzweig, Martin Buber, Rabbi Nehemiah Nobel, Siegfried Kracauer, Leo Löwenthal, Bertha Pappenheim, and the Hebrew-Language author S.Y. Agnon. For more information on the *Lehrhaus*, see the following: Nahum N. Glatzer, "The Frankfurt Lehrhaus," *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book* 1 (1956): 105-122; Brenner, *Renaissance*, 69-99; Barkai and Mendes-Flohr, *Modern Times*, 137-143.

⁵³ Rudy Koshar has argued that the "Interwar era was a golden age for German city guidebooks," especially cheaper ones published by companies like *Grieben*. Koshar, "What Ought to be Seen," 334-335.

⁵⁴ Rektor Schmitt, *Griebens Reiseführer Band 31. Frankfurt a.M. und Umgebung. 32 Auflage* (Berlin: Albert Goldschmidt, 1920), 9-10, 65, 52, 16. More information on Café Goldschmidt can be found in Arnsberg, *Bilder*, 175-180.

readers should also visit the adjacent old Jewish cemetery because of the historical significance of its “grave memorials dating back to the thirteenth century, including those of brilliant Jewish scholars.” The guide then instructs its readers to continue further along *Börnestraße* to until they reach the Rothschild house, which is described as a window onto the world of the Frankfurt ghetto from whence this and other famous banking families such as the Schiffs came. A second walking tour of the “The Old City between the *Zeil* and the *Anlagen*; Sachsenhausen,” includes stops at the aforementioned memorial to Heine, which is praised in the same language addressing it in the 1920 edition, and also encourages tourists to visit the IG’s Museum of Jewish Antiquity.⁵⁵ The same museum and the IG’s library as well as their opening hours also appear in another section dedicated to “Museum Attractions” in Frankfurt.⁵⁶ In short, then, both the 1920 and 1929 guide present these Jewish spaces as central components that define the center of the city and reflect Frankfurt’s historical development.

A year later, the city of Frankfurt still highlighted the importance of the local Jewish population for the development of the city in a bilingual official guidebook for German and English-speaking visitors to the city. Reflecting on Frankfurt’s economic history, the guidebook took a similar line to other works from the interwar period that had painted a positive, even philosemitic picture of the connection between Jews and money. In an essay on connections between finance in Frankfurt and New York City, the city economic official R.A. Lingnau informs readers that Frankfurt had provided fertile soil for the development of the Rothschild banking dynasty and also describes how Jewish bankers including Charles Hallgarten, Jacob Schiff, and Henry Budge managed to cultivate important transnational banking ties beginning in

⁵⁵ Ibid., 63, 65.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 35, 37.

the nineteenth century. Referencing the current efforts to shore up Germany's economy during the turbulent era following the First World War, Lingnau stresses that the Jewish community has continued to help Frankfurt's present-day economy by informing his readers that Jewish-owned banks including Lazard-Speyer-Ellison and M&A Rothschild, "have also recently been the means of floating German loans in the American market, thus affording further proof of the powerful economic connections which still exist between Frankfurt on the Main and the United States."⁵⁷ Another essay by the chief legal counsel of Frankfurt's Chamber of Commerce also points out that "the development of the Frankfurt [stock] Exchange was associated in a special manner with the name of Rothschild, a family which began its career in a modest house in the *Judengasse*."⁵⁸

Returning to Hans Reimann's aforementioned travel guide of Frankfurt also shows that humor writing of this era could reinforce the notion that Frankfurt had been positively defined by its longstanding Jewishness. Like so many other authors in this chapter, Reimann begins his discussion of Frankfurt's Jewish community with a reference to the old Jewish cemetery, albeit in his own, idiosyncratic way:

Even antisemites are allowed to take a look at the old Jewish cemetery, except on the *Shabbes* and holidays... There are approximately forty thousand graves made out of red sandstone from the Neckar [River]. Ones with emblems, ones with guild markings. Here rests Haas, Weintraub, Gans, Cohn, Apfel – three or four on top of another due to the lack of space. The oldest graves are six hundred years old. Birds chirp in the elder trees. Nowhere does the grass thrive so succulently as in this worn out location. Little stones sit on top of Bär and Hirsch – ersatz-calling cards.⁵⁹

⁵⁷ August Robert Lingnau, "Frankfurt on the Main and New York City," in *Frankfurt am Main. Die Goethestadt/The City of Goethe*, ed. Werner-Rades Laase, Kreis Köslin, 69-72 (Stettin: F. Hessenland, 1930), 69-70.

⁵⁸ Rumpel, "Frankfurt as an Industrial Centre," in *Frankfurt am Main. Die Goethestadt/The City of Goethe*, ed. Werner-Rades Laase, Kreis Köslin, 79-80 (Stettin: F. Hessenland, 1930).

⁵⁹ Reimann, *Baedeker*, 35-36.

Despite his clearly irreverent tone, this excerpt from Reimann’s work also reaffirms the cemetery’s cultural and aesthetic contribution to Frankfurt and begins to provide readers with small doses of historical and cultural knowledge that can demystify a number of elements of Judaism, including, but not limited to Jewish burial practices. Reimann continues to inform readers about other Jewish traditions in a cheeky paragraph describing how Jews in the area would build small huts outside of their buildings during the harvest holiday of *Sukkot*. After reflecting on the warm atmosphere inside of individual Sukkahs, Reimann once again pokes fun at the absurdity of anti-Jewish attitudes by declaring that even “First-class antisemites happily admit that [the Jewish high holiday] of Rosh Hashanah is accompanied by welcome sunshine.”⁶⁰ Reimann also echoes many of his contemporaries in his complimentary descriptions of several of the Jewish community’s Synagogues. Reimann writes:

Their Orthodox Synagogue stands on the *Friedberger Anlage*. The problem of directing their altar towards the east and thus having a representative façade that does not clash with the alignment of other buildings has been ingeniously solved. To the left is the entrance for *Tauweln*.⁶¹ I imagined that the inside is somewhat ramshackle, but the actual room for *Tauweln* – oy vey! *Jugendstil*, Secession, ornamentally ornamental light fixtures! The Synagogue on *Freiherr-von Stein-Straße*: like a decoration from [the opera] “Aida” with wonderful lion-clad fountains. The whole building is compact, but masterful. Beautiful antique Onion-shaped Towers on top of the *Hauptsynagoge*.⁶²

From there, Reimann further jokes that “The Museum of Jewish Antiquity has a few interesting pieces of curiosa for Christians,” such as the writing desks and portraits of members of the Rothschild banking dynasty, circumcision instruments, ornaments for torah scrolls, prayer shawls, and spice boxes. While the inclusion of the circumcision tools suggests that the museum

⁶⁰ Ibid., 36.

⁶¹ This is Reimann’s Germanized take on the Yiddish word for prayer.

⁶² Ibid., 37.

provides a further window onto certain Jewish peculiarities, Reimann nonetheless is advocating for a better understanding of Jewish culture by including the museum in his book.⁶³

Later sections of Reimann's guidebook also address the prominent role that a number of Jewish individuals played in defining cultural and political life in the city during the Weimar era. Over the course of approximately twenty-five pages, Reimann provides several brief introductions to Jewish politicians and celebrities in Frankfurt. A number of these come from the world of the local arts scene. Reimann calls the Jewish actress Mathilde Einzig a pillar of the municipal theater house who "passionately mimics wench from the hoi polloi, but her true character is aristocratic," and provides readers with a flattering caricature depicting Einzig at a table in one of Frankfurt's traditional apple wine taverns.⁶⁴ Benno Elkan, the sculptor of the city's Memorial to the fallen soldiers of the First World War, is featured in an image with a caption calling him "Frankfurt's Michelangelo," and is also said to be, "the most amusing and clever head in Frankfurt – mean, but kind...luminous on the outside, loyal inside and reliable like an artisan."⁶⁵ At certain points, Reimann strikes a surprisingly earnest in some of his brief blurbs. He references the famous music collection of the noted bibliophile Paul Hirsch and praises the multifaceted Ernst Kahn – who was an economics reporter for the *Frankfurter Zeitung* before later becoming a co-owner of the firm Speyer-Ellissen, a social-democratic magistrate, a committed Zionist, and a lecturer at the Goethe University – for being "equally serious in everything that he has entered out of equally serious idealism."⁶⁶ Reimann also has wry, albeit favorable words for the Mayor Ludwig Landmann, who he describes as the

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 141-142.

⁶⁵ Klaus Becker, *Stadtkultur und Gesellschaftspolitik. Frankfurt am Main und Lyon in der Zwischenkriegszeit 1918-1939* (Frankfurt: Waldemar Kramer, 2005), 115-116; Reimann, *Baedeker*, 142-143.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 148-149.

“hermetically sealed, musically-interested, generous, frugal, and clever king of Frankfurt. Because, the mayors are the true kings of Germany.”⁶⁷ Additional entries include ones for the Director of the *Neues Theater* Arthur Hellmer, the influential critic Siegfried Kracauer, the Director of the Municipal Theater Alwin Kronacher, the gold-medal-winning fencer Helene Mayer, the painter Jakob Nußbaum, the conservative politician Richard Merton, the composer Bernhard Ekles, the opera singer Magda Spiegel, as well as the industrialists-cum-philanthropists Carl and Arthur von Weinberg.⁶⁸

Thus, before 1933, positive portrayals of the past and present of Frankfurt’s Jewish community were a regular feature in local literature about the city. Historical overviews of the city by writers such as Friedrich Bothe and Fried Lübbecke employed philosemitic narratives of the past which contrasted the barbarity of antisemitic violence during the medieval era the important contributions that Jews had made to the city since they were first allowed to leave the *Judengasse* at the start of the nineteenth century. The inclusion of images of Jewish landmarks such as local synagogues and the Rothschild house in photo inserts of Frankfurt’s cityscape further demonstrated the way in which Jewishness was directly woven into the fabric of the city. It is important to note that the city government played an active role in shaping this discourse which positively defined Frankfurt as a Jewish space. In one sense, this was very much in line with other forms of political work that promoted tolerance and confessional peace amongst the city’s different religious groups. Additionally, promotional and branding materials commissioned by the City Magistrate for outside audiences consistently spotlighted the historical legacy and present importance of the Jewish community.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 151.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 147, 150, 151, 152-154, 158, 160, 163.

The Dwindling Presence of Jews in Works of Local Literature, 1933-1939

In many ways, it is not surprising that the radical change of Frankfurt's government following the March elections and the Nazis' seizure of power on a municipal and national level during the spring of 1933 led to a radical shift in the tenor of local literature and historical activities in Frankfurt. During the following months, a number of groups and individuals that had played an active role in writing materials that depicted the city as a Jewish space began to align themselves with the political and ideological aims of the Nazi's new regime. However, it would take some time for the antisemitism of the new regime to completely replace or alter the tone of older historical narratives about the important role of Jews in Frankfurt's history.

The minutes of a meeting of the members of the board and administrative committee of the city's Association for History and Antiquity in the reading room of the City Archive on 9 August 1933 perfectly demonstrates this swift and conscious incorporation of a number of local historical and cultural enterprises into the Nazi Party's "National Revolution." Those present in the room included the historian Friedrich Bothe, City Archivist Otto Ruppertsberg, and Otto Liermann, who had all previously written works with exceptionally positive portrayals of Frankfurt's Jewish past and present. Speaking in his capacity as Chairman of the Association, Liermann began the meeting by pointing out that a number of other associations including the Senckenberg Society, the Association of the Historical Museum, and the Union for Adult Education had already declared their allegiance to the Nazi government. He then argued that their own Historical Association could potentially face the prospect of forced liquidation unless it did the same and increased its cooperation with party-sanctioned organizations such as the Militant League for German Culture. Ruppertsberg echoed Liermann's sentiment by stating that:

The national upheaval requires every single German and every organization to unconditionally swear their allegiance and fully pledge their service to the national state

within the structures of political, economic, and cultural life. Our association will be in danger if it does not manage to quickly find a form that allows it to achieve the efforts that are now expected of it.

Ruppersberg went on to recommend that the organization move to act in a fashion that mirrored what had happened in voluntary associations throughout Frankfurt and Germany over the course of the first half of 1933: the current bylaws of the association would no longer be valid and they would appoint Liermann to serve as a “*Führer*” who would be responsible for carrying out almost all of the major decisions the Association would face. While this would have significantly enhanced Liermann’s power, he closed out the meeting by saying that his first move would be to talk about a potential creation of a working group or fusion with the Nazi’s “National Cultural Union Alt-Frankfurt.”⁶⁹

The action of the board of the Association for History and Antiquity is a familiar tale of the coercion, consent, and compromises that determined the actions of so many German organizations and elites during course of 1933.⁷⁰ Nevertheless, it took several years before Nazi ideology fully permeated the texts of local literature about the city. In fact, despite a number of local authors’ decisions to construct their texts in a manner that unambiguously demonstrated their positive reception and internalization of Nazi ideology, many of their finished products during continued to reflect, in some cases ambivalently, the ways in which Frankfurt had long been depicted as a Jewish space.

Hans Drüner’s 1934 book *In the Shadow of the World War: Ten Years of Frankfurt History from 1914-1924* is an outstanding example of the cognitive dissonance found within so many pieces of local literature during these early years of Nazi rule in Frankfurt. Like Friedrich

⁶⁹ IFS V65/38 Gesellschaft für Frankfurter Geschichte.

⁷⁰ An essential commentary on consenting and threatened elites can be found in Friedländer, *Years of Persecution*, 41-72.

Bothe, Drüner was intimately familiar with both Jewish history and had long been in contact with members of Frankfurt's Jewish community. Before arriving in Frankfurt, he had received a doctorate from the University of Marburg for a dissertation on Flavius Josephus, who is widely considered to be one of the first historians of the Jews to write from a post-biblical perspective.⁷¹ After finishing his degree in 1898, Drüner moved to Frankfurt and spent over thirty years working as a history and religion teacher at the *Goethe-Gymnasium*, a humanist high school in the neighborhood of *Westend* which, like Otto Liermann's *Wöhlerschule*, had long had a large number of Jewish youths in its student body.⁷² Although, the city had initially commissioned Drüner to write the book in the immediate aftermath of the First World War, its publication was continually delayed due to Drüner's continued employment as a teacher and a series of health problems that he experienced over the course of the next decade.⁷³

The final version of Drüner's work that went to print is bizarrely dissonant because it manages to both echo and contradict the Nazi Party's line on the negative impact of Jews on modern German history from a local perspective. It is hard to know if Drüner had become a Nazi or had merely decided to parrot their ideas to ensure the publication of the book. In either case, the number of positive and negative references to impact of the Jewish community and certain Jewish individuals on the city suggests that the earlier, positive portrayal of Frankfurt as a Jewish space was hard to expunge during the first years of Nazi rule.

⁷¹ Hans Drüner, *Untersuchungen über Josephus* (Marburg: Hamel, 1896); Michael A. Meyer, *Ideas of Jewish History* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1988), 10-11; Yerushalmi, *Zakhor*, 16.

⁷² IFS Personengeschichte S2/4.478 Hans Drüner. By the late 1920s, Jews consistently made up 36-38% of the *Goethe-Gymnasium's* student body. IFS Schulamt 7.289 Goethe-Gymnasium Jahresberichte 1920-1936.

⁷³ IFS Stadtverordnetenversammlung 1.594; IFS Magistratsakten 2.193 Bl. 5; IFS Magistratsakten 2.556 Historische Erforschung d. Vergangenheit Frankfurts.

The book opens with an introductory chapter that, among other things, highlights how Jewish individuals were at the forefront of efforts to transform Frankfurt into a well-functioning metropolis that could handle new challenges of increased urbanization and industrialization at the turn of the twentieth century. Drüner points out that although there were over two hundred voluntary associations and foundations in Frankfurt by 1890, most of them had no clear agenda and did not effectively cooperate with one another. According to Drüner, this all changed thanks to an informal triumvirate of two Jewish philanthropists and one Jewish politician: Wilhelm Merton, Charles Hallgarten, and the city Alderman Karl Flesch.⁷⁴ In regards to the latter, Drüner focuses on Flesch's leading role in the construction of over six thousand units of public and cooperative housing for approximately twenty-five thousand Frankfurters between 1900 and 1914.⁷⁵ Turning to Merton, Drüner praises the industrialist's belief that the burgeoning world of academics was fertile ground for discovering new methods of social welfare. Drüner then describes Merton's creation of the Institute for Public Welfare (*Gemeinwohl*) in 1890 as a prime example of a modern institution where, "knowledge and business, theory and praxis would mutually inform and enrich one another."⁷⁶

Despite having such kind words for Flesch and Merton, Drüner's text says nothing about the specifics of Hallgarten's engagement with the city. While it is presently impossible to know if earlier drafts of the book included more information on Hallgarten, one might speculate that this is due to the fact that unlike Flesch and Merton, Hallgarten had not converted to Christianity

⁷⁴ Hans Drüner, *Im Schatten des Weltkrieges. Zehn Jahre Frankfurter Geschichte von 1914-1924* (Frankfurt: R. Th. Hauser & Co., 1934), 38-39.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 37-38.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 39.

and was an active member of Frankfurt's Jewish community during his lifetime.⁷⁷ A few pages later, Drüner similarly effaces the specific efforts of another Jewish individual by omitting any mention of Wilhelm Epstein when discussing the proliferation of adult education in Frankfurt and the surrounding region.⁷⁸

Closing out his first chapter, Drüner begins to strike a more ambivalent tone about the role of Jewish influence in the city when he tries to assess the degree to which Frankfurt was prepared for the First World War. According to Drüner, Frankfurt had long been a city where "every stratum of the population" believed that peaceful relations with neighboring countries would benefit a local economy that often depended on foreign connections. Drüner argues that this was a kind of false consciousness brought about by the "zealous propaganda" of wealthy circles, including the representatives of "Jewish high finance, which had played a major role since the era of the House of Rothschild, and the entirety of Jewry." He also singles out Wilhelm Merton as one of the many local business leaders whose belief in "a kind of European spirit...almost appeared to be more valuable than the national culture (*Volkstum*) within which they lived." Perhaps it is unsurprising, then, that Drüner concludes his chapter by accusing the vast majority of Frankfurters of being clueless to the risk of a war.⁷⁹

Nevertheless, most Drüner's coverage of the the First World War presents a commendable image of Jewish involvement in the war effort on the home front, contradicting the Nazi Party's myth of a Jewish "stab in the back."⁸⁰ For one, he specifically mentions that a large

⁷⁷ Schembs, *Jüdische Mäzene*, 78; Heuberger and Krohn, *Aus dem Ghetto*, 99; IFS Personengeschichte S2/379 – Wilhelm Merton.

⁷⁸ Drüner, *Weltkrieg*, 42.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 48-49, 53.

⁸⁰ For more on the genesis of the "*Dolchstoßlegende*" see Rainer Sammet, "Dolchstoß." Deutschland und die Auseinandersetzung mit der Niederlage im Ersten Weltkrieg 1918-1933 (Berlin: Trafo Verlag, 2003).

donation from the Association of Jewish Nurses helped to fund the expansion of an ambulance train that a number of donors sent to the Western Front.⁸¹ On a small level, Drüner also partially reverses his attitudes towards the ranks of Jewish industrialists and businessmen whose prewar behavior he had criticized earlier in the book. In the course of describing efforts to maintain international business ties during the war, Drüner informs his readers that the philanthropist Leo Gans served as the chairmen of an association in Frankfurt that tried to promote economic ties between Germany and Spain, thus counter-acting anti-German propaganda that further hurt the nation's economy since the start of the war.⁸² Likewise, Drüner has laudatory words for Jenny Apolant, a Jewish feminist who had played an active role in city and national politics. When describing how the war affected the legal and political status of women, Drüner points out that Apolant commissioned a ground-breaking survey that showed the unprecedented increase in the number of women working in government positions.⁸³

Still, Drüner returns to his earlier antisemitic tone when discussing the negative ways in which Jews influenced the arts and political order in Frankfurt during the final years of the war and the first years of the Weimar republic. He tells readers that the city's municipal theater and opera company were on the cutting edge of developments related to expressionism –which, borrowing word from the Nazis, he describes as “degenerate” – when they were under the direction of Karl Zeiß, “who chose for his adviser the young, revolutionary minded Jew Georg Plotke.”⁸⁴ Turning to Frankfurt's relatively calm experience during the German Revolution of 1918-1919, Drüner points to the short tenure of the Jewish police officer Leopold Harris as the

⁸¹ Ibid., 91.

⁸² Ibid., 152-153.

⁸³ Ibid., 272.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 317-318.

height of the incompetence and malfeasance of the Workers' Council that briefly held sway over the government of the city. According to Drüner, the majority of the city's population believed that "the Jewish police chief Harris...in no way possessed the ability for a proper administration." He goes on to denigrate Harris's reputation by belittling him as little more than a former salesman of rubber goods and falsely claim that Harris used his position as the chief of police to further his "widespread black-market activities."⁸⁵

Drüner similarly depicts Jews as a "degenerate" force when writing about the University of Frankfurt during the early years of the Weimar Republic. Despite celebrating a more than six-fold increase of the university's student body and the creation of new research institutes such as one designed to study the history and culture of the lost province of Alsace-Lorraine, Drüner claims that the intellectual spirit of the university had become relatively stagnant at the start of the 1920s and lacked a truly German spirit. He proceeds to argue that the source of this stagnation was the presence and influence of a "Jewish intellectualism that especially asserted itself...in the fraction of younger faculty members." This "underbelly" of the university supposedly manifested itself in an overly technical and rational approach to higher education.⁸⁶

That being said, Drüner demonstrates his own cognitive dissonance regarding the influence of Jewish life on the culture of the city when he goes on to praise religious and other developments within Frankfurt's Jewish community a scant five pages after his remarks about the negative impact of "Jewish spirituality" at the Goethe University. Drüner connects the IG's creation in 1920 of the *Freies Jüdisches Lehrhaus*, which he positively describes as "a sight of intense research on the Old Testament," with broader efforts of religious groups in Frankfurt to

⁸⁵ Ibid., 385.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 431-432.

adapt to the modern challenges, especially a growing indifference to traditional religious customs and morals. Moreover, he favorably compares the consolidation of Jewish social welfare efforts into one central organization with the concurrent evolution and centralization of charitable organizations connected to the Lutheran Church.⁸⁷

Moving into the chaotic early years of the Weimar Republic, Drüner continues to strike a positive tone about the work of several Jewish politicians. Having earlier demonstrated his positive view of policies that had looked to build more housing during the years before the war, Drüner openly praises Ludwig Landmann's integral role in 1917 in drafting plans to create a municipal housing bureau within the bureaucratic structure of the city magistrate that would work to stop Frankfurt's rapidly increasing housing shortage.⁸⁸ Moving forward to the end of the brief French occupation of Frankfurt in 1920, he mentions that the Jewish City Council member Rudolf Lion was one of six local government officials who voluntarily presented themselves to the French military authorities on May 17th "as hostages that would ensure the good behavior of the city population until...the exit of [French] troops from the city had been completed without incident."⁸⁹ Striking an optimistic tone, Drüner goes on to depict the City Council's decision to elect Landmann mayor in 1924 as a moment when, "A new attempt at reconstruction could now – at least one hoped – be more successful than it would have been in 1910 or 1920."⁹⁰

In short, Drüner's book takes an ambivalent approach to explaining the impact Jews had on Frankfurt in an era of war, revolution, and frequent disorder. Although the official antisemitism of the Nazi government can easily be seen in Drüner's negative depiction of Jewish

⁸⁷ Ibid., 437-438.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 303.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 410.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 465.

influence on areas such as artistic and intellectual life in Frankfurt, it is often contradicted by complimentary portrayals of Jewish individuals that took part in long-standing efforts to help the city to adapt to the challenges facing many modern metropolises during the first quarter of the twentieth century. However, it must be stressed that Drüner only draws explicit attention to the Jewishness of individuals when he is trying to make a broader point about negative Jewish influence in the city. Thus, while an uninformed reader in the mid-1930s might not have realized that Drüner positively portrayed Jewish figures such as Charles Hallgarten and Jenny Apolant, they would have scarcely doubted that Drüner was exaggerating the negative or villainous behavior of “the Jew Georg Plotke” and “the Jewish police chief Harris.” At the same time, though, Drüner also presents a uniformly positive image of organized Jewish life in Frankfurt by highlighting the good work of charitable and religious institutions associated with the IG. In fact, it appears that Drüner normalizes the actions of the Jewish community by comparing them to similar moves made by the Protestant and Catholic Church during the same period. Ultimately, then, the cognitive dissonance within Drüner’s book indicates a small degree of continuity of pre-1933 narratives which depicted the local Jewish community as a positive influence on the development of the city.

Although the period from 1935 until 1938 generally saw the gradual effacement of Jews and Jewishness from works on Frankfurt, several tourist guidebooks from this period continued to highlight the city’s near, but often not too distant Jewish past. For example, both Ludwig Börne and Paul Ehrlich were included on the list of notable Frankfurters in an English language guide to the city by Richard Enders that was published in 1937. Moreover, they were mentioned in the same paragraph as other local and German luminaries including Goethe, the poet Clemens

Brentano, and the philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer.⁹¹ Enders also celebrated the city's history of interconfessional cooperation between Protestants, Catholics, and Jews in a brief sketch of the history of Frankfurt. He even seems to voice sympathy for the plight of Frankfurt's Jews when he mentions that, "the Jews were allowed to have their own laws and rites, although they had been forced in the previous century to live in a ghetto and were forbidden to practice any handicraft or engage in any form of trade but money changing and lending."⁹² Additionally, although no Jewish sights are included in a list of major attractions in the center of the city, Enders still informs his readers that one of his walks will afford them with the IRG's synagogue on the *Friedberger Anlage*.⁹³

During the same period, publications produced by the local city government for tourists and local Frankfurters continued to include a few positive references to Frankfurt's Jewishness. A volume from 1936 on municipal cultural institutions contained an essay on the city's main archive by Otto Ruppertsberg that mentioned the archive's wealth of sources on the history of the local Jewish population. In the same entry, Ruppertsberg strikes a complimentary tone when he talks about the "the Jews' unrelenting efforts for equal rights, which they first achieved in 1853."⁹⁴ The very fact that Ruppertsberg wrote this is all the more amazing, as 1936 was also the same year in which he had officially become a member of the Nazi Party.⁹⁵

⁹¹ Richard Enders, *Frankfort-on-Main. A Short Guide for English-Speaking Visitors* (Frankfurt: Hauserpresse, 1937), 4.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 7.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 18, 33.

⁹⁴ Otto Ruppertsberg, "Das Frankfurter Stadtarchiv," in *Führer durch die kulturellen Einrichtungen der Stadt Frankfurt am Main*, ed. Richard Oehler, 57-62 (Frankfurt: Diesterweg, 1936), 61.

⁹⁵ IFS S1-40 Ruppertsberg, Otto: Nachlass.

The same volume also proudly mentioned that the municipal libraries special collection of Hebraica and Judaica is, “the largest special library of its kind on the European continent for research on Jews that was created from foundations of larger libraries and planned expansion. It also contains numerous handwritten and early printed works in Hebrew.”⁹⁶ Although this is a seemingly neutral portrayal of this special collection, it should be noted that the meaning of its inclusion might be slightly ambivalent because the same volume also contained an enthusiastic two-page section on a recently founded Institute for Hereditary Biology and Racial Hygiene at the Goethe University.⁹⁷ The volume also eschews any mention of the Rothschild family when it talks about the bucolic splendor of the city’s *Grüneburgpark*, which had been built on land bought by Anselm Mayer von Rothschild in 1837 and which, despite having long been open to the public, had only become a piece of municipal property in 1935.⁹⁸

A guide to the city released just one year later in 1937 by Frankfurt’s Bureau for Transportation and Economics shows the degree to which the effacement of Frankfurt’s Jewishness had continued apace in local guidebooks. Once again, there is no mention of Jewish sights or spaces in sections on “the most important landmarks” and “Museums and Artistic Places.” There is also no mention of the aforementioned Judaica collection at the municipal library. Jews also appear only twice in a brief chronology of Frankfurt’s history, which

⁹⁶ *Führer durch die kulturellen Einrichtungen der Stadt Frankfurt am Main*, ed. Richard Oehler, 57-62 (Frankfurt: Diesterweg, 1936), 128. Publications about the city from before and after 1933 frequently referenced the outstanding nature of the collection. Max Dreitz, “Frankfurter Geistesleben der Gegenwart (Wissenschaft, Theater und Musik),” in *Frankfurt. Das Buch der Stadt*, ed. Otto Ruppertsberg, 236-247 (Frankfurt: A. Schulze & Co., 1927) 238-239; Hans Hajek, *Praktischer Führer durch die Frankfurter Bibliotheken* (Frankfurt: Peter Naacher, 1933), 31. The latter contained a section on the IG’s library on *Börnstraße*, whose special collections included the personal papers of the German-Jewish philosopher Hermann Cohen. *Ibid.*, 48-49. More information on the state of the catalog before 1933 can be found in *Stadtbibliothek Frankfurt am Main Katalog der Judaica und Hebraica: Erster Band Judaica* (Frankfurt: M. Lehrberger & Co., 1932).

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 102-104.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 111; Blecken, “Historische Parks,” 99.

misleadingly refers to the creation of the creation of the *Judengasse* in 1462 as a “relegation of the Jews into the ‘*Judengasse*’ outside of the city,” as well at the expulsion of the Jews during the Fettmilch Uprising. Curiously enough, though, the Jewish philanthropist Charles Hallgarten’s name briefly appears in the book when a suggested itinerary of the city recommends taking in view of the Dutch-style buildings in the “Hallgarten Settlement” on *Hartmann-Ibach-Straße*, which had been named *Hallgartenstraße* from 1908 until 1935.⁹⁹

One of the more egregious examples of antisemitism in local literature following the implementation of the Nuremberg Laws in 1935 came from a surprising source: Friedrich Bothe, the author of the history of Frankfurt examined earlier in this chapter. In 1937, Bothe and his son, Hans, published a tour guide for historical points of interest in the older part of the city entitled *With Goethe Through Frankfurt am Main*.

Although it is hard to initially comprehend Bothe’s radical break from the tolerant and even philosemitic tone of the numerous editions of his history of Frankfurt published before 1933, his embrace of the Nazis’ views on Jews can partially be explained as an effort to continue to publish works on the history of the city. Despite dedicating years of his life to researching and writing a massive history of the Fettmilch Uprising, Bothe was unable to secure additional funding to print it from Frankfurt’s cash-strapped government during the final years of the Weimar Republic. One can only imagine Bothe’s extreme disappointment when the members of the city’s Historical Commission informed him in 1931 that their limited funds would only allow them to store his manuscript in the main city archive, rather than publishing it outright.¹⁰⁰ Shortly

⁹⁹ *Wegweiser durch Frankfurt am Main*, ed. Verkehrs- und Wirtschaftsamt der Stadt Frankfurt a.M. (Frankfurt: Bröner, 1937), 16-25, 76-77, 27, 51; Hessisches Hauptstaatsarchiv Wiesbaden (HHStA) 407,617 Straßenbenennung und Nummerierung der Häuser Bl. 203-205; IFS Grünflächenamt 326 betr. Strassenbenennungen 1933-1936.

¹⁰⁰ IFS Stadtverordnetenversammlung 1.594 – Geschichtliche Werke [1894 Jan. 20 – 1931 Febr. 21]. Friedrichs’s article on how historians have depicted the Fettmilch Uprising says that Bothe’s larger writings on the Fettmilch Uprising can be found in the following collections: IFS S6b/19, Nr. 3, 4 Friedrich Bothe, “Der Fettmilchaufstand.”;

after the Nazis came to power, Bothe decided to see if the new city government would be willing to provide him with the necessary funds for publishing the book. Although Bothe's request reached the desk of the city's new mayor, Friedrich Krebs, the city's Office for Science, Art, and Public Education claimed the printing costs would exceed 10,000 Marks and that the city currently had plans to publish only four other historical works, including Hans Drüner's *In the Shadow of the World War*. Thus, on 10 May 1933, Bothe discovered that his efforts had so far had been in vain.¹⁰¹ However, it appears that Bothe had not given up hope and may have proceeded to change elements of his existing manuscript on the Uprising. According to Christopher R. Friedrichs, the surviving manuscript of Bothe's history of the Fettmilch Uprising may have been written during the Nazi era and includes a number of "anti-Semitic remarks quite out of keeping with his earlier writings."¹⁰²

In the middle of 1935, Bothe once again approached the city government with the hope that they would be willing to publish his more modestly sized travel guide of sights in Frankfurt related to the life and times of Goethe. A letter from the city's Office of Economics and Transportation reveals that Bothe pitched the book, "as his last large work on the history of the city of Frankfurt." At first, his handwritten manuscript ping-ponged between different offices within the city bureaucracy and was slated for publication. However, its chances of publication began to dim after a copy landed on the desk of an employee at the press and promotional division of the city's main administrative office who had previously encountered Bothe and the

IFS S6b/19: Nr. 1, 2, 5 "Vorgeschichte des Fettmilchaufstandes"; IFS S6b/59 "Der Frankfurter Fettmilchaufstand (1612-1616) im Rahmen der deutschen Politik."

¹⁰¹ IFS Magistratsakten 2.556 Historische Erforschung d. Vergangenheit Frankfurts. 1. Historische Kommission.

¹⁰² The following excerpt clearly demonstrates the dramatic shift in Bothe's worldview: "Before the Thirty Year's War in Frankfurt, it had come to the point that the only question was how long the embittered citizenry... would tolerate the exploitative activities of the Jews... The Frankfurters hoped that the Kaiser would provide aid for their misery and did not consider that he himself was in the hands of the Jews." Friedrichs, "Politics or Pogrom," 216.

manuscript while working at the Englert & Schlosser publishing house. On 19 February 1936, the unnamed employee wrote a letter to Mayor Krebs that contained a scathing critique of Bothe's personality and ability as a historian. For one, he claimed that contrary to his correspondence with city officials, Bothe had already tried and failed to sell the book to two local publishers as early as 1934. He also said that this new work came on the tails of several failed efforts by Bothe to print works of local history because most publishers did not enjoy the style or scope of his research. Furthermore, the bureaucrat added, Bothe had a sketchy reputation amongst other historians because he had rarely provided satisfactory footnotes or lists of his sources. On a more practical note, they also argued that the book was too dense for non-Frankfurters to understand and that tourists were unlikely to pay a sum as large as two *Reichsmark* for such a travel guide. Unsurprisingly, this polemic ruined any chance that the city would publish the guidebook. Barely a day after receiving it, Mayor Krebs wrote to Bothe that the city would no longer be able to pay for its publication.¹⁰³

Nevertheless, Bothe quickly managed to get a publishing deal with another publishing house, thus bringing us back to its publication date in the spring of 1937. The publishers, Waldemar Kramer, advertised the book as a “Baedeker for sophisticated individuals,” both from Frankfurt and other parts of Germany.¹⁰⁴ In the introduction to the book, Bothe echoed the argument that his guide would be serviceable for locals and visitors and that that the inspiration for it came from a series of walking tours that he and his son had led through older parts of the city. In the introduction, he stated that the book was intended for locals as well as visitors and quickly showed his full alignment with the Nazi regime by stating his belief that, “History and

¹⁰³ IFS Magistratsakten 2.556 Historische Erforschung d. Vergangenheit Frankfurts.

¹⁰⁴ IFS Personengeschichte S2/317 Friedrich Bothe.

above all...local history should strengthen the self-assurance of our people, it should purify, it should educate people into upright, loyal German men and women.”¹⁰⁵

Whereas his earlier history of the city demonstrated a profound empathy for the plight of the Jews during the medieval and early modern eras and celebrated Jewish emancipation as an important part of the Frankfurt’s development into a Liberal metropolis, the section of Bothe’s guidebook devoted to the *Judengasse* presents a jarringly negative, antisemitic narrative of Jewish presence in Frankfurt. For one, he writes that Frankfurt’s decision not to follow the lead of other German cities that expelled their Jews during the late medieval era led to a twenty-fold increase in the city’s Jewish population. With a note of disgust he relates that the city had at least 750 Jewish residents at the start of the seventeenth century, “while the entire Christian population – Lutheran, Reform, and Catholic – only had 20,000 souls.”¹⁰⁶ The guidebook also has repeated references to the unhygienic conditions of the *Judengasse*, a topic he had also discussed in his earlier history of the city. The key difference, however, is Bothe’s newer work no longer paired these references with comments about Jewish resilience in the face of adversity. Thus, while his history of the city had referenced Goethe’s positive words for the inhabitants of the Ghetto, Bothe’s guidebook cited a quote from Goethe’s autobiography in which the young writer describes his disgust and alienation upon catching glimpses of the Ghetto through the outer gates of the *Judengasse*.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁵ Friedrich Bothe and Hans Bothe, *Mit Goethe durch Frankfurt am Main* (Frankfurt: Waldemar Kramer, 1937), 7-10.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 247.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 248. Bothe referenced the following quote from Goethe’s autobiography *Aus meinem Leben: Dichtung und Wahrheit*: “The narrowness, the filth, the bustle, the accent of an unpleasant language - all this together made the most uncomfortable impression when one transiently saw through the gate.” More on Goethe’s relationship with Jews and Judaism can be found in “*Außerdem waren sie ja auch Menschen.*” *Goethes Begegnung mit Juden und Judentum*, ed. Annette Weber (Berlin: Philo, 2000).

Furthermore, he casts the broader history of the *Judengasse* as a lost opportunity to prevent Jewish economic chicanery and domination. Referencing the fire on the *Judengasse* in 1711, Bothe writes that, “The Frankfurt Ghetto was still the El Dorado of German Jewry because despite the restrictions that were established to protect the citizenry from the pernicious competition...and all kinds of their beloved ‘practices,’ its inhabitants took over increasingly larger areas of the economy.”¹⁰⁸ Bothe also singles out the Rothschild banking dynasty, which began in a house on the *Judengasse* as an example of the negative economic that Jews have played in European history. In sharp contrast to the way in which his history pointed out the Rothschild House on *Börnestraße* as a noble specimen of the architectural style of the former *Judengasse*, Bothe’s guidebook directs passers-by to remember that Meyer Amschel Rothschild grew rich, “through clever exploitation of the circumstances,” during the French Revolution and Napoleonic Wars, opining that “Wars, of course, have always produced benefits for the Jews.”¹⁰⁹

Finally, the guidebook presents a dramatically different interpretation of the Fettmilch Uprising and its significance for the history of the city. The Uprising is described not only as a revolt against the power of city patricians, but also as a valiant effort to rid the city of Jews, “whose usury and competition had awoken the rancor of the citizenry.”¹¹⁰ Bothe also provides a drastically dissimilar depiction of Vinzenz Fettmilch. Unlike his earlier work that speculated that Fettmilch’s actions might have been selfishly motivated, the Fettmilch in the pages of Bothe’s guidebook is an unalloyed hero. In contrast to his earlier work, Bothe also portrays Fettmilch as an antisemite by omitting the fact that Fettmilch personally intervened to stop the plunder of the

¹⁰⁸ Bothe and Bothe, *Mit Goethe*, 248.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 195, 252.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 43.

Judengasse before expelling Jews from the city.¹¹¹ Bothe goes on to lament the return of Jews to the city under the protection of the Holy Roman Emperor, claiming it allowed the Jews to slowly redevelop their control over the entire economy of the city. Soon thereafter, Bothe ends his section on the uprising by arguing that the idea to emancipate Frankfurt's Jews was a French export during the Napoleonic era and that the end of this experiment in Jewish emancipation was a key part of Frankfurt's efforts to restore order after it reclaimed its prior status as a Free City. Finally, Bothe says correctly, but with malice, that the rise of Liberalism led to the ultimate emancipation of the Jews in 1864.¹¹²

Strangely enough, Bothe's older book that had a diametrically opposed view of the history of Jewish life in Frankfurt remained in circulation during the Nazi era. In July 1937, Rudolf Keller, the director of the city's school system, sent out a letter asking a number of school directors if they knew of any teachers that would be interested in buying discounted copies of Bothe's *magnum opus*. Although Keller mentioned that the work had been shortened to conveniently exclude the history of Frankfurt after the First World War, one can only assume that this edition must have still contained Bothe's earlier, tolerant depiction of the importance Jews for the development of the city. At the very least, four teachers and the Director of the *Viktoriaschule*, a girl's *Lyzeum* in *Westend* that had once had a large contingent of Jewish students, purchased copies of the book before the start of the 1937-1938 school year.¹¹³ The afterlife of Bothe's original history of the city persisted beyond the end of the Holocaust and the Second World War. At least two publishers reprinted copies of the original 1913 version of

¹¹¹ Bothe, *Dritte Auflage*, 168-170; Bothe and Bothe, *Mit Goethe*, 251-2.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 252.

¹¹³ IFS Viktoriaschule 20, Bl. 84, 94.

Bothe's history in 1966 and 1977 and local newspapers including the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* still referred to it as the standard work of Frankfurt's history.¹¹⁴

By 1938, however, little remained of the formerly positive portrayal of Jews that had once been a dominant feature of numerous works of *Heimatkunde* and local literature in Frankfurt. On 10 July 1938, for example, the *Frankfurter Zeitung* published a special twenty-page section on the history and culture of the city which they hoped would "bring the readers of the *Frankfurter Zeitung* closer to the image of Frankfurt" and that it would help to advertise the city to German and foreign audiences. The section did not contain a single word about the local Jewish community, omitting even the history of the *Judengasse* and the Rothschilds, suggesting that an uninformed reader of this work would have no idea that Frankfurt had long been thought of as a Jewish space. A sub-section on recommended works of local literature directed readers to Friedrich Bothe's antisemitic guidebook, rather than to his more liberal, pre-1933 works of history.¹¹⁵ Similarly, a passage in a 1939 book on the city by Fried Lübbecke no longer mentioned Jews, the *Judengasse*, or the Rothschilds in a passage that is similar to a passage in a book he had published 1932.¹¹⁶

Conclusion

Between the start of the First World War and the end of the Weimar Republic, the city of Frankfurt and several independent authors reinforced and reflected the high level of Jewish

¹¹⁴ IFS S2/317 Friedrich Bothe.

¹¹⁵ UAF Abt. 1 Nr. 85.

¹¹⁶ The 1932 passage says the following before mentioning Jews and the economy: "The Frankfurt Trade Fair was as important for Frankfurt as the flooding of the Nile was for Egypt, only that instead of mud, money was left behind on the banks of the Main." Lübbecke's 1939 book contains a slight revision: "Like the Nile that flooded Egypt twice a year, the trade fairs in Frankfurt during Easter and the Fall left a similar kind of richness and prosperity in its wake." Lübbecke, *Frankfurt*, 6-7; Fried Lübbecke, *Frankfurt am Main* (Leipzig, E.A. Seemann, 1939), 14-15.

integration in their city by publishing a number of local histories, travel guides, and promotional materials that embraced the idea that Frankfurt was a Jewish space. A broad look at the contents of these various publications reveals some common themes in the ways that local authors decided to depict the place of Jews in Frankfurt's past and present. Regarding the past, the local Jewish community was described as an important structural force in the development of Frankfurt's economy from the trade fairs of the medieval period through the industrialization of the city's economy in the late nineteenth century. Despite the fact that this particular narrative appears to echo antisemitic tropes about Jews and money, authors such as the local historian Friedrich Bothe duly noted that historical forces including but not limited to Christian anti-Judaism were responsible for the historically strong concentration of Frankfurt's Jews in the financial sector of the city's economy. Even the Rothschild banking dynasty was celebrated for transforming Frankfurt into a major European and global financial center as well as for their long-standing commitment to civic philanthropy. Moreover, Bothe and other authors presented the advent of the long road to Jewish emancipation in the nineteenth century as an important element of Frankfurt's transformation from a medieval city to a tolerant and vibrant modern metropolis.

Regarding the more contemporary history of the city since the Prussian annexation of Frankfurt in 1866, many of the works of local literature cited in this chapter also argued that Jews had continued to positively impact the development of the city. Jewish philanthropists such as Charles Hallgarten and Wilhelm Merton were often depicted as the epitome of the liberal spirit of the city because of their creation of and generous contributions to a number of institutions such as the fledgling University of Frankfurt that aimed to enrich the cultural and intellectual life of the city and welfare programs that would help aid the poor and combat the

inherent problems of daily life in a large city. Local authors also praised the aesthetic and historic values of several Jewish landmarks in the city. These included the old Jewish cemetery, which was depicted as one of the oldest surviving traces of Frankfurt's medieval history and an ocean of calm in the middle of Frankfurt's crowded historic center, as well as the Orthodox IRG's main Synagogue on the *Friedberger Anlage*, which art critics and others described as a prime example of fin-de-siècle architecture that existed in harmony with the nearby park ring that separated parts of the neighborhood *Ostend* from the center of the city.

Despite the radical changes brought on by the Nazi Party's seizure of power in early 1933, the positive portrayal of Jewish influence on Frankfurt continued to be present in a number of works of local literature during the initial years of the Third Reich. Thus, although a number of authors such as Hans Drüner openly declared their allegiance to the so-called "national revolution," their writings contained an element of cognitive dissonance whereby they managed to simultaneously support the Nazis while continuing to stress the degree to which the local Jewish population had defined Frankfurt. Over time, and especially after the passage of the Nuremberg Laws in 1935, newer works of local literature began to efface Jews and Jewishness from their descriptions of what defined Frankfurt's past and present. Nevertheless, old works such as Friedrich Bothe's history of the city that had promoted the idea that Frankfurt was a Jewish space remained in circulation and even distributed by the city government to local schools during the late 1930s.

What possibly explains the, in many ways, bizarre continuity of the positive portrayal of Jews in local literature about Frankfurt written after 1933? The clearest and simplest explanation is that so many of the authors and officials responsible for writing and commissioning works about the city during the latter days of the *Kaiserreich*, the First World War, and the Weimar

Republic continued to remain in their influential positions well after the Nazi Party had begun to take control of the city. Men such as the City Archive Director Otto Ruppertsberg and the former school Director Otto Liermann had been part and parcel of the city's earlier campaigns to use local literature and other tools at their disposal to promote a civic culture that supported the continued existence of Jewish integration and peaceful relations among the different confessional groups in Frankfurt. The fact that they continued to a large degree to be important gatekeepers for authors looking to publish works on the city helps explain why the passages praising the contributions of the local Jewish population remained in the published versions of works like Drüner's history of Frankfurt during an era of war and revolution. At the same time, it also helps to explain why someone with less power like Friedrich Bothe adopted a radically antisemitic tone out of a desire to remain relevant and hopefully continue to publish historical works on the city. Perhaps, then, it also comes as no surprise that the nearly total effacement of Jews from local literature on the city happened after someone like Ruppertsberg had retired and moved away from the city in 1938.¹¹⁷ Ultimately, it is a bitter irony that so many of the men who worked to promote Jewish integration played an integral role in its eventual demise after 1933.

¹¹⁷ IFS S-40 Ruppertsberg, Otto: Nachlass.

CHAPTER 7: SWASTIKAS ON *JAKOB SCHIFF-STRAÙE* – THE PECULIAR HISTORY OF JEWISH STREET NAMES IN FRANKFURT AM MAIN, 1872-1938

On 17 December 1933 the *Frankfurter Volksblatt*, a Nazi newspaper, received an angry letter from Gertrud Bengen, a member of the Nazi Party who lived in Eschersheim, a quiet northern district of Frankfurt am Main. In the letter, Bengen asked the editorial staff of the *Volksblatt* if they would be able to use their influence to convince the city government to change the name of her street, “which is named after the Jew Jakob Schiff. Right now, the residents of our street are almost entirely national-socialist minded people and...the Swastika waves outside of every house. This ‘Jakob Schiff’ always causes a sting in the heart. [If not to you] where else can someone direct this request...we would all be very grateful for a revision.”¹

The *Volksblatt* quickly forwarded Bengen’s plea to city officials. It soon came to the attention of Friedrich Krebs, Frankfurt’s Nazi mayor, who eventually called for a campaign to “aryanize” the name of *Jakob Schiff-StraÙe* as well as all of the other streets in Frankfurt that had been named after Jews.² However, despite the city’s best efforts to quickly resolve this matter, the city struggled to complete this campaign and Jewish street names continued to be regular presence in Frankfurt until the fall of 1938.

¹ *Dokumente*, 163. The printed version of the letter in this volume bears no signature, but a hard copy of the original letter in a file at the *Institut für Stadtgeschichte* reveals that Bengen was its author. IFS Stadtvermessungsamt 428 Umbenennung der nach Nichtariern und Parlamentariern des alten Systems benannten Straßen Bl. 56.

² Historians have used the term “Aryanization” as a short hand for the expropriation of Jewish businesses and, more generally, the exclusion of Jews from the economy in Nazi Germany. I am using this term to reflect the fact that the vast majority of Jewish street names in Frankfurt were replaced with the names of so-called “Aryans.” For more on the etymology of the term and its historiography see: Frank Bajohr, *“Aryanisation” in Hamburg: The Economic Exclusion of Jews and the Confiscation of their Property in Nazi Germany* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2002), 1-11.

In theory, little stood in the way of the city's efforts to change or eliminate Jewish street names; the municipal government's Committee on Street Names simply had to convince the city's Chief of Police to sign off on their recommendations for new street names.³ Given the fact that the Nazis had effectively rolled back high levels of Jewish integration in political, economic, cultural, and everyday life in Frankfurt and other parts of Germany by the end of 1933, how was it possible that these Jewish street names continued to be integrated into the landscape and fabric of the city for so long?

A spatial study of Jewish street names in Frankfurt forces historians of the Jews to reassess both the meaning of the term integration as well as the trajectory of Jewish integration in Germany before the Holocaust. In a recent volume on space and spatiality in German-Jewish history, Simone Lässig and Miriam Rürup astutely assert that "The construction and depiction of spaces inevitably go along with negotiating and establishing real or imaginary boundaries; to create and interpret social and cultural space always means defining who is included or excluded."⁴ More specifically, scholars in the fields of onomastics and toponymy such as Maoz Azaryahu argue that in addition to helping people to organize to and navigate space, street names, which are often overlooked or taken for granted, play a major role in the construction of urban meaning, political identity, and the sense of a shared past in modern societies. Indeed, commemorative street names "celebrate and reify an authorized version of history."⁵ It stands to

³ IFS Stadtvermessungsamt 430 General-Akten betr. Straßenbenennungen Allgemeines, Unterausschuss für die Benennung von Straßen, Straßenverzeichnis

⁴ Simone Lässig and Miriam Rürup, "What made a space 'Jewish?'," 2.

⁵ Maoz Azaryahu, "The Power of Commemorative Street Names," *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 14, no. 3 (June 1996): 311, 321; *Ibid.*, "Street Names and Political Identity: The Case of East Berlin," *Journal of Contemporary History* 21, no. 4 (Oct 1986): 581; Reuben Rose-Redwood, Derek Alderman, and Maoz Azaryahu, "The Urban Streetscape as Political Cosmos," in *The Political Life of Urban Streetscapes: Naming, Politics, and Place*, ed. Reuben Rose-Redwood, Derek Alderman, and Maoz Azaryahu, 1-24 (New York: Routledge, 2018), 1; Brenda Yeoh, "Street Names in Colonial Singapore," *Geographical Review* 82, no. 3: 313-322; Göran Therborn,

reason, then, that the conscious decision of Frankfurt's municipal government to name streets after Jews constituted an effort to cultivate and reinforce a civic culture that was supportive of Jewish integration before and after the First World War and throughout the course of the Weimar Republic. Moreover, the continued presence of Jewish street names in Frankfurt during the first five years of Nazi rule suggests a longer continuity of spatial markers and other elements of Jewish integration in Frankfurt and Germany after 1933 that both reflected and reinforced ideas of Jewish belonging.

Jewish Street names in Frankfurt, 1872-1932

Beginning in the late nineteenth century, the government of the ever-expanding city of Frankfurt began to name and rename streets after well-known German-Jewish artists and thinkers. Early examples include the creation in 1872 of a street named for the poet Heinrich Heine, another street named after the composer Felix Mendelssohn in 1879, and the decision in 1885 to rename the *Judengasse*, the location of the city's former Jewish ghetto, after the writer Ludwig Börne, who had been born there.⁶ The members of the City Magistrate and City Council soon began to name more streets after prominent local Jewish citizens who had contributed to Frankfurt's burgeoning bourgeois civic culture. This policy was directly related to the municipal government's belief that street names had the ability to "preserve and strengthen local patriotism." Indeed, in 1909, the City Magistrate instructed urban planners that new street names should primarily refer to "local historical events or the names of persons intimately connected to the history of a given place" or serve as "a memorial to German culture and German heritage."⁷

Cities of Power: The Urban, the National, the Popular, the Global (New York: Verso, 2017); Bertie Neethling, "Street Names: A Changing Urban Landscape," in *The Oxford Handbook of Names and Naming*, ed. Carole Hough (London: Routledge, 2016).

⁶ IFS Stadtvermessungsamt 428 Umbenennung der nach Nichtariern und Parlamentariern des alten Systems benannten Straßen Bl. 25-26.

This meant that any decision to name or rename a street for a Jew was always an action that served as an official statement on the important role that Jews had and continued to play in shaping Frankfurt and Germany. In turn, this would have encouraged continued Jewish integration by broadcasting the view that Jews were a fundamental part of German and local culture.

The creation of a street named after the German-Jewish philanthropist Charles Hallgarten provides a good case study of the municipal government's efforts to imprint their liberal-minded politics and Jewish integration onto the geographical fabric of the city. Born in Mainz in 1838, Hallgarten came of age in New York City, where his father had established a successful bank on Wall Street. Hallgarten returned to Germany in the late 1870s and decided to settle in Frankfurt because of its growing importance as a financial center on the European continent. Once there, he quickly established himself as a leading figure in the fight against poverty, donating large amounts of money as well as founding and serving on the boards of various charitable institutions. In addition to his civic duties, Hallgarten was actively involved in different Jewish organizations including the welfare branch of the city's main Jewish community, the Association for Resistance Against Antisemitism, the Jewish Colonization Association, and the *Alliance Israélite Universelle*.⁸ Shortly after his death in 1908, representatives of the city's Department of Civil Engineering sent a letter to the Chief of Police in which they expressed their desire to recognize Hallgarten's legacy by renaming a portion of *Nordendstraße* – a street that included several buildings that Hallgarten's donations and initiatives had helped to build – in his honor.

⁷ IFS Stadtvermessungsamt 536 Schreibweise von Straßennamen.

⁸ Schembs, *Jüdische Mäzene und Stifter in Frankfurt am Main*, 76-78.

The chief of police approved the plan without hesitation and *Hallgartenstraße* came into existence on 16 July 1909.⁹

As of 1914, Frankfurt's government had named twenty-four streets after Jews and the outbreak of the First World War did little to curb this practice. Like *Hallgartenstraße*, many of the city's new Jewish street names honored the generous support of Jewish philanthropists. In 1915, for example, the city named a street in the center of the *Bornheim* district after Raphael Ettliger, who had served on the boards of the *Israelitische Gemeinde* and the synagogue on *Börneplatz*.¹⁰ Two years later, they renamed the eastern portion of *Jordanstraße* after the recently deceased industrialist Wilhelm Merton in honor of his "multifaceted work for the development of Frankfurt, especially his participation in the founding of the University."¹¹

Moving forward, the city government's policy of using street names to reinforce liberal ideals occasionally took on greater dimensions of political urgency during Germany's bumpy transition to democracy at the start of the Weimar Republic. In January 1922, City Council members from the Independent Social Democratic Party put forth a resolution calling on the City Magistrate to "rename all, streets, squares, parks, schools etc. whose names...recall former [German] rulers and dynasties." Members of the centrist and moderate leftist coalition that controlled the City Council and City Magistrate initially refused to take the bill seriously.

Several pointed out that the city already had a long tradition of naming streets after avowed anti-

⁹ Hessisches Hauptstaatsarchiv Wiesbaden (HHStA) 407,617 Straßenbenennung und Nummerierung der Häuser Bl. 203-205.

¹⁰ "Kleine Notizen," *Israelitisches Familienblatt*, October 4, 1915; HHStA 407,554 Straßenbenennung und Nummerierung der Häuser 1912-1919 Bl. 292; IFS Wohnungsamt 911 Bl. 10; "Aus der Geschichte der Gemeinde: Straßennamen," *Gemeindeblatt der Israelitischen Gemeinde Frankfurt am Main*, February 6, 1929.

¹¹ HHStA 407,554 Straßenbenennung und Nummerierung der Häuser 1912-1919 Bl. 354; IFS Magistratsakten 1.438 Straßenverzeichnis 1938-1955; IFS Statistisches Amt und Wahlamt 111 Straßenbenennung und Umnummerierung 1901-1930.

monarchists such as Heinrich Heine, the Jewish Liberal and newspaper magnate Leopold Sonnemann, and the 1848 parliamentarian Robert Blum. More chillingly, the Jewish Magistrate and future Mayor Ludwig Landmann warned that a new precedent for changing street names “could, if the times would once again change, be just as useful to other parties that stand on the other end of the political spectrum. If, for example, antisemitic majorities came to power, they could demand the removal of the names of the *Börneplatz*, the Heine fountain, and other streets named after outstanding Jewish intellectual heroes (*Geisteshelden*).”¹²

The stance of the ruling coalition changed dramatically in June of that year following the assassination of Walter Rathenau, Germany’s Jewish Foreign Minister.¹³ On 4 July, the Social Democratic Council Members Karl Gerwien and Leonhard Heißwolf filed a resolution calling for the abolition of monarchist street names and the removal of monarchist symbols from all public buildings in the city. In an impassioned speech, Gerwien pointed out that local schools had flown the black, white, and red flag of the old monarchy during the period of mourning for Rathenau because they had never been supplied with the flag of the Weimar Republic. Gerwien ended his speech with a suggestion to name a street after Rathenau as a way of showing Frankfurt’s unswerving support for the new German Republic. He further added:

We do not wish to name a street after Rathenau in a remote district that will not be connected with public transportation for quite some time, but rather a street in a busy part of the city. We are of the opinion that it would be good to rename *Kaiserstraße* as “*Rathenau-Straße*.” That would be the best option to honor the deceased Minister Rathenau.¹⁴

¹² IFS Stadtverordnetenversammlung 557 Straßen-Namen 1897-1923.

¹³ For an excellent account of Rathenau’s life and his complicated relationship with Judaism see Shulamit Volkov, *Walter Rathenau: Weimar’s Fallen Statesmen* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012).

¹⁴ *Kaiserstraße* was and continues to be one of Frankfurt’s major thoroughfares, running from the main entrance of the Central Train Station to the heart of the city’s downtown. IFS SD1 175 1922 Bl. 527-8.

Few objections were raised about the new resolution, and it was soon approved and passed along to the City Magistrate. Ultimately, the Magistrate and the Chief of Police announced on 30 September 1922 that the *Theaterplatz*, which had not been home to a theater for several decades, would henceforth be called *Rathenauplatz*.¹⁵ Not only was this newly renamed square in the heart of the city, it directly bordered another square named for Frankfurt's favorite local son and Germany's national poet: Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. Given the fact that street names often contribute to "the cultural production of a shared past," the city government's decision to rename the square after Rathenau might be seen as an effort to reinforce the idea that Jews were as vital a part of German life and culture as Goethe.¹⁶ Indeed, Rathenauplatz was not the only Jewish street name to be located in a prominent part of the city. The street named after the philanthropist Wilhelm Merton bordered the main building of the Goethe University, *Paul Ehrlich-Straße* was in the vicinity of the university's main medical clinic, and a boulevard named for the Rothschild family formed part of a ring road surrounding Frankfurt's inner suburbs.

The city government ordered the creation of at least sixteen other Jewish street names throughout the course of the Weimar Republic. Like *Hallgartenstraße*, many honored the contributions that local Jews had made to Frankfurt's civic life. In 1921, the city created *Jakob Schiff-Straße* to honor the German-American banker's substantial donations to local institutions.¹⁷ A neighboring street bore the name of Ernst Ladenburg, who had served as a

¹⁵ IFS Wohnungsamt 911 Straßennamen und Numerierung. During that same year, the city government of Nuremberg decided to rename a square in honor of Rathenau. The square, which had previously been named after former Field Marshall Paul von Hindenburg, was located in front of an entrance to the city's historic center. Presently, there are three hundred and twenty-five streets or squares named for Rathenau in Germany. *Lexikon der Nürnberger Strassennamen*, ed. Michael Diefenbacher and Steven M. Zahlaus (Nuremberg: Selbstverlag des Stadtarchivs Nürnberg, 2011), 456-457; "Wie oft gibt es ihre Straße?" *Zeit Online*, March 4, 2019, <https://www.zeit.de/interactive/strassennamen/#/?suche=rathenau&strasse=1199429> (accessed on February 26, 2020).

¹⁶ Azaryahu, "Commemorative Street Names," 311.

member of the City Council for nineteen years.¹⁸ Other new Jewish street names recognized Emil Claar, the founding General Manager of the city's Opera House and long-time Director at the Municipal Theater, as well as Henry Budge, whose many philanthropic works included the creation of a nursing home with an equal number of Jewish and Christian residents from the middle and working classes.¹⁹

At least three Jewish politicians and bureaucrats played an active and influential part in this process by serving as members of the city government's Committee on Street Names at various points during the Weimar Republic. Before the body was formalized in 1925, the committee had met on an ad hoc basis under the aegis of the city's Department of Civil Engineering and its membership consisted of representatives from the City Magistrate, the larger political blocs in the City Council, and other civil servants including the City Archivist and the Director of the Office of Statistics. Until June 1924, the Jewish City Councilor Ludwig Landmann was the representative from Frankfurt's Department of Civil Engineering. Although Landmann formally resigned from the committee when he was appointed Mayor of the city in 1924, he continued to play an active part in the act of street naming until he fled the city in March 1933.²⁰ Ernst May served as the Deputy Chairmen of the committee during his tenure as City Architect from 1925 to 1930.²¹ The final Jewish representative to the committee was Rudolf

¹⁷ IFS Stadtverordnetenversammlung 557 Straßen-Namen 1897-1923.

¹⁸ Ibid.; Arnsberg, *Geschichte der Frankfurter Juden Band III*, 533.

¹⁹ IFS Stadtverordnetenversammlung 558 Straßen-Namen 1924 – Dezember 1933; Schembs, *Jüdische Mäzene und Stifter in Frankfurt am Main*, 43-44. For more on Budge and his philanthropic works see: Arnsberg, *Budge*; IFS Magistratsakten V/691 Henry und Emma Budge Stiftung.

²⁰ IFS Magistratsakten T 1.705 Strassenbenennungskommission Bl. 1; Rebentisch, *Ludwig Landmann*, 63-64.

²¹ IFS Stadtvermessungsamt 430 General-Akten betr. Straßenbenennungen Allgemeines, Unterausschuss für die Benennung von Straßen, Straßenverzeichnis Bl. 16-17; IFS Magistratsakten T 1.705 Strassenbenennungskommission Bl. 7; Friedman, *The Lion and the Star*, 66-67.

Lion, the city's longest serving City Council Representative and a member of the right-wing liberal German People's Party (*Volkspartei*).²²

City records from this period reveal only one particular case in which non-Jewish Frankfurters officially protested the municipal government's decision to rename a street after a Jew. In 1926, Julius Heymann bequeathed his house and art collection to the city under the condition that a street be renamed in his honor. Residents of the chosen block quickly voiced their disapproval in letters and a petition that they sent to the City Council. The baker Simon Glauberg said that he and other shopkeepers on the street would have to bear the high cost of printing signs and forms bearing their new addresses. He also worried that customers who had never heard of *Julius Heymann-Straße* would think he had moved to another part of the city. Residents were also frustrated that they had only learned of the name change from a newspaper article in the *General-Anzeiger*, rather than from city officials. That being said, it is noteworthy that none of the complaints mentioned Heymann's Jewishness as a reason to keep the street's old name in place.²³ Thus, any opposition to the creation of *Julius Heymann-Straße* should be seen as a protest against a bureaucratic headache, rather than as an indication of an increase of everyday antisemitism in Weimar-era Frankfurt.

A Slow Shift: Jewish Street Names, 1933 – March 1935

Upon assuming power in March of 1933, the city's new National Socialist government quickly moved to use street names to imprint their ideology onto the geography of the city and to erase physical markers of the liberalism and republicanism that had long defined the city's

²²IFS Magistratsakten T 1.705 Strassenbenennungskommission Bl. 1, 7; IFS Stadtvermessungsamt 430 General-Akten betr. Straßenbenennungen Allgemeines, Unterausschuss für die Benennung von Straßen, Straßenverzeichnis Bl. 12; IFS Personengeschichte S2/3.021 Rudolf Lion.

²³ IFS Stadtverordnetenversammlung 558 Straßen-Namen 1924 – Dezember 1933; IFS Stadtvermessungsamt 428 Umbenennung der nach Nichtariern und Parlamentariern des alten Systems benannten Straßen Bl. 26.

municipal politics and culture. On 18 March 1933, Frankfurt's new Chief of Police sent out a letter to members of the city government in which he expressed his dismay at the number of Weimar-era street names that had been created according to a "Marxist viewpoints." He then provided a list of streets named for communist and socialist figures such as Karl Marx, Friedrich Ebert, August Bebel, Friedrich Ebert. Bizarrely, Walter Rathenau, who had been a member of the Liberal German Democratic Party and would have never been called a Marxist during his lifetime, was also on the list.²⁴ Over the next few weeks, Nazi Party members within the city bureaucracy and City Council excitedly discussed different possibilities for renaming these and other streets. On 15 May, the City Council passed a resolution that called on the City Magistrate and the Chief of Police to rename the *Taunusanlage*, which formed part of the park ring road around the center of the city, as *Adolf Hitler-Anlage* and the *Untermainbrücke* as the *Adolf Hitler-Brücke*. They also decreed that *Rathenauplatz* would be renamed in honor of Horst Wessel, an early martyr of the Nazi movement. Five days later, a special edition of the *Städtisches Anzeigblatt* announced that *Rothschildallee*, a large boulevard named after the famous Jewish banking dynasty, would henceforth be known as *Karoligner Allee*.²⁵

However, despite these initial actions to rename certain "Marxist" streets, it appears that no one in Frankfurt's government or the local cells of the Nazi Party felt compelled to do a systematic investigation of any other streets named after Jews. That is, until the *Frankfurter Volksblatt* forwarded Gertrud Bengen's aforementioned letter to Mayor Krebs. This suggests that the city's Nazis may have initially been more concerned with effacing Liberalism and Marxism as a defining elements of the city's space and identity than Judaism.

²⁴ IFS Magistratsakten 6.292 Straßenbenennungen 1930-1933 Bl. 29.

²⁵ IFS Stadtverordnetenversammlung 558 Straßen-Namen 1924 – Dezember 1933.

Still, other factors needed to be considered once the city government turned its gaze towards the Jewish street names that were still part of Frankfurt's street plan. Soon after receiving Bengen's letter, Krebs brought the existence of *Jakob Schiff-Straße* to the attention of the Frankfurt's Committee on Street Names. Although several members of the committee had helped to name streets after Jews during the Weimar Republic, they had adjusted their personal priorities and some had even joined the Nazi Party over the course of 1933. Ironically, then, many of the men responsible for creating or approving Jewish street names would now be responsible for "aryanizing" them.²⁶ On 6 March 1934, the Committee informed the mayor that Bengen's street had been named after Schiff because he and his relatives had donated more than 70,000 dollars toward the founding of the University of Frankfurt in 1914, over 2 million Marks for the maintenance of a foundation that supported local charities, and had provided additional support to cultural organizations such as the Senckenberg Natural History Museum, the city library, and, further proving Schiff's Frankfurt *bona fides*, the Goethe Museum. Their communiqué ended with a simple recommendation to refrain from renaming the street. A few days later, the Committee sent Krebs a postscript in which they doubled down on their recommendation not to rename *Jakob Schiff-Straße*. They did so because of the Schiff family's connections to the financial industry in the United States and because they feared "that a renaming of the street, which undoubtedly would be reported in America, could lead to a new, aggressively negative view of Germany because of, among other reasons, the idea that [the Third Reich] will retract honors without returning donations." At the end of March, Krebs sent Bengen

²⁶ Chief among them were committee Chairmen Reinhold Niemeyer, who had succeeded Ernst May as City Architect in 1931, and the City Archive Director Otto Ruppertsberg, who had written extensively about the important role that Jews played in Frankfurt's history. IFS Personengeschichte S2/9.015 Reinhold Niemeyer; IFS Grüneflächenamt 326 betr. Strassenbenennungen 1933-1936 Bl. 30, 155; IFS Stadtvermessungsamt 430 General-Akten betr. Straßenbenennungen Allgemeines, Unterausschuss für die Benennung von Straßen, Straßenverzeichnis; IFS Nachlässe S1-40 Otto Ruppertsberg Nr. 1; Tüffers, *Der Braune Magistrat*, 184; Ruppertsberg, "Die Reichsstadt und die freie Stadt," 87-105.

a brief letter in which he politely but cryptically stated that he and the Committee had decided not to change the name of *Jacob Schiff-Straße* because of “special circumstances.”²⁷ Thus, for a time, fear of financial and geopolitical consequences put a halt to plans to aryanize the name of *Jacob Schiff-Straße* and, quite likely, other Jewish street names in Frankfurt.

Following several months of silence, the issue of Jewish street names returned to the city government’s agenda in the fall of 1934 when a local member of the Nazi Party complained that his street still bore the name of Zacharie Hochschild, a Jewish merchant and philanthropist.²⁸ After reading the letter, the City Archive Director Otto Ruppertsberg, who was a member of the Committee on Street Names, requested a meeting to clarify the city’s policy on renaming all streets that had been named after Jews.²⁹

The eventual meeting on 11 October brought little clarity to the matter. Although the committee had no qualms about changing the name of *Hochschildstraße*, they struggled to reach a more conclusive policy about the fate of the other remaining Jewish street names in the city. For example, members of the Committee developed two separate reasons to delay any decision to rename a central street and square named after the German-Jewish writer Ludwig Börne, who was born in Frankfurt’s ghetto at the end of the eighteenth century. For one, the committee could not agree upon an appropriate new name to affix to either *Börnestraße* or *Börneplatz*. They also rejected a plan for these streets to revert to their original names of *Judengasse* (Jew Street) and *Judenmarkt* (Jew Market), “out of respect to the Christian inhabitants [of the street].” On a larger

²⁷ IFS Magistratsakten 6.294 Straßenbenennungen: Neubenennung, Umbenennung, Vorschläge Bl. 29a-c; IFS Stadtvermessungsamt 428 Umbenennung der nach Nichtariern und Parlamentariern des alten Systems benannten Straßen Bl. 54-56; *Dokumente*, 163-4.

²⁸ IFS Grüneflächenamt 326 betr. Strassenbennungen 1933-1936 Bl. 148; “Aus der Geschichte der Gemeinde,” *Gemeindeblatt der Israelitischen Gemeinde Frankfurt am Main*, February 6, 1929.

²⁹ IFS Grüneflächenamt 326 betr. Strassenbennungen 1933-1936 Bl. 150.

level, the members of the Committee were unsure if Frankfurt should follow the lead of the municipal governments of Munich and Nuremberg, which had already purged their cities of all Jewish street names. In their view, Frankfurt's Jewish street names recognized important scientific and artistic achievements as well as charitable donations to the city. Thus, they suggested only changing streets named after Jews who had "behaved in an anti-German manner or proven in another way to be enemies of the new Germany." They argued that this approach would allow them to get rid of *Jakob Schiff-Straße* because a Nazi magazine had recently (and dubiously) claimed that Schiff had been a major funder of the Bolsheviks during the Russian Revolution. In closing, they requested the Mayor's help in shaping any future guidelines and procuring details on all of the remaining Jewish street names in Frankfurt.³⁰

Within less than a day of receiving the Committee's report, Krebs fired off three letters. The first informed members of his administration that he did not want the city's address book for 1935 to contain the names of any streets named after Jews. This was especially important because the current edition still contained small biographical entries on the namesakes of all streets, including those named after Jews.³¹ The second ordered local cells of the Nazi party to provide him with information about Jewish street names in their districts. He also told the city's Office of Statistics to compile its own comprehensive list of all streets named after non-Aryans and parliamentarians of the "old system."³²

At the start of November, the city's press office told the Mayor that he had given them a task that was essentially impossible. For one, the final draft of the new address book had already

³⁰ Ibid. Bl. 155-158; *Dokumente*, 165-66; IFS Stadtvermessungsamt 428 Umbenennung der nach Nichtariern und Parlamentariern des alten Systems benannten Straßen Bl. 58.

³¹ *Amtliches Frankfurter Adreßbuch 1935*, ed. Deutsche Adreßbuch-Gesellschaft (Frankfurt: Verlag August Scherl, 1935).

³² IFS Magistratsakten 6.294 Straßenbenennungen: Neubenennung, Umbenennung, Vorschläge Bl. 26, 28, 60.

been sent to its printers and the city would have to pay a hefty penalty for any potential changes or delays. Moreover, they said that a decision to get rid of twenty street names – a number much lower than the actual amount of Jewish street names in the city – would change approximately eight to ten thousand addresses and create confusion amongst the public.³³

The reply letters of the local party cells revealed another issue that stood in the way of the city's desire to quickly resolve this issue: many of Frankfurt's Nazis could not authoritatively say whether or not they lived in areas with streets named after Jews, thus reflecting the degree to which Jewishness had been ingrained into the fabric of the city. In one case, the Nazi Party cell in the industrial neighborhood of Fechenheim reported the existence of a street named after the Jewish industrialist Leo Gans, but had no idea that the neighboring *Casellastraße* bore the last name of the Jewish chemist whose dye factory went on to form the core of the mighty IG Farben chemical concern. The Nazi cell in Bockenheim failed to report that their district included streets named after the Jewish banker and philanthropist Georg Speyer and Sophie von Rothschild and the cell in Eschersheim, the home of Gertrud Bengen, overlooked the presence of *Jakob Schiff-Straße*. Some Nazi Party cells expressed confusion about whether or not the namesakes of certain streets were or were not Jewish. For example, the members of the Nazi Party in *Ortsgruppe Günthersburg* informed the mayor that their district included a street named after Charles Hallgarten. Nevertheless, despite their sense that "the family name Hallgarten, the frequently common use of a foreign first name in Jewish circles (here the English or American 'Charles'), and his characterization as a 'Philanthropist' are strongly suspicious," they said that they did not currently have the means to prove whether or not Hallgarten had in fact been Jewish.³⁴

³³ Ibid., Bl. 65.

City officials soon discovered several other new complications. The Director of Frankfurt's Building Bureau told Mayor Krebs that his office would need to conduct a more thorough investigation to make sure that the city would not have to return donations or incur additional costs if they renamed streets that bore the names of certain Jewish philanthropists.³⁵ For example the Building Bureau's in-house lawyer had determined that the executors of Julius Heyman's estate would be legally entitled to ensure that the name of *Julius Heymann-Straße* would not change.³⁶ The Mayor and the members of the Committee on Street Names also continued to worry about the bad optics and potential consequences of renaming streets that honored Jews who had done extraordinary work for Frankfurt and the German Fatherland. In a draft of a letter to the Building Bureau and the Committee on Street Names in early November 1934, Mayor Krebs wrote and eventually crossed out a paragraph in which he stated that he was "fundamentally...not in favor of a complete removal of all non-Aryan street names, [and] rather that streets named after non-Aryans who have made contributions through charitable foundations and similar things related to the general good or have played an outstanding role in the fields of art or science can remain in place." These included streets named after figures such as Georg Speyer, Charles Hallgarten, and Leo Gans.³⁷

City Archivist Otto Ruppertsberg even wrote to the chairmen of the Committee on Street Names about renaming a street for the Rothschilds because the family's donations had substantially benefited and helped create municipal institutions such as the *Clementinen* hospital,

³⁴ Ibid., Bl. 39, 51, 67-68; *Dokumente*, 165.

³⁵ IFS Stadtvermessungsamt 428 Umbenennung der nach Nichtariern und Parlamentariern des alten Systems benannten Straßen Bl. 68.

³⁶ Ibid., Bl. 76-77.

³⁷ *Dokumente*, 166-7; IFS Magistratsakten 6.924 Straßenbenennungen: Neubenennung, Umbenennung, Vorschläge Bl. 75.

the Goethe University, and the Municipal Library. While he had supported the earlier decision to rename *Rothschildallee* because it had, in his view, inappropriately bordered streets named after the Nibelungen and several German royal families, Ruppertsberg now adamantly felt that it would be “inappropriate for [the Rothschild name] to completely disappear from the directory of streets.” He concluded his letter by suggesting that a move to rename *Börnestraße* for the Rothschilds would protect Frankfurt from any potential accusations that it was negligently denying the legacy of the banking dynasty.”³⁸

The Committee on Street Names finally managed to send a comprehensive set of recommendations for name changes to Mayor Krebs on 3 February 1935, more than a year after they had first met to discuss a strategy for dealing with the continued existence of Jewish street names in Frankfurt. They had created four different groups and five different recommendations for what to do with fifty-four streets named after Jews, Liberals, Socialists, and Communists. Eleven streets named after Jews including *Jacob Schiff-Straße*, *Georg Speyer-Straße*, *Börnestraße*, *Börneplatz*, and *Heinestraße* would immediately be renamed. Perhaps reflecting the city’s continued struggle to determine which streets were actually named after Jews, they included a street named after Leopold Sonnemann, the founding editor of the *Frankfurter Zeitung* and a longtime member of the Reichstag, not because he was Jewish, but because he had been a “strong proponent of Liberalism.”³⁹ The names of three other streets would simply disappear and not be replaced.⁴⁰ This eventually caused a minor problem when it turned out that city officials had neglected to note that two major medical institutes affiliated with the Goethe

³⁸ IFS Stadtvermessungsamt 428 Umbenennung der nach Nichtariern und Parlamentariern des alten Systems benannten Straßen Bl. 114.

³⁹ DRC P30/59-11 Straßennamen; *Dokumente*, 167-169.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 169-170.

University had addresses on Theodor Stern-Kai.⁴¹ A third group contained nine streets that the city would wait to rename in 1936 and the fourth and fifth group listed fifteen Jewish street names that would remain in place into the foreseeable future.⁴²

The Committee had found several pragmatic and novel reasons for not changing some of the names in these last two groups. For example, four streets and squares named after female members of the Rothschild family would remain in place, but official documents would be changed to say that they were merely named after “female first names.” Similarly they recommended that official records would be altered to note that *Casellastraße* was named for the *Casella Werke* plant of IG Farben, rather than for Leopold Casella. However, in some cases the Committee recommended that names remain in place because of the efforts that the namesakes had made for Germany and Frankfurt. These included streets named after Wilhelm Merton as well as the chemist and Nobel laureate Paul Ehrlich, whose creation of the anti-syphilitic drug Salvarsan was “seen abroad as a success of German science.” The Committee also recommended maintaining a street named after Felix Mendelssohn because, per them, his works embodied the spirit of popular German music and “the composer – unlike, for example Börne and Heine – never acted in a specifically Jewish manner.” Street names such as *Julius Heyman-Straße* would remain in place because changing their name could cause the city to lose important donations. Finally, street names tied with Leo Gans and Karl von Weinberg would not be changed because the two men had held important positions in IG Farben.⁴³ In short, the members of Committee felt that certain Jewish street names had to stay in place not just because they feared financial

⁴¹ IFS Magistratsakten 6.294 Straßenbenennungen: Neubenennung, Umbenennung, Vorschläge Bl. 115.

⁴² IFS Stadtvermessungsamt 428 428 Umbenennung der nach Nichtariern und Parlamentariern des alten Systems benannten Straßen Bl. 127-133; *Dokumente*, 170-173.

⁴³ IFS Stadtvermessungsamt 428 428 Umbenennung der nach Nichtariern und Parlamentariern des alten Systems benannten Straßen Bl. 121-133.

consequences, but also because they did not want to erase the names of Jews who had made tremendous contributions to civic and cultural life in Frankfurt, Germany, or the world at large.

The Move to Full Aryanization: April 1935 – September 1938

Although the name changes for streets in the first group were approved and implemented in April of 1935, Frankfurt's government continued to take an inconsistent approach toward the city's other remaining Jewish street names. By the middle of November 1935, the members of the Committee on Street Names had convinced the Chief of Police and the Mayor to change ahead of schedule the names of seven of the ten streets slated to be aryanized in 1936. Nevertheless, they failed to change the official explanation for the names of the three streets named for female members of the Rothschild family and until June 1936, *Casellastraße* continued to officially be named after Leopold Cassella.⁴⁴

Moreover, new disagreements, doubts, and even slight resistance came to light about long term plans to remove all of the remaining Jewish street names. In July 1935, Officials in charge of administering the city's forests passionately requested that the Building Bureau not aryanize the name of a riding path named after Gustav Gerst. A scion of the Jewish family that owned the Tietz department store chain, Gerst had made frequent donations to the city. Most notable among them were funds that allowed the city to finish building a large wooden tower commemorating Goethe. The Forest Officials stressed that Gerst had done this under the condition that the tower would always be free to the public and that he would only be listed as an anonymous donor to the project.⁴⁵ Several months later, there was more resistance when the Director of Frankfurt's

⁴⁴ IFS Magistratsakten 6.294 Straßenbenennungen: [Neubenennung, Umbenennung, Vorschläge Bl. 152b, 159, 168a.

⁴⁵ Their appeal fell upon deaf ears. *Gerst Weg* disappeared from the city within the year. IFS Stadtvermessungsamt 428 Umbenennung der nach Nichtariern und Parlamentariern des alten Systems benannten Straßen Bl. 214-15, 248; IFS Magistratsakten 6.294 Straßenbenennungen: Neubenennung, Umbenennung, Vorschläge Bl. 168L.

Office of Surveying asked the Dean of the Medical School at the Goethe University to query his colleagues for the names of local scientists that could be used as a replacement for *Paul Ehrlich-Straße*. A number of doctors doubted that they would be able to find the name of another local scientist or Frankfurter who had impacted the world as much as Ehrlich had. The Director of the Institute for Animal Physiology went so far as to ask the Dean if a change was even necessary, stressing that “Ehrlich was such an outstanding person and Frankfurt and all of Germany are so indebted to him that many Germans and foreigners would not understand” a decision to rename the street.⁴⁶ The members of the Committee for Street Names shared this view about *Paul Ehrlich-Straße* and two other streets named after Jews. In a letter to Mayor Krebs in late February 1936 they recommended renaming fourteen streets, but also said that they would prefer to keep the names of *Paul Ehrlich-Straße*, *Karl von Weinberg-Straße* out of respect for its namesake’s age, and repeated their earlier argument for not renaming *Mendelssohnstraße*.⁴⁷

In fact, it appears that Felix Mendelssohn became more “German” in the eyes of the municipal government. In late December 1936, a certain Wilhelm Baumgärtner sent a letter to Mayor Krebs in which he incorrectly complained that Frankfurt still had a “*Mendelssohnstraße* named after the Jew Moses Mendelssohn,” the German-Jewish theologian and philosopher who was Felix Mendelssohn’s grandfather. Shortly after the start of the New Year, the director of the Office of Surveying issued a statement saying that the Magistrate had already debated and decided not to rename the street because Mendelssohn’s music was “traditional...and cannot be confused with the subversive Jewish music of the modern era...Since then, no new conditions

⁴⁶ IFS Stadtvermessungsamt 428 Umbenennung der nach Nichtariern und Parlamentariern des alten Systems benannten Straßen Bl. 219, 228, 230.

⁴⁷ *Dokumente*, 173-7.

have arisen for a renaming.”⁴⁸ In the end, *Mendelssohnstraße* managed to survive until July of 1938, when it was renamed in honor of the Austrian composer Josef Haydn. This name change was undertaken as a tribute to Germany’s recent *Anschluss* with Austria, rather than as a statement regarding Mendelssohn’s Jewishness.⁴⁹

Ultimately, the final bureaucratic push that led to the aryanization of all remaining Jewish street names in Frankfurt was the result of outside pressure from the Nazis’ central government in Berlin. Although the Office of Surveying had compiled a list in March of 1938 with recommendations for changing the city’s eight remaining Jewish street names, the Magistrate did not begin to act in earnest until August, when the Reichs Interior Ministry ordered municipalities to immediately rename all streets named after Jews and first-degree *Mischlinge*. The Ministry set a deadline for 1 October and stressed that “Unlike the normal practice with street name changes, the street signs for Jewish names are not allowed to remain hanging near the new ones for a longer period of time; they are to be removed simultaneously with the installation of the new ones.”⁵⁰

Frankfurt was not the only city that fell squarely into the crosshairs of the Interior Ministry’s new order. It appears that Berlin’s municipal government was simultaneously engaged in a process of finalizing the aryanization of its own Jewish street names. Since 1813, street naming in the city had been the purview of Berlin’s Magistrate, Police Chief, and the Interior Ministry.⁵¹ Surprisingly, though, only about one-fourth of the approximately forty

⁴⁸ IFS Magistratsakten 6.294 Straßenbenennungen: Neubenennung, Umbenennung, Vorschläge Bl. 209.

⁴⁹ IFS Stadtvermessungsamt 434 Straßenbenennung 1937 bis 1938 Bl. 204, 209, 212.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, Bl. 228-230.

⁵¹ August Giese, “Unsere Helden und ihre Taten in den Straßennamen von Groß-Berlin,” *Berlinische Blätter für Geschichte und Heimatkunde* 1, no. 10-11 (June 1934): 123.

Jewish street names in Berlin were renamed between the 1933 and 1937. One can surmise that most of the streets in this category were aryanized for political as well as racial reasons because they bore the names of prominent German-Jewish Liberals and Social Democrats such as Walter Rathenau, former Berlin City Council Member Leo Arons, as well as the publishers Leopold Ullstein and Rudolf Mosse. Berlin's government aryanized at least fourteen of the city's remaining Jewish street names in May 1938 and six more in September of that same year.⁵²

Frankfurt's Committee on Street Names – now known as the “Experts’ Council for Naming Streets” – met on 16 August and proposed final name changes for their city's remaining Jewish street names, many of which had first been slated for potential elimination almost two years earlier. They further proposed renaming *Rappstraße* as *Georg Rapp-Straße* because it would prevent the public from thinking the street was named after a prominent local Jewish family. By the end of the month, Mayor Krebs had forwarded their recommendations to the Chief of Police, who gave his final approval on 24 September 1938.⁵³

Although this seemingly ended a process that had begun when the Nazis had first taken control of Frankfurt over five years earlier, at least one Jewish street name remained in place for the entirety of the Third Reich. In 1920, the Magistrate had named a street after Albert Linel who, with his wife, had donated a foundation worth 820,000 *Reichsmarks* to the city. Fifteen years later, city officials worried that a stipulation in Linel's will would force them to transfer the remaining funds in the foundation to the city's Jewish community. According to the historian Paul Arnsberg, the matter of renaming *Linelstraße* was pushed back so many times that the Nazis

⁵² Much like Frankfurt, Berlin also had Jewish street names that honored local philanthropists, scientists such as the physicist Heinrich Hertz, and artists including Max Liebermann, Giacomo Meyerbeer, and Heinrich Heine. While it is far from conclusive, the information in this paragraph was gathered from *Lexikon alle Berliner Straßen und Plätze. Von der Gründung bis zur Gegenwart Bd. 1-4*, ed. Hans-Jürgen Mende (Berlin: Verlag Neues Leben, 1998).

⁵³ IFS Stadtvermessungsamt 434 Straßenbenennung 1937 bis 1938 249-61, 266-269.

eventually forgot about the matter entirely.⁵⁴ The same might also be said for a street in Berlin named after the writer Fanny Lewald, whose autobiography provides readers with an intimate portrait of her own conversion from Judaism to Lutheranism, that was never renamed between 1933 and 1945.⁵⁵

Until now, this chapter has largely focused on the actions of Frankfurt's municipal government, but it is important to note the ways in which the long campaign to aryanize the city's street names had a major impact on Jews in Frankfurt and throughout Germany. Before the Nazis came to power, Jewish Frankfurters had viewed these street names as a source of pride and an authoritative list of them had appeared in the newspaper of the city's main Jewish community.⁵⁶ By May 1933, an advertisement in the same newspaper stated that a Jewish-owned pharmacy was now located on *Horst Wesel-Platz*, rather than on *Rathenauplatz*.⁵⁷ In October 1934, an article in the newspaper of the Central Association for German Citizens of the Jewish Faith fretted over a recent interview in which Frankfurt's Mayor announced the city's intention to rename *Börnestraße* and *Börneplatz*, an act that would not happen for several more months.⁵⁸

To some Jews, changes in street names served as a barometer for gauging Nazi efforts to roll back Jewish integration. For example, the Jewish doctor Simon Isaac walked down *Mendelsohnstraße* on his daily trip to work at the Institute for Experimental Therapy on *Paul*

⁵⁴ DRC P30/59-11 Straßennamen.

⁵⁵ *Lexikon alle Berliner Straßen und Plätze*, Bd. 3, 16-27; Fanny Lewald, *The Education of Fanny Lewald: An Autobiography*, trans and ed. Hanna Ballin Lewis (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992).

⁵⁶ "Aus der Geschichte der Gemeinde: Straßennamen," *Gemeindeblatt der Israelitischen Gemeinde Frankfurt am Main*, February 6, 1929.

⁵⁷ *Gemeindeblatt der Israelitischen Gemeinde Frankfurt am Main*, May, 9, 1933.

⁵⁸ "Wird die Börnestraße in Frankfurt umbenannt?," *Centralverein Zeitung*, October 18, 1934; IFS Magistratsakten 6.294 Straßenbenennungen: Neubenennung, Umbenennung, Vorschläge Bl. 29.

Ehrlich-Straße. Along the way, he always made sure to see whether or not their names had been aryanized overnight.⁵⁹ Occasionally, Jews were caught unawares by street name changes. At one point in 1938, Mile Braach tried to send a letter to an aunt living on *Paul Ehrlich-Straße* only to have a postman return it with the words “un-deliverable” written on the envelope. When Braach asked the postman for an explanation, he replied in thick Frankfurt dialect, “ ‘didn’t you know...Ehrlich was a Jew and there’s no longer any *Paul Ehrlich-Straße*. Write *Ludwig Rehn-Straße* and the letter will be delivered.’ ” Braach was furious: “For a moment, I thought: should I enlighten him and tell him about the Nobel Prize winner Paul Ehrlich, who discovered Salvarsan and thus saved the lives of thousands who suffered from syphilis?” In the end, however, she remained silent.⁶⁰

Conclusion

Between 1872 and the end of the Weimar Republic, Frankfurt’s municipal government’s practice of naming streets in honor of Jewish luminaries served as a physical reminder to the public that Jews were an important part of local and national culture. But let us return to this article’s central question: how did so many Jewish street names manage to survive in Frankfurt until the fall of 1938, well after the Nazis had begun to roll back Jewish integration in Germany? I want to offer four possible reasons.

The first is bureaucratic inefficiency. In theory, aryanizing Jewish street names should have been a simple task that required little more than the consent of Frankfurt’s Mayor before gaining final approval from the city’s Chief of Police. In practice, however, Mayor Friedrich Krebs and the city’s Committee on Street Names were often incapable of reaching any consensus

⁵⁹ LBI ME 1366 Simon Isaac Bl. IV-V.

⁶⁰ Braach, *Rückblende*, 155.

on how to handle the fate of Frankfurt's Jewish street names. Attendant worries that changing street names would force the city to spend large sums of money to change entries in local address books or potentially confuse local citizens trying to navigate the streets of Frankfurt similarly influenced the local government's piecemeal approach to aryanizing Frankfurt's Jewish street names.

A second reason was city officials' fear of larger financial consequences for Frankfurt and Germany on a global scale. Frankfurt was still recovering from the debilitating effects of an economic depression and debts accrued during the Weimar Republic. Officials in the City Magistrate worried that the city might be legally obligated to repay past donations that were tied to streets named after Jewish philanthropists like Jakob Schiff. They also fretted that the presumed impropriety of these name changes could set off a new round of anti-German "atrocious propaganda" in the foreign press, not least because of the prevailing belief that wealthy American-Jewish families like the Schiffs held tremendous sway with the American press.

The protracted campaign to aryanize Frankfurt's streets also reflected the evolving dynamics between local and national power during the early years of Nazi rule. Frankfurt's municipal government retained a large degree of independence in fully administering order on its own streets before the central government intervened in the summer of 1938.

Finally, and I think most curiously, many Jewish street names remained in place because numerous officials in Frankfurt's government and what might have once resembled civil society felt that it was simply wrong to stop honoring or even deny the contributions that certain Jews including Paul Ehrlich, Wilhelm Merton, and Felix Mendelssohn had made to local, national, or even global history and culture. Part of this was related to the continued presence of Weimar-era bureaucrats at the upper and lower levels of the Frankfurt Magistrate after the Nazis had come to

power. This explains why an official like City Archivist Otto Ruppertsberg, who helped create Jewish street names before 1933, could still advocate for the creation of a new street named after the Rothschilds in 1935 or for the preservation of a street named after Ehrlich as late as 1937. Street names, after all, had long been used as a way to shape local identity, patriotism, and, in turn Jewish integration. Thus, the continued existence of Jewish street names in Frankfurt until 1938 reflects the tenacity on a local level of spatial markers and other elements of Jewish integration and belonging into the early years of the Third Reich.

Jewish street names began to reappear in Frankfurt soon after the end of the Second World War. Within nine days of V-E Day, fourteen Jewish street names including *Rathenauplatz*, *Börnestraße*, and *Paul Ehrlich-Straße* were back on the map.⁶¹ For a brief moment, it appeared that the city government wanted to avoid the restoration of approximately thirty other Jewish street names that had been altered during the Third Reich. In late August 1945, officials at the city's Building Bureau told American occupation forces they had successfully purged the names of streets named after Nazis, but argued that restoring the names of all streets changed after 1 January 1933 was unnecessary because "Every change of street names involves so many difficulties (addresses, addresses of firms, names on maps, registers, etc.) that only very weighty reasons will justify such a procedure."⁶² It appears, however, that other members of the "provisional city government" or, at the very least, American officials believed that this was indeed a "weighty" matter. By the end of the 1950s, the city government had restored the name of almost all of Frankfurt's Jewish street name and created new ones

⁶¹ IFS Stadtvermessungsamt 422 Denazifizierung und Entmilitarisierung deutscher Straßennamen und Denkmäler Bl. 76.

⁶² *Ibid.*, Bl. 133-134.

honoring notable German Jews including the former local politician Hugo Sinzheimer, the writer Franz Kafka, and Anne Frank, who was born in Frankfurt.⁶³

The fate of Jewish street names still had the ability to significantly impact local politics and culture in Frankfurt. This was most evident in a series of controversies related to *Börneplatz* during the late 1970s and 1980s. The remnants of the square had been turned into a new north-south roadway and an adjacent parking lot as a part of the city government's rebuilding and modernization campaigns during the 1950s. Two decades later, the historian Paul Arnsberg and other members of the local Jewish community led a campaign that convinced the city to restore the name *Börneplatz* to a portion of the former square. In 1987, excavation efforts to build a new service center for Frankfurt's municipal utility company on this site unearthed the archaeological remains of nineteen houses and two *mikvot* from the city's Jewish ghetto, which had existed from 1462 until the end of the nineteenth century. The city's ruling Christian Democratic government soon announced its intentions to continue with its construction plans, prompting a grassroots coalition of Jewish, Green party, and Social Democratic activists to occupy the square. The ensuing debate about the fate of the ruins and the square created a heated, often critical dialogue about issues including the place of the Holocaust in German-Jewish history and the continuities of antisemitism in local and Central Europe.⁶⁴

⁶³ IFS Ortsgeschichte S3/S 17.609 Straßennamen: 1950-1959; DRC P30/59-11 Straßennamen. Frankfurt's municipal government continued to name more streets for locally, nationally, and internationally important Jews. In the early 1970s alone they created new streets named after the female, socialist parliamentarian Toni Sender, the city's former Jewish mayor Ludwig Landmann, and Israeli Prime Minister David Ben Gurion. IFS Stadtverordnetenversammlung 2.509 Straßenbenennung, Straßenbenennungsausschuß 1957, 1966-1974.

⁶⁴ Numerous authors have written about the Börneplatz controversy. A sample of works includes Hans-Otto Schembs, *Der Börneplatz in Frankfurt am Main. Ein Spiegelbild jüdischer Geschichte* (Frankfurt: Waldemar Kramer, 1987); Micha Brumlik, *Kein Weg als Deutscher und Jude. Eine Bundesrepublikanische Erfahrung* (Munich; Luchterhand, 1996); *Der Frankfurter Börneplatz. Zur Archäologie eines politischen Konflikts*, ed. Michael Best (Frankfurt: Fischer Verlag, 1998); Susanne Schönborn, "The New Börneplatz Memorial and the Nazi Past in Frankfurt am Main," in *Beyond Berlin: Twelve German Cities Confront the Nazi Past*, ed. Paul B. Jaskot and Gavriel Rosenfeld, 273-294 (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2008); Joseph Cronin, "Controversies Surrounding the Excavation at Börneplatz, Frankfurt am Main, 1987," *Holocaust Studies: A Journal of Culture and*

However, most of the new postwar Jewish street names were quietly added to Frankfurt's map without eliciting any controversy. For instance, on 20 February 1969, Frankfurt's City Council voted to name a new street after the late Jewish political scientist Eleonore Sterling. Born in Heidelberg, Sterling emigrated from Nazi Germany and arrived in the United States at the age thirteen in 1938. Eleven years later, she returned to Germany in order to pursue a doctorate on nineteenth-century German antisemitism at the Goethe University in Frankfurt. Sterling went on to write and collaborate on several important projects on this topic and other elements of German-Jewish history before her untimely death in 1968.⁶⁵ Coincidentally, one of these was an edited collection of documents on the history of Jewish life in Frankfurt from 1933 to 1945 that contained a copy of Gertrud Bengen's letter to the *Volksblatt* about changing the name of *Jakob Schiff-Straße*.⁶⁶ Thus, it is a particularly fitting twist of irony that *Eleonore Sterling-Straße* is located in Eschersheim, the neighborhood whose street names Bengen had once tried so hard to aryanize.

History 22, No. 2-3 (2016): 172-184; Michael Meng, "Layered Pasts: The Judengasse in Frankfurt and Narrating German History and the Holocaust," in *Space and Spatiality in Modern German-Jewish History*, ed. Simone Lässig and Miriam Rürup, 107-124 (New York: Berghahn, 2017); Tobias Freimüller, *Frankfurt und die Juden. Neuanfänge und Fremdheitserfahrungen 1945-1990* (Göttingen: Wallenstein, 2020), 480-487.

⁶⁵ More information on Sterling can be found in Birgit Seemann, *Ein "feather weight champion Cassius Clay." Eleonore Sterling (1925-1968) deutsch-jüdische Kämpferin gegen Antisemitismus und Rechtsextremismus* (Lich: Verlag Edition AV, 2013).

⁶⁶ *Dokumente*, 163.

Table 2: List of Jewish Street Names in Frankfurt am Main, 1872-1938⁶⁷

	Original street Name	Year Created	Year Changed	New Name
	Heinestraße	1872	1935	Rudolf Jung-Straße
2)	Luisenplatz	1877	1936	Namesake changed
3)	Luisenstraße	1877	1936	Namesake removed
4)	<i>Königswarterstraße</i>	1879	1936	Quinkestraße
5)	Mendelssohnstraße	1879	1938	Josef Haydn-Straße
6)	Börneplatz	1885	1935	Dominkanerplatz
7)	Börnestraße	1885	1935	Großer Wollgraben
8)	Rothschildallee	Pre-1899	1933	Karoligner-Allee
9)	Sophienstraße	1899	1935	Namesake removed
10)	Mathildenplatz	1900	1935	Namesake removed
11)	Mathildenstraße	1900	1935	Namesake removed
12)	Sonnemannstraße	1906	1935	Max Eyth-Straße
13)	Hahnstraße	1907	1938	Kesellbergstraße
14)	Hallgartenstraße	1908	1936	Hartmann Ibach-Straße
15)	Synagogenstraße	Pre-1909	1937	Allerheiligenstraße
16)	Reinganumstraße	1909	1936	Raumerstraße
17)	Georg Speyer-Straße	1909	1935	Parsevalstraße
18)	Paul Ehrlich-Straße	1909	1938	Ludwig Rehn-Straße
19)	Katzensteinstraße	1911	1935	Removed, but not replaced
20)	Herxheimerstraße	1911	1935	Nothnagelstraße

⁶⁷ Sources for this footnote include IFS Stadtvermessungsamt 428 Umbenennung der nach Nichtariern und Parlamentariern des alten Systems benannten Straßen; IFS Wohnungsamt 911 Sonderdruck des Anzeigeblasses der Städtischen Verwaltung: Straßenbenennung und Nummerierung 1914-1932; IFS Stadtverordnetenversammlung 557 Straßennamen 1897-1923; IFS Stadtverordnetenversammlung 558 Straßennamen 1924-1933; IFS Grüneflächenamt 326 Strassenbenennung 1933-1936; IFS Stadtvermessungsamt 429 Anlegung eines Registers für noch unbenannte Straßen in Frankfurt sowie Bockenheim, Bonames, Eckenheim, Eschersheim, Ginnheim, Hausen, Niederrad, Niederursel, Oberrad, Preungesheim, Rödelheim und Seckbach; IFS Magistratsakten 6.294 Straßenbenennungen: [Neubenennung, Umbenennung, Vorschläge] 1934-1936; *Bericht über die Verhandlungen der Stadtverordneten-Versammlung 1922*, ed. Kanzlei der Stadtverordneten-Versammlung (Frankfurt: Rupert Baumbach, 1923); IFS Statistisches Amt und Wahlamt 111 Straßenbenennung und Ummummerierung 1901-1930; IFS Stadtvermessungsamt 434 Straßenbenennung 1937 bis 1938; IFS Magistratsakten V/691 Henry und Emma Budge Stiftung 1921-; IFS Magistratsakten 6.292 Straßenbenennungen 1930-1933; Hessisches Hauptstaatsarchiv (HHStA) Wiesbaden 407, 617 Straßenbenennung und Nummerierung der Häuser; HHStA 407,554 Straßenbenennung und Nummerierung der Häuser 1912-1919; DRC P30 Nachlass Paul Arnsberg 59-11 "Juden in der Geschichte Frankfurts. Was Strassenamen erzählen"; "Aus der Geschichte der Gemeinde," *Gemeindeblatt der Israelitischen Gemeinde Frankfurt am Main*, February 6, 1929.

21)	Max Hirsch-Straße	1911	1935	Tilsiterstraße
22)	Josef May-Straße	1911	1935	Treisbergerstraße
23)	Hochschildstraße	1911	1935	Taufsteinstr.
24)	Theodor Stern-Kai	1912	1935	Removed, but not replaced
25)	Heidelbachstraße	1915	1935	Egererstraße
26)	Ettlingerstraße	1915	1935	Karlsbaderstraße
27)	Merton-Straße	1917	1938	Universtiätsstraße
28)	Töplitzstraße	1919	1937	Robert Koch-Straße
29)	Odrellstraße	1920	1937	Guaitastraße
30)	Ladenburgstraße	1921	1935	Olenschalger Weg
31)	Jacob Schiff-Straße	1921	1935	Mummstraße
32)	Rathenauplatz	1922	1933	Horst Wesel-Platz
33)	Geigerstraße	1926	1935	Heussenstammstraße
34)	Henry Budge-Straße	1927	1935	Langemarckstraße
35)	Julius Heyman-Straße	1927	1938	Palmstraße
36)	Pfungststraße	1927	1935	Removed, but not replaced
37)	Lehrbergerstraße	1928	1935	Ganerbenstraße
38)	Casellastraße	1928	1938	Friedrichshafenerstraße
39)	Karl Flesch-Straße	1929	1935	Marienbaderstraße
40)	Edinger Weg	1930	1936	Walter Flex-Straße
41)	Karl von Weinberg-Straße	1930	1938	Ferdinand Runge-Straße
42)	Gerst Weg	1930	1936	Removed, but not replaced
43)	Emil Claar-Straße	1930	1936	Jansenstraße/Rankestraße
44)	Leo Gans-Straße	1931	1938	Friedrichshafenerstraße
45)	Jacobystraße	Unknown	1933/6	Camhausenstraße
46)	Simsonstraße	Unknown	1936	Mevissenstraße
47)	Paul Heyse-Straße	Unknown	1936	Chamissostraße
48)	Nathan Trier-Straße	Unknown	1933	Josef Wolff-Straße

EPILOGUE AND CONCLUSION

From *Kristallnacht* until 1945

“I had one wish. I was so enraged at what happened that I said to myself ‘I wish that the whole city would burn down right now.’”¹

– Josef Kampler

In a bizarre twist of fate, both the perpetrator and the victim of the murder that served as a catalyst for pogroms across the Germany between 7-10 November 1938 had ties to Frankfurt.² Ernst vom Rath, the young First Secretary of the German Embassy in Paris, was the scion of an aristocratic family from the city. His assassin, Herschel Grynszpan, whose violent act was meant to avenge his deported Polish-Jewish parents and siblings, had briefly attended Rabbi Jakob Hoffmann’s orthodox rabbinical yeshiva in *Ostend*.³

According to most reports, the violence in Frankfurt began early in the morning on November 10th and was initially localized to the neighborhood near the prominent synagogues in the center of the city. Members of the SA intercepted Rabbi Georg Salzberger at a bakery on what was formerly known as *Börnstraße* and demanded that he surrender the keys to the nearby *Hauptsynagoge*. Salzberger was released after informing them that he did not have the keys. With a heavy heart he hurried to check on the status of the building. When he arrived he saw that

¹ Kampler, Josef. Interview 16003. Segment 42. Visual History Archive, USC Shoah Foundation, 1996. Accessed on 6 April 2018.

² Alan Steinweis argues that historians should expand the timeline of *Kristallnacht* to include riots that took place in Kassel and towns throughout Electoral Hessen shortly after German media outlets reported that Ernst vom Rath was shot on November 7, 1938. Alan E. Steinweis, *Kristallnacht 1938* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009), 6, 22-29; Friedländer, *Years of Persecution*, 266-268.

³ Steinweis, *Kristallnacht*, 17-19; Heuberger and Krohn, *Hinaus*, 179.

the synagogue was ablaze and surrounded by a small crowd which primarily consisted of members of the SA, who threatened to arrest anyone who voiced any opposition to the destruction of the building. Salzberger soon headed east and discovered that another fire was burning the neo-orthodox IRG's massive synagogue on the *Friedberger Anlage*. Later on, Salzberger heard a rumor that members of the SS assaulted the Catholic superintendent of the Reform synagogue in *Westend* when he refused to turn over the keys of the building. By the end of the day roving bands of men from the Gestapo, SA, and SS had destroyed or gutted eight synagogues and twelve smaller prayer halls throughout the city.⁴

Chaos reigned throughout the center of the city as these same groups began to target and loot Jewish-owned businesses and apartments in the *Altstadt* and *Ostend*. Joseph Levy, the cantor of the *Börneplatz-Synagoge*, surmised that they had an easier time picking out Jewish businesses because an increasing number of gentile shopkeepers had put up signs proclaiming that they owned a "German business."⁵ Richard Kirn and Irmgard Walter-Zeising recalled that the debris of cakes from one of Frankfurt's few remaining Jewish-owned cafes as well as clothing from a popular laundromat were among the detritus that was visible in the streets.⁶ Vera Ansbach biked past glass from the broken windows of the Stiller and Leiser shoe store, Valentin Senger and his future wife saw furniture being flung out of the windows of apartments on *Oeder Weg*, and a mob stormed a Jewish orphanage and assaulted its staff.⁷

⁴ *Die Synagogen brennen*, 141; *Materialien zum 40. Jahrestag der Synagogenzerstörung in Hessen*, ed. Die Jüdische Gemeinde Frankfurt am Main und dem Landesverband der Jüdischen Gemeinde in Hessen (Frankfurt: Jüdische Gemeinde Frankfurt am Main, 1979), 15-16, 18.

⁵ LBI ME 383 Joseph Levy Bl. 65.

⁶ *Die Synagoge brennen*, 165.

⁷ Ansbach, Vera. Interview 12709. Segment 48. *Visual History Archive*, USC Shoah Foundation, 1996. Accessed on 12 April 2018; Senger, Valentin. Interview 8168. Segment 74. *Visual History Archive*, USC Shoah Foundation, 1996. Accessed on 9 April 2018; LBI ME 238 Sydney Baumann Bl. 3.

Some of the violence that day stemmed from the participation of ordinary Frankfurters who took part in the persecution of the city's Jews for either material or ideological reasons. A woman married to an SS member who lived on the ground floor of Friedrich Schafrank's apartment building in a posh corner of *Westend* stood outside and directed roving mobs towards other nearby Jewish apartments.⁸ One Jewish woman overheard a group of women outside of the enflamed *Friedberger Anlage Synagoge* plotting to “get all the gold the Jews hide in their synagogues before everything is burnt to ashes.”⁹ Elsewhere, more than 15,000 *Reichsmarks* were stolen from the Jewish hospital on *Gagernstraße*.¹⁰

However, it is important to note that many Jews survived the day unscathed because they were able to rely on the support of gentile friends and acquaintances. Gerald Oppenheimer evaded potential arrest because his non-Jewish co-workers at a rubber factory advised him to return home when he arrived to work on November 10th.¹¹ Lucy Bachrach's cook told her to leave the city and Germany and several of her Christian friends called over the course of the day to see if she was aware of the chaos in the city's streets.¹² Lilli Hojda's family received assistance from a former Christian servant and her husband, who offered to buy them groceries

⁸ Friedrich Schafrank, “Meine Eindrücke vom Philanthropin,” in *Der Mandelzweig soll wider Blüten tragen. Erinnerungen an das Philanthropin in Frankfurt – Jüdisches neues Leben*, ed. Gerlind Schwöbel, 103-116 (Frankfurt: Verlag Otto Lembeck, 2004), 106.

⁹ LBI ME 482 Alice Oppenheimer Bl. 18.

¹⁰ LBI ME 1366 Simon Isaac Bl. XVI.

¹¹ LBI ME 1115 Gerald J. Oppenheimer Bl. 16.

¹² Bachrach, Lucy. Interview 46518. Segments 76-78. Visual History Archive, USC Shoah Foundation, 1998. Accessed on 17 April 2018.

and locate Lilli's missing father.¹³ Paul Birnbaum-Rawer's family hid in the apartment of Catholic neighbors for several days.¹⁴

In one particular case, Alice Oppenheimer, the wife of the chairman of the orthodox IRG, appears to have relied on gentile support for almost all of the major decisions she made during the pogrom and its immediate aftermath. At one point on November 10th, a Catholic friend warned Oppenheimer that the authorities were arresting Jewish men and offered to provide shelter to her children at a house that her daughter owned in a quieter suburb of the city. This same friend offered to accompany Oppenheimer to potential discussions with the police and eventually escorted her and her children to the train station to ensure that they would be able to board a Switzerland-bound train on 11 November.¹⁵ Amazingly, then, the terrible events of the pogrom seemed to affirm the strong bonds that endured between some Jews and other Germans in Frankfurt.

As the day went on, things became increasingly grim for adult Jewish men who remained in the city. Hundreds of them were arrested and forced to walk through the streets to the *Festhalle*, a large arena at the center of Frankfurt's massive convention fairgrounds. Along the way they dealt with large crowds that hurled insults and occasionally spat upon them.¹⁶ Inside the arena, SS members forcibly shaved some of the men's hair and beards and prisoners were

¹³ ...*daß wir nicht erwünscht waren*, 95-96

¹⁴ Birnbaum-Rawer, "Kindheitserinnerungen," 118-119.

¹⁵ LBI ME 482 Alice Oppenheimer Bl. 21-2, 32-33; *Spuren des Faschismus in Frankfurt. Das Alltagsleben der Frankfurter Juden 1933-1945*, ed. Arbeitsgruppe "Spuren des Faschismus in Frankfurt" beim Hessischen Institut für Lehrerfortbildung (Frankfurt: Hessisches Institut für Lehrerfortbildung, 1984), 98.

¹⁶ Reports from the Wiener Library in London indicate that at least two men died while being arrested. The head of the gynecology clinic at the Jewish hospital consumed poison and a Rabbi H. died of a seizure after being forced to view the destruction of the synagogue where he had worked. Steinweis, *Kristallnacht*, 73, 78. LBI ME 383 Joseph Levy Bl. 68-70; LBI ME 561 Ralph Sanford Bl. 6-7.

forced to engage in a humiliating array of military drills and marches that only stopped after several Jews died of heart attacks. The supervising SS officers eventually sent home men who were either older than 65 or had received high honors for bravery in combat or wounds they had received during the First World War.¹⁷ Over the course of the next few days, the remaining men and new wave of arrestees were marched to the city's Southern train station and shipped off for brief periods of incarceration in the Dachau and Buchenwald Concentration camps.¹⁸ Many of the men once again faced angry crowds hurling stones and vitriol as they made their way from the *Festhalle* to the station. According to Georg Salzberger, at last one man on the fringe of the crowd secretly passed bottles of milk to the men who were bound for an uncertain fate.¹⁹

In the immediate aftermath of the events of the pogrom, the city government began to take actions to clear away the wreckage of damaged buildings in the city. This quickly morphed into a campaign to demolish synagogues and thus efface the most prominent spatial markers of Frankfurt's Jewish community and history. By 14 November, officials in the city's Building Bureau had already advised the mayor to get rid of the *Börneplatz Synagoge*, the *Hauptsynagoge*, the IRG synagogue on *Friedberger Anlage*, and another synagogue in the western suburb *Höchst*. Mayor Krebs assented to the urgency of their request, but insisted that actions would only proceed once the "the Jews themselves...call for the demolition of the synagogues in the inner city." This was a self-fulfilling prophecy and, in a sign of the swiftly deteriorating agency of Jewish communal institutions, representatives of the IG and IRG

¹⁷ LBI Joseph Levy Bl. 71-2; Adolf Diamant, *Gestapo Frankfurt am Main*, 127-128.

¹⁸ As many as 2,621 men may have been deported to the two camps. Steinweis, *Kristallnacht*, 108; Heuberger and Krohn, 180; Monica Kingreen, "Von Frankfurt in das KZ Dachau: Die Namen der im November 1938 deportierten Männer," in "*Nach der Kristallnacht.*" *Jüdisches Leben und antijüdische Politik in Frankfurt am Main 1938-1945*, ed. Monica Kingreen, 55-89 (Frankfurt: Campus, 1999).

¹⁹ LBI ME 238 Sydney Baumann Bl. 3-4; Salzberger, *Leben und Lehre*, 115.

assented to the plan on 21 November. A few weeks later, the leaders of the IG and the IRG decided to merge into a unified Jewish community, something which had not existed in Frankfurt since the 1870s. Most of the rubble from the *Börneplatz Synagoge* was cleared away by March 1939, the remains of the *Hauptsynagoge* were gone by May, and the city Magistrate declared a complete end to the demolition of the *Friedberger Anlage* synagogue on 20 June 1939. Stones from all three buildings were used to construct a wall separating the city's main cemetery from the southern and eastern edges of the new Jewish cemetery that had opened eleven years earlier in 1928. During the late spring, Mayor Krebs also called for the demolition of "the old Jew houses on *Dominikanerplatz*," effectively eliminating the few remaining pieces of the former Jewish ghetto and the original house of the Rothschild banking dynasty.²⁰

Concurrently, the municipal government concocted a plan to force the newly unified Jewish community to transfer its property and many of its assets to the city of Frankfurt. Bureaucrats working for the city Magistrate forced Jewish communal leaders to accede to three key demands. First, the land of four synagogues would move into city hands and would be cleared to make room for a purportedly urgent need to improve transportation capabilities. All other community-owned buildings and the old Jewish cemetery in the center of the city would also become municipal property. despite officially leaving Jewish hands, the community's hospital on *Gagernstraße* and schools including the *Philanthropin* would still be allowed to function for three more years. Finally, although the community would still have the right to conduct new burials at their cemetery on *Eckenheimer Landstraße*, they would have to abide by an understanding that the city would eventually clear the land for the purpose of urban redevelopment. It would appear, then, that the subtext of the city government's plans was to

²⁰ *Dokumente zur Geschichte der Frankfurter Juden*, 256, 276-280; IFS Magistratsakten 5800 Israelitische Gemeinde: Rabbiner, Synagogen Bl. 20-21, 33, 48, 59; *Die Synagogen brennen*, 156-157.

signal their belief that the events of November 1938 marked the beginning of the end for Frankfurt's Jewish community.²¹

Despite the best efforts of the local Nazi government to rid the city of spatial markers of Jewishness, both the old Jewish cemetery and the synagogue in *Westend* managed to survive the Holocaust and the catastrophic bombing of the city during the Second World War. As early as 1933, the mayor's office had been receiving requests to transform the old cemetery into a playground or park that could be used by "Aryan" children living and attending schools in the inner city. Nine years later, the mayor ordered that the city clear the cemetery's approximately 6,000 gravestones in order to make space for a dumping site for debris from potential allied bombing. Curiously, an official in the Cemetery and Burial Bureau ordered the removal of 175 tombstones that were deemed to be of particular aesthetic value and deposited them in the city's second-oldest Jewish cemetery on *Rat-Beil-Straße*. These were later returned to the old cemetery after the war.²² Although it had been ransacked during *Kristallnacht*, the reform synagogue in *Westend* escaped demolition in the winter and spring of 1938-1939. Financial shortfalls brought about by the start of the Second World War put the brakes on the Building Bureau's plan to transform the house of worship into a large indoor swimming pool and Mayor Krebs later objected to the regional *Gauleiter* of the Nazi Party's request that the party's *Kraft durch Freude* leisure program be allowed to convert it into a movie theater or a concert hall.²³ The building

²¹ IFS Magistratsakten 9.392 Erwerb einzelner Liegenschaften 1938-1939.

²² Records in the city archives show that bureaucrats, teachers, and others asked to turn the cemetery into a park in 1933, 1936, 1938, 1940, 1942, and 1943. *Dokumente zur Geschichte der Frankfurter Juden*, 290-291; IFS Schulamt 2.708 Spielplatz auf dem jüdischen Friedhof Dominikanerplatz Bl. 2, 5, 15-16, 18; IFS Magistrat: Nachträge 204 Altstadtgesundung Bl. 19-20; Schembs, *Börneplatz*, 19-20.

²³ IFS Magistrat: Nachträge 203 Wiederverwendung der Synagoge in der Freiherr von Stein-Straße; IFS Magistratsakten 5800 Israelitische Gemeinde: Rabbiner, Synagogen Bl. 109, 111, 113.

was later restored, reopened in 1950, and has since served as a hub of Jewish religious life in the city.

In the aftermath of *Kristallnacht*, both the local and national government began to implement policies that took a more radical approach towards eliminating Jews' economic livelihood and looked to further segregate them from their gentile neighbors. When the Nazis first came to power in 1933, local government bureaucrats had initially concluded that the mass liquidation of Jewish businesses would have a devastating effect on the local economy. In fact, many of Frankfurt's Jewish businesses briefly experienced a surge in revenue during the first years of Nazi rule due to a boost in consumer optimism as Germany moved out of a long phase of economic depression. During the next few years, some Jewish businessmen attempted to counter the rising tide of aryanization and maintain their economic livelihood by working closely with non-Jewish partners. These efforts finally fizzled out after *Kristallnacht* when the Reich Ministry of Economics declared in late 1938 that Jewish-owned businesses would only be allowed to reopen if they were doing so to facilitate a speedy transfer of ownership into "Aryan" hands.²⁴ On 20 April 1939, the city sent around a circular to Jewish residents informing them that "All Jewish renters living in a building that does not belong to a Jew must consider that they will need to vacate their domicile in the near future. These Jewish renters are advised to voluntarily look to be a tenant or subtenant in a building that belongs to a Jew in order to avoid moving into a bureaucratically ordered accommodation." In a bitter twist of irony, the Institute for Common Welfare, which had been created by the baptized Jewish philanthropist Wilhelm Merton, was assigned the task of orchestrating the housing segregation of Frankfurt's Jews by

²⁴ Hermann Göring announced on November 12, 1938 that Jewish business activity would come to an end on January 1, 1939. Nietzel, *Handeln und Überleben*, 209-210, 340-342; Friedländer, *Years of Persecution*, 281.

forcing many of them into at least 300 so-called “Ghetto houses,” most of which were concentrated on non-commercial streets in *Westend*, *Nordend*, and *Ostend*.²⁵

The period after the pogrom also bore witness to a surge of Jewish emigration from the city and. Approximately 8,500 Jews left the city between April 1939 and March 1940, bringing Frankfurt’s Jewish population to around 11,500. As of September 1941 there were 10,357 Jews in the city, a little more than one-third of the Jewish population in the city at the end of the Weimar Republic.²⁶ It is also estimated 715 Jewish Frankfurters committed suicide between 1938 and 1942. Nearly eighty percent of these suicides occurred in 1940, 1941, and 1942. A memorial to the group was later installed at the Jewish cemetery on *Rat-Beil-Straße*.²⁷

At the start of the fall in 1941, the city government asked the leaders of the unified Jewish community to prepare in triplicate a series of identification cards listing the names of community members. These cards would be used to plan the first deportation of Jews from the city in late. Rumors of this action began to circulate through the Jewish population in mid-October and became so pervasive that the local branch of the Gestapo summoned the board members of the Jewish community and ordered them to quell the rumors. At least one Rabbi attempted to do so during a Friday evening service on 16 October.²⁸ Three days later, a large contingent of SA men gathered early in the morning outside of the entrance to the *Palmengarten*

²⁵ Ute Daub, “Die Stadt Frankfurt am Main macht sich ‘judenfrei.’ Zur Konzentrierung, Verbannung und Ghettoisierung der jüdischen Bevölkerung zwischen 1938 und 1943,” in *“Nach der Kristallnacht.” Jüdisches Leben und antijüdische Politik in Frankfurt am Main 1938-1945*, ed. Monica Kingreen, 319-355 (Frankfurt: Campus, 1999), 328, 333, 337-338. For a microhistory of the residents of one of the “Jew houses” see Renate Hebauf, *Gaußtrasse 14. Ein “Ghettohaus” in Frankfurt am Main. Die Geschichte eines Hauses und seiner jüdischen Bewohnerinnen und Bewohnern zwischen 1912 und 1945* (Frankfurt: CoCon Verlag, 2010).

²⁶ *Dokumente zur Geschichte der Frankfurter Juden*, 456-459, 469.

²⁷ Adolf Diamant, *Durch Freitod aus dem Leben geschiedene Frankfurter Juden, 1938-1943* (Frankfurt: Selbstverlag, 1983).

²⁸ Heuberger and Krohn, *Hinaus aus dem Ghetto*, 189.

in *Westend*. They were instructed to work in two-man teams to enter the homes of Jews who were slated for deportation and inform them to pack a suitcase and carry no more than 100 *Reichsmarks* on their person.²⁹ Lina Katz, a protected employee of the Jewish community since 1937, recalled spending hours helping members of the six other families in her “ghetto house” on *Bockenheimer Landstraße* to pack up their belongings before leaving for the streets below.³⁰

At around six o’clock, the Jews who had been rounded up in *Westend* began to march to the eastern part of the city. They followed a route that was nearly identical to the one trod in the first chapter of this dissertation. Along the way they would have walked by the former Rothschild Library. Once a public library famous for housing one of Europe’s largest collections of books and manuscripts on Judaism and Hebrew literature, the building was now the headquarters of the Institute for the Study of the Jewish Question. The institute’s opening event in March of that year had featured a keynote speech by Nazi Party ideologue Alfred Rosenberg and the guests of honor included the Norwegian fascist Vidkun Quisling and Anton Mussert, a founder and leader of the Dutch National Socialist Party.³¹ Upon entering the inner city, Jewish deportees would have passed by the opera house where Hans Earl, Richard Breitenfeld, and Magda Spiegel had once sung and then moved along the *Zeil*, which was once dominated by

²⁹ The local head of the SA stressed to these men that they were strictly forbidden from engaging in any kind of looting or chicanery that would allow them to steal the valuables of the Jews they encountered. Two reports on the activities of individual battalions during that day imparted a smug self-satisfaction at the orderly and effective job of most of the SA men involved. *Dokumente zur Geschichte der Frankfurter Juden*, 509, 511-514.

³⁰ Katz tried her best to follow the group as it marched across town, but was eventually kicked off a street car because of the yellow star on her coat. *Ibid.*, 507; Heuberger and Krohn, *Hinaus aus dem Ghetto*, 189-91.

³¹ Mayor Friedrich Krebs and Wilhelm Grau, the Institute’s director, had laid the groundwork for establishing the institute in a series of letters in 1938 to Reich Minister of the Interior Wilhelm Frick. A. Freimann, “Judaica in der Frankfurter Stadtbibliothek,” *Gemeindeblatt der Israelitischen Gemeinde zur Frankfurt am Main*, August 1941; IFS Ortsgeschichte S3/N 517 Rothschild’sche Bibliothek; Alan E. Steinweis, *Studying the Jew: Scholarly Antisemitism in Nazi Germany* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006), 15, 102, 114; IFS Ortsgeschichte S3/N 276 Institut zur Erforschung der Judenfrage in Frankfurt; IFS Magistratsakten 8.614 Institut zur Erforschung der Judenfrage 1938-1941 Bl. 16, 33-37, 41.

Jewish-owned department stores including *Haus Wronker, Bamberger & Hertz*, and *Geb Brüder Robinson*.³² These and other Jewish-owned stores had long since been aryanized during the first six years of Nazi rule. Their walk ended at the *Großmarkthalle*, the centerpiece of Bruno Asch, Ernst May, and Ludwig Landmann's New Frankfurt program during the Weimar Republic. Early the next morning, 1,125 Jews boarded third-class passenger train cars bound for the Jewish ghetto in Łódź. It is believed that only three of them survived.³³

Two more deportations took place that year. Many of the 1,052 passengers on a 11 November train bound for Minsk died due to a lack of water during their six-day journey. The 992 passengers on a 22 November train to Riga were re-routed to Kaunas and murdered by mass shooting upon their arrival three days later. By the start of 1942 there were only 6,697 Jews left in Frankfurt. Deportations resumed on 8 May and over the course of the year seven trains went to the Theresienstadt concentration camp and, more ominously, "the east," reducing the city's Jewish population to 706. In total, 9,415 Jews had been deported from Frankfurt between 1941 and 1945.³⁴

Conclusion

This dissertation has looked at the dynamics of Jewish integration in Frankfurt am Main during the final years of the first period of Jewish emancipation in Germany. One of its central questions has been whether or not the societal upheaval of the First World War managed to halt

³² According to a Gestapo report in 1936, *Bamberger & Hertz* became a branch of *Peek & Cloppenburg*, which is still a major department store in Germany and Austria. *Lageberichte Teilband I*, 88; Arnsberg, *Bilder*, 23; DRC P30/179 "Das 'Uhrtürmchen' um das Jahr 1900" Bl. 10.

³³ One of the survivors was likely Friedrich Schafrank. Schafrank, "Meine Eindrücke," 103-116; *Dokumente zur Geschichte der Frankfurter Juden*, 513; Monica Kingreen, "Gewaltsam verschleppt aus Frankfurt. Die Deportation der Juden in den Jahren 1941-1945," in "*Nach der Kristallnacht. Jüdisches Leben und antijüdische Politik in Frankfurt am Main 1938-1945*," ed. Monica Kingreen, 357-402 (Frankfurt: Campus, 1999), 358-362.

³⁴ *Dokumente zur Geschichte der Frankfurter Juden*, 477, 532-533; Kingreen, "Gewaltsam verschleppt," 362-68.

or even reverse the growing degree to which Jews were able to participate or felt included in the realms of politics, culture, education, and social relations with non-Jews. It has also examined at cultural and spatial factors including street names, local histories, guide books, and promotional materials about the city both reflected and reinforced elements of Jewish integration.

Jewish integration in local politics grew stronger over the course of the war and during the initial years of the Weimar Republic. Building on a precedent set during the end of the Imperial era, Jewish politicians from across the political spectrum won seats on Frankfurt's City Council during the municipal elections of 1919. The first class of women in the city's municipal government included the pioneering Jewish feminists Jenny Apolant, Henriette Fürth, and Toni Sender. Moreover, the City Council selected Ludwig Landmann, a Jewish apostate, to serve as mayor in 1924. For most of this period, local politicians strove to ensure that their policies and public debates would preserve an element of "confessional peace" between the city's Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish populations. In practice, this meant that antisemitism was beyond the pale of respectable politics and failed as a mobilization in mass politics.

Local politicians' commitment to "confessional peace" began to wane during the final years of the Weimar Republic. Political consensus and functional governance deteriorated as representatives from political parties on the right and, occasionally, the far left joined with local Nazis to block the prerogatives of the "Landmann system." By 1932, the fractious and cash-strapped city government could no longer muster the requisite force to visibly protest antisemitic incidents such as the defacement of a statue of the German-Jewish writer Ludwig Börne. Still, Jewish politicians could be found in the City Council factions of political parties in both the city's ruling coalition as well as the opposition up until March 1933.

Jewish integration was also robust in the realm of cultural life up until the end of the Weimar Republic. Jewish artists were some of the more prominent figures in the companies and leadership of the City Opera and Municipal Theater. Mathilde Einzig won nearly universal adoration for her ability to embody the city's past when performing in farces which were written in local dialect, the politician Max Michel spearheaded cultural programming such as the *Römerbergfestspiele* affiliated with the Goethe Year in 1932, and Georg Swarzenski served as the inaugural General Manager of the city's municipal museums. Beyond the artists themselves, Jews were also an important contingent of audiences and patrons of the city's most important cultural institutions.

Integration remained strong, but patchwork in the realm of education. The policy prerogatives of the Frankfurt Magistrate ensured that Jewish religious education and Jewish religion teachers remained a part of the curriculum and institutional culture at a number of public schools. Jewish religion classes used materials that accentuated the degree to which Jews were an important part of their local *Heimat*. Literary works espousing interconfessional tolerance and critiquing antisemitism was frequently employed by upper school German and English teachers. Jewish teachers appear to have had fine relationships with their colleagues and were rarely subject to hiring discrimination based upon their religion. Memoirs and oral testimonies further reveal that schools were a place of joy as Jewish pupils readily established strong bonds with their gentile classmates. Nevertheless, tuition fees for elite schools meant that Jewish students were rarely exposed to non-Jewish students from lower or more middle-class backgrounds.

Concurrently, the newly founded Goethe University strove to be an institution which would avoid the politics that had long determined limits on Jewish participation in German higher education. The university's charter explicitly forbade hiring discrimination based on

religion and created one of the country's first professorships in Jewish religious studies.

Although antisemitic incidents were not uncommon amongst right-wing elements of the student body during the early years of this new institution, the university's administration consistently took swift action to condemn such actions, at one point banning a Nazi student group for passing out antisemitic leaflets in November 1929. The largely positive recollections of Jewish professors, graduate students, and undergraduates confirm that while present, antisemitism was only a marginal feature of everyday life at the Goethe University. Integration and antisemitism could occur at the same time, with the former being much stronger than the latter.

The first World War appears to have had little or no impact on the social integration of Jews in Frankfurt. That being said, it is important to remember that social integration varied widely according to factors including age, class, gender, and religious observance. Not all Jews wanted deeper relationships with their non-Jewish neighbors. Indeed, Many adult orthodox Jews eschewed social relations with gentiles out of an abiding fear that it would introduce their children to the temptations of assimilation. The male nature of professional life also meant that Jewish men had a greater chance of establishing casual acquaintanceships with their non-Jewish peers. Adult interconfessional friendships frequently began as a result of children meeting in school or on the streets of a given neighborhood. Beyond this, the private sphere of Jewish homes facilitated the creation of family-like ties between middle- or upper-class Jews and their gentile servants. Finally, the realm of associational life revealed both the continued possibilities and limitations for Jewish social integration. While athletic clubs such as *Eintracht* and FSV warmly embraced their Jewish members, Jews were limited to membership in specific masonic lodges.

This dissertation has also looked at how the spatial and cultural politics of the local government included efforts to fund projects which sought to reinforce and deepen Jewish integration and belonging in Frankfurt. Streets named after Jewish individuals served as physical reminders of how integral Jews had been to the development of local, German, and world culture. Throughout this era, government officials similarly commissioned local histories and promotional materials which articulated a vision of Jews as a fundamental part of local identity as well as a motor of the city's longer history of modernization and economic development since the medieval era. This positive notion that Frankfurt was a Jewish space carried over into independent travel guides and brochures for the city from the same era.

In short, it appears that the First World War did not harm or stop Jewish integration in its tracks in Frankfurt am Main. Jews continued to have and in some cases gained greater access to participation in politics, culture, and education. Moreover, Frankfurt's municipal government took consistent actions to support or even deepen Jews' sense of integration and belonging well into the course of the Weimar Republic. While it cannot be denied that Frankfurt charted a unique and more liberal path than other German cities, the larger implications of this study suggest that it will be fruitful for scholars to continue to rethink the way that the impact of the First World War and the *Judenzählung* should factor into over-arching narratives of German-Jewish history.

What happened to Jewish integration in these different spheres of society after 1933? Jewish Integration ended most suddenly and dramatically in the realm of politics. Jews were swiftly forced out of government positions by vote, executive fiat, or force almost as soon as the Nazi party took control of the reins of local political power. Mayor Ludwig Landmann fled the city before his term was over and Max Michel, the head of the Cultural Bureau, found out he was

fired from a newspaper while on a business trip. Rudolf Lion, a Conservative and the longest-serving member of the City Council, appears to have committed suicide three months after being forced out of the body whose culture he had once helped to define.

Although some elements of cultural integration survived the initial shock of the Nazi rise to power, it eroded at a rapid rate over the course of 1933. At first several Jewish opera soloists attempted to jump on the Nazi bandwagon in order to settle a score; they joined with their colleagues in signing a letter which called for the removal of a Jewish colleague they accused of practicing “cultural Bolshevism.” But for the unintended consequences of stipulations in a new laws seeking to purge Jewish bureaucrats, almost all of the Jews at municipal cultural institutions would have been fired. Some Jewish artists who had been in municipal service since 1914 moved to end their careers on their own terms by announcing or negotiating for their retirement. Those who remained were subsequently let go over the course of the next two years as the city found excuses to fire them or not renew their contracts. One of the final traces of Jewish involvement in cultural life came to an end when Arthur Hellmer was pressured to sell his theater company to the city government in the spring of 1935.

Although it took little time for public schools in Frankfurt to transform into one of the primary vectors for transmitting Nazi ideology, certain elements of Jewish integration in this sector of society remained until the latter half of the 1930s. As in the realm of culture, some Jewish teachers survived the initial purge of government jobs in early 1933 due to the stipulations of the Law for the Restoration of the Civil Service. Changes to this law, an intensification of the Nazis’ anti-Jewish policies, and, in some instances, grassroots pressure led the city to fire most of Frankfurt’s remaining Jewish teachers during the first half of 1935. However, the city eventually rehired three Jewish teachers to lead segregated Jewish classes at

two elementary schools at the start of the 1936-1937 school year. Approximately half of Jewish pupils decided to leave public schools during the course of 1933. Those who remained lost close gentile friends and experienced antisemitic bullying within the classroom and frequently on the streets as they walked to and from school. The experience of several students reveals that they were able to persevere in no small part because of secret acts of kindness from certain gentile teachers and administrators during the middle of the 1930s. Still, Jewish Frankfurters continued to enjoy a right to public education until the Reich government took actions after *Kristallnacht* which would ban Jews from attending any of Germany's public schools.

Integration came to a swifter end at the Goethe University. Local Nazi elites were quickly appointed to important positions and the Law for the Restoration of the Civil Service was used to fire almost one-third of the university's faculty between April 1933 and April 1934. Although some Jewish students dropped out, others stuck it out for another two years in the face of mounting persecution. However despite their best efforts, the new administration never managed to rid the university of the Jewish aura of its pre-Third Reich Past.

Although some elements of social integration rapidly deteriorated during the Nazis first year in power, some personal and business relationships survived up until or even beyond *Kristallnacht* in 1938. *Eintracht* Frankfurt's decision to force out its Jewish members in April 1933 shows how even some associations with a reputation for tolerance and a large Jewish membership proved all too willing to self-coordinate with the ideological prerogatives of the Nazi regime. Gentile members of the free professions voiced few objections when the Nazi decision to "restore" the civil service led to the prevented Jews from practicing law. The decision of Frankfurt's government to exclude Jews from public commemorations of the First World War in 1933 and subsequent efforts to create segregated spaces in the mid-1930s also laid the

groundwork for grassroots efforts to prevent Jews from going to restaurants, cafes, and other public spaces of socialization. Over time, personal relationships between Jews and gentiles shifted almost entirely into the private sphere of Jewish homes. This was largely due to gentile fears of retribution for associating with Jews. Nevertheless, the story of Alice Oppenheimer reveals how some Jews survived the horrors of *Kristallnacht* thanks to gentile friends and servants who risked their lives to help them.

There appears to have been a lag time before Nazi ideology managed to upend the prevailing discourse on Jews in local literature. For example, an interrogation of Hans Drüner's 1934 history of the city during the First World War and early Weimar Republic has a dissonant mixture of critique and praise for the Jewish institutions' and individuals' efforts to develop communal welfare systems and take part in mass mobilization on the home front beginning in 1914. By 1938, local literature either depicted Jews as a malign and parasitic influence, as in Friedrich Bothe's *Mit Goethe durch Frankfurt*, or attempted to erase their impact on the city's history and culture altogether.

Curiously, most of the forty-eight Jewish street names in Frankfurt remained in place for two years or even longer after the initial transition to Nazi rule. There are several reasons for this. For one, a lack of bureaucratic oversight meant that only a few prominent streets and squares changed names during the spring of 1933. Despite some grassroots calls to "aryanize" Frankfurt's street grid, little concrete action was taken before 1935 because local officials feared they might need to return generous donations from Jewish families, inspire global backlash for the Third Reich, or even provoke retribution from what the Nazis believed to be nefarious circles of "Jewish high finance." Be that the same, the same government officials, including Nazi Mayor Friedrich Krebs, felt that it would be wrong to gainsay the contributions that Jews such as Paul

Ehrlich and Felix Mendelssohn had made to local, German, and world culture. This meant that traces of the earlier civic spirit which had undergirded the integration of Frankfurt's Jewish community remained in place until the fall of 1938, when the Prussian Interior Ministry ordered municipalities to once and for all rid themselves of Jewish street names. The peculiar history of these street names after 1933 demonstrates that a spatial approach can reveal not only what supported integration before 1933, but also how certain elements of Jewish integration and belonging proved harder to roll back or erase during the early years of the Third Reich.

No matter how strong Jewish integration was in different spheres of Frankfurt's society before 1933, the rapid rate of disintegration during the early years of the Third Reich proved that it rested on a fragile foundation. Frankfurt had proven to be fertile ground for Jewish integration before 1914 because its liberal-dominated municipal government had done so much to support it as a part of their broader politics of "confessional peace." This more or less continued to be the case until the end of the Weimar Republic. City officials worked to ensure that public education would be an integrated space which would encourage tolerant relations across religious lines. Street naming integrated the legacy of the Jewish community into the physical fabric of the city while local literature embraced the degree to which Jews Jewishness had defined the history and culture of the city. City officials also ensured that Jewish communal leaders had a seat at the table in determining education policy and participating in public events.

When the Nazis came to power in 1933, the local government quickly became an engine for rolling back Jewish integration. In this context, it is chilling to consider that many of the local officials who had supported Jewish integration throughout the Weimar Republic took went on to promote its demise during the early years of the Third Reich. As the head of the School Bureau, Rudolf Keller was responsible for firing Jewish teachers and making the Nazis' antisemitic

ideology a regular feature of everyday life at Frankfurt's public schools. Keller and the City Archivist Otto Ruppertsberg were also members of the committee which struggled for so long to determine the proper way to "aryanize" Frankfurt's Jewish street names. Beyond them, scholars and civil society figures such as Friedrich Bothe and Friedrich Lübbecke were willing to write new narratives of local history that were either antisemitic or sought to altogether elide Frankfurt's Jewish past. It is hard to say how much agency these men had in the wake of the regime change in 1933. Nevertheless, their desire to stay relevant or employed meant that they were actively involved in efforts to so thoroughly alter the prevailing political and cultural paradigm in Frankfurt.

I first encountered the actions of these and many other men during my first trip to Frankfurt in June 2016. An illiberal and populist impulse had been spreading around the world. My heart sank and the hairs on my back rose when I read minutes of associations municipal institutions that readily disregarded the fate of their Jewish neighbors and colleagues by quickly moving to align themselves with the Nazis over the course of 1933. I found myself reflecting on the implications of these pages as the United States hurtled toward the 2016 election and they have remained a constant presence in my mind ever since.

Beyond my desire to challenge certain narratives of German-Jewish history, this project took shape against the backdrop of a populist, illiberal wave that has been gathering strength around the world since the start of the 2010s, if not sooner, as well as the disastrous rise of Donald Trump. Although I have and continue to resist the impulse of many on the left to equate Trumpism with Fascism³⁵, the past four years, let alone the past few months, have shown the

³⁵ This is only one of many pieces by scholars who have more eloquently shared my misgivings about the reflex to define Trumpism as a form of fascism: Samuel Moyn, "The Trouble with Comparisons," *New York Review of Books*, May 21, 2020, <https://www.nybooks.com/daily/2020/05/19/the-trouble-with-comparisons/> (accessed on June 14, 2020).

fragility of American democracy. Beginning in the fall of 2016, I found myself constantly rooting for the perseverance and success of not only the federal institutions which figures on the right have labeled “the deep state,” but also local governments and civil society groups which were willing to stand up for the human rights of those groups in America which the forces of Trumpism would seek to exclude from falling under the banner of “we the people.”³⁶ If this dissertation has revealed anything to me, it is how local governance can play an integral role in ensuring the integration, inclusion, and security of minority groups.

I want to end where so much of contemporary Jewish Studies begins: Salo Baron’s seminal essay “Ghetto and Emancipation.” In it, Baron called upon his students and contemporaries to buck the “lachrymose conception” of nineteenth-century Jewish historians who depicted Jewish history as a seemingly unending tale of woe before the advent of emancipation in the wake of the French Revolution. However, beyond this, the essay also contained Baron’s critique of the long-held belief that European liberalism would bring about a “golden age” of redemption for the Jews. Baron’s view should not be surprising, as he had written the essay within living memory of the death of hundreds of thousands of Jews due to inter-ethnic and ideological violence in the Soviet Union and Eastern Central Europe. Indeed, he presciently registered his fear that “growing dissatisfaction with democracy and parliamentarism has brought about a movement back to a modified medievalism” of both fascism and Soviet communism.³⁷

³⁶ I am taking a cue here from Jan-Werner Müller’s helpful analysis of contemporary populism: Jan-Werner Müller, *What is Populism?* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016).

³⁷ At least 100 pogroms had taken place in Poland as of 1919 and an estimated 50,000-200,000 Jews died or were killed during the course of the Russian Civil War. Baron, “Ghetto and Emancipation,” 12; John Efron, Matthias Lehmann, and Steven Weitzman, *The Jews: A History. Third Edition* (New York: Routledge, 2019), 382; Oleg Budnitskii, “Jews, Pogroms, and the White Movement: A Historiographical Critique,” *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 2 (2001): 751.

To the best of my ability, I have tried to write a history of Jewish integration in Frankfurt that seeks to revise some of the more lachrymose elements that have defined both the popular and scholarly understanding of German-Jewish History before 1933. At the same time, though, my own liberal subjecthood and sensibilities have left me with the stubborn belief that a system of liberal democracy with a robust civil society is still the best assurance of preserving the security of the Jewish people into the future. Despite their past and present failings – of these there are many – local and national government institutions should still be seen as vital tools that can be used keep alive the pluralist and multicultural visions which are needed to safeguard and promote the interests and protection of minority groups in our contemporary world.

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