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The Collateral Prisoner. A Bundist Holocaust Survivor between Nazi Perpetrators, Anti-Communism and British World Politics

Abstract: While crossing the border in order to find his comrades in Belgium, Holocaust survivor and Bundist Herman Goldberg was arrested by the British military under the suspicion of being a Communist, a Trotskyist or even a militant member of the Zionist underground. After he had “proven” his “innocence,” he still remained incarcerated for months – to his torment together with high-ranked German Nazis. In a painfully composed letter, Goldberg turned to his comrades in New York who apparently were overwhelmed by the many problems risen by this unique source of post-Holocaust martyrdom of a political activist. Arguing that the collateral prisoner Goldberg suffered this deeply insulting treatment because he was not a member of the movements the British were afraid of, this article presents a full translation of this newly discovered document as well as a contextual interpretation.

From 1945 to 1948, directly after the defeat of Germany, the world was in turmoil. New regimes were about to be established, the Allied war coalition prepared ground for the Cold War, war refugees and displaced persons lived dispersed all over Europe, and British officials struggled between supporting Zionism and the need to stabilize the situation in late-Mandatory Palestine.¹ World politics, one may say with a shrug, impacts the constitution of the whole world but has nothing to do with individual experience. Still, these major currents fell together in a single person's life. And they did so, I argue, paradoxically because this person belonged to a movement which was anything but involved in contemporary world politics.

Herman Goldberg has been a Bundist since his earliest years. As a long-term member of the General Jewish Labor Bund he supported the ranks of the temporarily strongest Jewish party in Poland,² fighting against exploitation, oppression and the rising anti-Semitism and for a secular Jewish and social democratic future, shaped by class-equality, human rights, and an autonomous Yiddish culture.³ He has never been a theorist or author, he was what every

¹ Angelika Königseder, Juliane Wetzel: *Lebensmut im Wartesaal. Die jüdischen DPs (displaced persons) im Nachkriegsdeutschland*, München, Fischer-Taschenbuch-Verlag, 1994; Michael Brenner: *After the Holocaust. Rebuilding Jewish Lives in Postwar Germany*, Chichester, West Sussex, Princeton University Press, 1999; David Childs: *Britain Since 1945. A Political History*, London e.a., Routledge, 2001; Walter Laqueur: *A History of Zionism*, London e.a., Tauris Parke Paperbacks, 2003, pp. 374-378, 572ff.; Joseph Heller: *The Birth of Israel. 1945-1949. Ben-Gurion and his Critics*, Gainesville, University Press of Florida, 2000; Avinoam J. Patt: *Finding Home and Homeland. Jewish Youth and Zionism in the Aftermath of the Holocaust*, Detroit, Wayne State University Press, 2009; see also the crucial collection of sources: Michael J. Cohen: *Jewish Resistance to British Rule in Palestine. 1944-1947*, New York e.a., Garland, 1987.

² On the Bund's strength in local elections, see Jack Jacobs: *Bundist Counterculture in Interwar Poland*, Syracuse, N.Y., Syracuse University Press, 2009, pp. 1-7.

³ On Bundist ideology, see: Koppel S. Pinson: Arkady Kremer, Vladimir Medem, and the Ideology of the Jewish Bund. In: *Jewish Social Studies* 7 (1945), 3, pp. 233–264; Charles E. Woodhouse, Henry J. Tobias: Primordial Ties and Political Process in Pre-Revolutionary Russia. The Case of the Jewish Bund. In: *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 8 (1966), 3, pp. 331-360; Henry J. Tobias: The Jewish Bund in Russia from its Origins to 1905,

labor movement knows as an activist, a man of the street, absent from history books and contemporary debates.⁴ As such he was one the Bund's many backbones – and this is the reason why he stands in the center of an incredible story, experienced shortly after the Second World War.

The first and most important aspect of this story is that Herman Goldberg survived the Holocaust. As the only survivor of his family he held on to the last network available for him: The Bund. Directly after liberation, right at the beginning of his post-war migration process, he attempted to reconnect and reassociate with his fellow comrades. This was by no means unique. Many surviving, escaping, or simply migrating Bundists tell that their first harbor in the process of migration was not a specific Jewish community nor *landsmanshaft*, but rather one or another Bundist circle, the *bundische mishpokhe*. This counts for the well-known Abraham Brumberg in San Francisco as well as for Israel Grosman in Kobe in war-time Japan, or many earlier Bundist in Argentina, whose paradigmatic life stories had been told by Pinie Wald, the local leader of the Bund, with great emphasis.⁵

Bundists, for various reasons, had already been in the United States when the war broke out. Many of them had even been living there for decades. In New York they had lead a devoted and activist life.⁶ When World War II proceeded, all of them became aware of the fact that the East European Bund, once the strongest arm of the Yiddish Labor Movement, would not rise again to former force and glory. Already directly after the outbreak of the Second World War, the Bund had reacted to the new situation by recreating core institutions on the Western shores of the Atlantic. Most importantly present Bundists, some leaders among them were literally stuck in the United States on a fundraising-campaign in 1939, had created the New York based monthly '*Unzer tsayt*' in 1941. This new periodical set course to become the Bundist mouthpiece after World War II and it was instantly distributed to Bundist circles all over the world.⁷ However, apart from that the Bund continued its debates about relocating its center until 1947.⁸ Only by then it officially admitted that Eastern Europe was lost to Socialist activities. But even before the official recreation of the World Bund with its Headquarters in New York many Bundists perceived '*Unzer tsayt*' as the most important expression of the

Palo Alto, Stanford University Press, 1972; Jack Jacobs: *On Socialists and The Jewish Question After Marx*, New York, NYU Press, 1993, pp. 118-142; Mario Keßler: *Parteiorganisation und nationale Frage. Lenin und der jüdische Arbeiterbund 1903-1914*. In: Theodor Bergmann (ed.): *Lenin - Theorie und Praxis in historischer Perspektive*, Mainz, Decaton Verlag, 1994, pp. 219-231; Gertrud Pickhan: *Gegen den Strom. Der Allgemeine Jüdische Arbeiterbund "Bund" in Polen 1918-1939*, München, DVA, 2001; Viktor Gusev: *V. Kossovskii i V. Medem protiv V. Lenina. Mogut li Evrei nazhyvat'sia natsiei i imet' sobstvennuiu gosudarstvennost'?* In: K. lu. Burmistrov e.a. (ed.): *Materialy Trinadtsatoi Ezhagodnoi mezhdunarodnoi mezhdistsiplinarnoi konferentscii po iudaike*, Moskva, Shefer, 2006.

⁴ This letter is the only source available on him. His biography is not part of the "Doyres Bundistrn" nor of other important biographical dictionaries. In the archival fond where the letter is stored there are several questionnaires and reminiscences connected to a Heyman Goldberg, a Bundist of a very similar kind. Hand-written in Yiddish, either names look extremely similar. According to some hard-to-discover evidence, Heyman spent the respective years as an active member of Yiddish unions and the Arbeter-ring in New York, a fortune Herman did not share. Yivo Institute for Jewish Research, New York, Bund-Archives [short: Bund-Archives], 1400, MG-2, #429, ##Goldberg, Heyman (Manye), reminiscence attached to biographical questionnaire (June 15 1971), 2; Yakob Sh. Herts (ed.): *Doyres bundistrn*. 3 vols., New York, Unzer tsayt, 1956.

⁵ Abraham Brumberg: *From Vilna to San Francisco. Pages from a Diary*. In: Sławomir Kapralski (ed.): *The Jews in Poland, Kraków, Judaica Foundation, 1999, pp. 75-84*; Israel Grosman: *Geleyent dem ershtn numer fun 'unzer tsayt' in kobe*. In: *Unzer tsayt* (New York), 3 (1945), pp. 77f.; Pinie Vald: *Mendl Maler*. In: *Bletlekh [Hojas. Semblanzas de mi ambiente]*, Buenos Aires, Aroysgegebn fun yidishn literatn un zshurnalistrn fareyn in argentine, 1929, pp. 7f.

⁶ For a more detailed description, see: Frank Wolff: *Neue Welten in der Neuen Welt? Der Allgemeine Jüdische Arbeiterbund im Migrationsprozess zwischen Osteuropa, den USA und Argentinien, 1897-1947. Eine globale Mikrostudie*. Univ. Diss., Bielefeld, Universität Bielefeld [submitted April 2011], pt. IV.

⁷ Grosman, *Geleyent dem ershtn numer fun 'unzer tsayt' in kobe*, pp. 77f.

⁸ David Slucki: *The Bund Abroad in the Postwar Jewish World*. In: *Jewish Social Studies* 16 (2009), 1, pp. 111-144; See: David Slucki: *The Jewish Labor Bund after the Holocaust. A Comparative History*. Univ. Diss., Melbourne, Monash University, 2009.

already emerging new center in New York. So did Herman Goldberg when he send his letter to the American Bund.

In order to fully understand this letter, it is important to know that Goldberg, among many Bundists in Poland and Russia, had been fighting against Communism as well as against Zionism, arguing for a proud, localized Yiddish workers culture in Eastern Europe, especially in independent Poland. Between 1945 and 1947, Bundists tried to revive the Bund on Polish soil but success appeared to be more and more improbable. Shortly before the Soviet occupation force finally disbanded the Polish Bund,⁹ the New York Bund started looking for the movement's members. They were dispersed literally all over the World. Therefore evaluating the conditions of those who survived became a major task of the comparatively small Bundist group in New York. In order to learn about facts and conditions of survival and in order to understand the new social structure of their own party, the Bundist leaders mounted a campaign of biographical questionnaires.¹⁰ This went along with the reestablishment of the party's Archives, the original of which had been lost in the flames of the Warsaw Ghetto in 1943.¹¹ In fact this campaign to create and to send the questionnaires to known Bundist associations all over the world was one of the first actions the new Bund-Archives in New York undertook. In the first campaign of 1947, two more refined versions would follow until the late 1950s, the Bund asked the surviving members for biographical information as well as for some stations of the experienced martyrdom. This unique and previously unexplored material provides data by which I have been able to draw a picture of Bundist activists based on collective biographies.¹² Yet, Goldberg's letter did not fit in this analysis and neither did the receiving Bundists know how to make use of its content.

I discovered the letter among those questionnaires which found their way back to New York. In the archival list it is only listed as a reply without a questionnaire. Goldberg simply used the distributed address in order to find an official Bundist recipient for his letter. Obviously understanding that this is a unique source, the Archivists type-copied the apparently handwritten original, something that was done with only a tiny number of the hundreds of questionnaires and reminiscences stored in this collection. Only a short handwritten heading has been added to the content of the paper which in all other aspects apparently reflects the original document in full length. There is no original headline, no address, no subject, only the core body and a signed end. It presents information stripped to the bone. However, Goldberg did not provide the kind of data the New York Bundists were looking for – he rather used this campaign as a generator of memory; he simply had to talk about his martyrdom long before the tradition of “narrating the Holocaust” found first established expressions.¹³ He told a story unheard before, a story of tragic misunderstandings which placed a largely passive Bundist in the midst of the struggles between his enemies: Zionism, Communism and the colonial British military. Originally in Yiddish, the full letter reads the following:

⁹ The rest of the Polish Bund was “unified” with the Communist Party under major opposition from its Youth movement. See: Liquidation of the ‘Bund’ in Poland. In: *The Jewish Labor Bund Bulletin* 2 (1949), 14, pp. 2f.

¹⁰ Found in: Bund-Archives, RG 1400, MG2, #429.

¹¹ Marek Web: Between New York and Moscow. The Fate of the Bund Archives. In: Jack Jacobs (ed.): *Jewish Politics in Eastern Europe. The Bund at 100*, New York: New York University Press, 2001, pp. 243-254.

¹² Wolff, *Neue Welten in der Neuen Welt?*, pt. II.3.

¹³ James E. Young: *Writing and Rewriting the Holocaust. Narrative and the Consequence of Interpretation*, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1988, pp. 1-14, 99-114.

Copy of Herman Goldberg's letter¹⁴

I went through a path of concentration and working camps, Majdanek, Skarżysk,¹⁵ Buchenwald, physically heavily broken, I have lost my wife and my three children.

After liberation I decided to travel from Germany to Belgium to my friends and *khaverim*.¹⁶ Coming to Aachen, the German-Belgian border city towards the English zone, I had to experience hard and tragic weeks and moral torment.

The English border guard stopped me and found in my possession some small letters by comrades from the camps for the Bundists in Belgium; on me I also carried a membership card of the Bund. Because of that I was directly brought to Montgomery's headquarters.¹⁷ The interrogations lasted for four weeks including different torments and they kept asking me: What is the Bund? When has it been founded? What are the names of the leaders and where are they? If I was a Trotskyist? What is the difference between Communists, Bundists and Trotskyists? If we in fact were not engaged in underground work with Zionists, willing to bring people to Palestine?

I was brought into a bunker where I sat for four weeks under conditions of heavy hunger. I told them that in England they could get information about who have been our leaders:¹⁸ Ehrlich and Alter. About what our movement is, if he does not believe me, he should ask international representatives like de Brouckère,¹⁹ Spaak,²⁰ Léon Blum²¹ for Henryk Ehrlich and Viktor Alter, who used to represent our party.²² This is the way the interrogation went, and as a result, after two months, they were telling me that they were finally convinced of my Socialist stand and that I am not connected to Zionism.

¹⁴ Hand-written by the Archivist.

¹⁵ Apparently Skarżysko Kamienna, a forced labor camp for Jews close to Radom, Kielce, Poland. See also a Bundist depiction of life and struggle in this camp: Mordekhai Shtrigler: *Goyroles*, Buenos Aires, Tsentral-farband fun poylishe yidn in argentine, 1952.

¹⁶ The Yiddish term *khaver* stands for both 'friend' and 'comrade.'

¹⁷ Field Marshal Bernard Montgomery (1887-1976) was one of the most important figures in the war against Nazi Germany. He led the victorious 8th army in Africa, later co-planned D-Day and lead most important battles in the West. His troops liberated Bergen-Belsen. This earned him the position as Commander-in-Chief of the British Forces in Germany, later he became Chief of the Imperial General Staff, the highest position in British military. Montgomery extensively wrote about his experiences, as well as there is a huge amount of literature available, see: Bernard Law Montgomery: *The Memoirs of Field-Marshal, the Viscount Montgomery of Alamein*, K.G., London, Collins, 1958; Colin F. Baxter: *Field Marshal Bernard Law Montgomery, 1887-1976. A Selected Bibliography*, Westport, Conn., Greenwood Press, 1999.

¹⁸ England had been the basis for the development of the Jewish labor movement and London, in the Second World War, was also the place where the Polish government in exile, including a Bundist representative, stayed and carried out its important diplomatic work.

¹⁹ Louis de Brouckère (1869-1951), one of the leaders of the Labour and Socialist International and a devoted Belgian socialist leader who maintained well established contact with the Bund, see: Dzshon Alter: *Lui de Bruker*. In: *Unzer tsayt* (New York), 7-8 (1951), pp. 8f.

²⁰ Paul Henri Spaak (1899-1972), long-term member of the Belgian Socialist Party, Belgian prime minister in 1946 and again 1947-1949.

²¹ Léon Blum (1872-1950), 1902 co-founder of the Parti Socialiste Français (PSF); 1936 he became France's first Socialist and Jewish prime minister under the popular front government. Goldberg either misses to report or more likely was not informed that the most important Bundist in the United States now were Jacob Hertz, Emanuel Sherer and Jacob Pat, who could easily have been contacted (given the fact that the British officials had been willing to do so).

²² According to Marek Edelman's well informed testimony Alter and Ehrlich had been personal friends with the named Spaak and Blum, but also with Otto Bauer and Émile Vanderfelde, who is said to have saved Alter's life already in an earlier imprisonment under Lenin. Anka Grupinska, Joanna K. Zuchowska, Joanna Szczenska: Interview with Marek Edelman, Part 19: Alter and Erlich, 2003. URL: <<http://www.webofstories.com/play/15613?o=MS>>.

It takes very much time writing everything down for you, I am exhausted. And, dear *khaverim*, there is something else our press should not conceal. We were imprisoned together with the most important Nazi criminals, diplomats that had been working for von Papen, correspondents of the German news agency, technical scientists, superintendents, colonels and *sturmführer*, with all the felonious and thuggish pack [*mit dem gants kloper getseyg dem banditishn*], I protested every time I met the interrogating judge, how can they put Jews together with their murderers into one cell? It didn't help, we were not threat better than our murderers.

March 7 1946, me and 10 other Jews were send to a German internee-camp together with the Nazis. The conditions were horrible, one bread for 8 men and half a liter of soup. The German bandits had the right to receive parcels from their families and so we turned to the English commander of the camp as we had none, because the Nazis had killed our our wifes and children, fathers and mothers, and they had burned them in the crematories. They should let us turn to UNRA²³ or to the Jewish Committee.²⁴ But unfortunately all was in vain.

We have been 56 Jews. Among us 16 women, one pregnant in her 8th month, all of them heavily weakened; we would had starved if not coincidence had come to help us. This was a new English relief organization and a certain women from the organization named Zelma and an English Rabbi who freed me and all the other Jews on April 1st 1946 from the German camp.

Isn't this a paradox? I think the public should know about this.

(-) Herman Goldberg²⁵

[Typescript with hand-written additions, Yiddish language. YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, New York, Bund-Archives, RG 1400, MG-2, #429, ##Envelope: Goldberg, Herman. Emphasis in original.]

Activism and Jewishness, taken together in the eyes of the British officials, rendered Goldberg as highly suspicious, a suspicion that postponed Herman Goldberg's final liberation from unjust imprisonments connected to the Second World War a full year. The two parts of the letter barely interact, they are, as Goldberg says himself, written in greatest pain. Writing, in this sense, also meant to struggle for words. On the literary side no discourse of how to speak about the Holocaust had been established.²⁶ This took decades and Goldberg lacked

²³ The UNRRA (United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration) was active between 1945 and 1947 in the case of the refugees in Europe.

²⁴ Probably the Jewish Labor Committee, JLC, which was founded and run mainly by Bundists in the United States. It had been carrying out important relief work already in the 1930s, but in the War period became an important actor in saving Socialist activists from Europe. See: Gail Malmgreen: *Labor and the Holocaust. The Jewish Labor Committee and the Anti-Nazi Struggle*, Silver Spring, MD, George Meany Memorial Archives, 1991; Jack Jacobs: *Ein Freund in Not. Das jüdische Arbeiterkomitee in New York und die Flüchtlinge aus den deutschsprachigen Ländern. 1933-1945*, Bonn, Forschungsinstitut der Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, Historisches Forschungszentrum, 1993; Catherine Collomp: *The Jewish Labor Committee, American Labor, and the Rescue of European Socialists. 1934-1941*. In: *International Labor and Working-Class History* 68 (2005), 1, pp. 112-133; Wolff, *Neue Welten in der Neuen Welt?*, pp. 500, 514ff.

²⁵ "Herman Goldberg" hand-written by the Archivist.

²⁶ As Young pointed out, this establishment was required in order to propel the public commemoration. This, as social psychology has argued already earlier, was connected to the very concept of the Holocaust, which also sought to deprive the prisoners their humanity. See: Young, *Writing and Rewriting the Holocaust*; William G. Niederland: *Folgen der Verfolgung. Das Überleben-Syndrom Seelenmord*, Frankfurt am Main, Suhrkamp, 1980.

any modes or genres to “narrate the unnarratable.”²⁷ Furthermore Goldberg had to combine his post-Holocaust refugee problems with the direct experiences of the Holocaust.

As for the British side, there were three possible layers they expected Goldberg to be participating in. As a leftist Jew, Goldberg was perceived as a possible threat to British objectives either as a Communist, as a Trotskyist, or as a Zionist. As a member of a movement apparently irrelevant for global post-war politics, he stood for principles that exceeded Montgomery's imagination of Jewish politics – in that sense British officials had accepted Zionist or Communist arguments that valuable movements had to struggle for state power, the latter finding its monumental description in Trotsky's interpretation of the Russian Revolution.²⁸ This also ignored the fact that only a decade before the Polish Bund had been a massive challenge to either group.²⁹ But now the Bund and its former force were already forgotten. This is especially tragic as only a few years earlier, the Bundist representative to the Polish emigration government in London, Shmuel Zygielbojm, fatally set himself to fire in order to protest against the German mass murder and the world's ignorance towards the Jewish case with the last of all means: public suicide.³⁰ This act “on the peoples' altar”, as one of the many Bundist commemorators called it,³¹ had no enduring effect on the presence of the Bund in English officials' thought, just like the fight of Bundists groups in Great Britain against Communism and Zionism which had been dominant all through the Interwar-period, now had been forgotten. According to Goldberg, the British interrogators approached him with questions about the fundamental character of the Bund, but refused to simply use available information on its character and ideology. For the detainee it was particularly unsettling that no one even tried to gather easily available information that could instantly have ended the undignified interrogations – given the fact that the British officials had any interest in letting him go. Therefore these interrogations and accusations must have been a double torture for Goldberg, first because of the very fact of unjust imprisonment and secondly because of their content.

As a convinced Social Democrat, Goldberg had been fighting against Communism in Poland and the world.³² Whereas the conflict between Bundism and Zionism was only approaching its climax, the conflict between Bundism and Communism had already erupted in the

²⁷ Richard Kearney: *On Stories*, London, Routledge, 2002, p. 169; S. Lillian Kremer: *Holocaust Literature. Agosin to Lentin*, New York: Routledge, 2003, p. 569. In the last decade new research on the autobiographical Self after the Holocaust has revised our understanding of the possibilities of narrating the Holocaust, especially by blurring the border between memory, fictionalization and the establishment of genres. See: Erin H. McGlothlin: ‘Im eigenen Hause’ ... ‘vom eigenen Ich’. *Holocaust Autobiography and the Quest for ‘Heimat’ and Self*. In: Walter Schmitz (ed.): *Erinnerte Shoa. Die Literatur des Überlebenden. The Shoa Remembered. Literature of Survivors*, Dresden, Thelem, 2003, pp. 91-119; Arianne Eichenberg: *Zwischen Erfahrung und Erfindung. Jüdische Lebensentwürfe nach der Shoa*, Köln-Weimar-Wien, Böhlau, 2004; Elrud Ibsch: *Die Shoa erzählt. Zeugnis und Experiment in der Literatur*, Tübingen, Max Niemeyer, 2004; Christoph Münz: ‘Wohin die Sprache nicht reicht...’ *Sprache und Sprachbilder zwischen Bilderverbot und Schweigegebot*. In: Bettina Bannash, Almuth Hammer (eds.): *Verbot der Bilder - Gebot der Erinnerung. Mediale Repräsentation der Shoa*, Frankfurt am Main-New York, Campus, 2004, pp. 146-165; Silke Segler-Messner: *Archive der Erinnerung. Literarische Zeugnisse des Überlebens nach der Shoa in Frankreich*, Köln-Weimar-Wien, Böhlau, 2005.

²⁸ Leon Trotsky: *The History of the Russian Revolution*, Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press, 1957.

²⁹ On this constellation, see: Zvi Gitelman: *The Emergence of Modern Jewish Politics. Bund and Zionism in Eastern Europe*, Pittsburgh, PA, University of Pittsburgh Press, 2003; Ulrich Herbeck: *Das Feindbild vom “jüdischen Bolschewiken”*. *Zur Geschichte des russischen Antisemitismus vor und während der Russischen Revolution*, Berlin, Metropol, 2009; on the impact that Trotsky's “History of the Russian Revolution” had on the linear understanding of the development of the Russian Revolutions, see the classical introduction of: Tsuyoshi Hasegawa: *The February Revolution. Petrograd 1917*, Seattle, University of Washington Press, 1981.

³⁰ Zigelboym-bukh, Nyu York: *Unser tsayt*, 1947; Sophia Dubnov-Erich: *A bukch - a denkmol*. In: *Unzer tsayt* (New York) 2 (1947), pp. 20-23; Artur Zigelboym: *Tsum gevisn fon der velt*. In: *Historisher Zambukh. Materialn un dokumentn tsutshayer tsu der geshikhthe fun Algemeiner Yidisher Arbeter-Bund*, Varshe, Ringen, 1948, pp. 87-91.

³¹ Arih: *Oyfn mizebeyekeh fun folk*. In: *Unzer tsayt* (New York) 4 (1953), pp. 37-39.

³² Abraham Brumberg: *The Bund. History of a Schism*. In: Jacobs (ed.), *Jewish Politics in Eastern Europe*, pp. 81-89.

Interwar years. In independent Poland the relation between the Bund and Labor-Zionists had been coined by both conflict and cooperation. But the struggle between Communists and Bundists had already mounted into its largest drama in 1941/42: The Ehrlich-Alter case.

In Goldberg's memory this collectively traumatic case must have been present as the latest encounter between the two former fractions of the Russian Social Democratic Party. When World War II was raging high, the two leaders of the Polish Bund had managed to escape to Soviet Territory. Like other escaping Bundists they were instantly incarcerated. A larger number of rank-and-file Bundists could finally leave Soviet lands, mostly to the United States. Taking into consideration the conflict between the Bund and the Bolsheviks it is less surprising that many surviving Bundists perceived imprisonment by Stalinist authorities as equal to German labor and concentration camps. For them, already the early Bolsheviks, and even more the later Stalinists, had committed massive treason to the social democratic cause. Also, those former Bundists who had joined the Communist Party in Russia after the October Revolution were among the first to be persecuted in the Great Terror of 1937.³³ For Bundist refugees there was not much difference between Stalinist practice and the torture they had experienced in the Ghettos and German Labor camps.³⁴ In this perception the Ehrlich and Alter case is elementary. Both outstanding leaders of the Polish Bund were captured, released, re-imprisoned and finally tried under various unjust accusations. There they were found guilty of crimes equal of treason (to a state they never were citizens of) and finally secretly killed by the NKVD.³⁵ Bundists screamed the murder of their leaders into the world; but they were heard only by a few fellow Socialist organizations.³⁶

As a Bundist, Goldberg also opposed the Zionist interpretation of Jewish history and future. The Bund resisted the teleology of the *aliyah* with greatest force. In the post-war world the Bund heavily complained about the factual establishment of Zionist leaders as representatives of Jews; a trend which completely undermined their Diaspora-based understanding of Jewish life and culture. This, as a matter of fact, led to a complete marginalization of the Bund's political ideas.³⁷ Bundists in DP camps, for example, felt forced against their will to settle in Israel or even to enlist in the *Haganah*, the Zionist underground army in Palestine. For Bundists – and despite all the conflicts between British forces and the Zionist movement in the post-war years – the international policy on displaced persons and the subsequent liquidation of the camps simply were “a move designed by the Zionists – who govern the life in the DP camps – to increase the population of Israel.” The Bund, on the other hand, demanded the refugees' right “to emigrate according to their free will and choice.”³⁸ Those were the years, in which the long-known conflict between Bundists and

³³ Zvi Gitelman: *Jewish Nationality and Soviet Politics. The Jewish Sections of the CPSU. 1917-1930*, Princeton, NJ, Princeton University Press, 1972, pp. 154, 513-523.

³⁴ The best expressions are the mentioned questionnaires of 1947. In different sections the archivists asked for “arrests” as well as for experiences in “camps”, by which they supposedly only meant German camps. The answering Bundists filled in different imprisonments in Russia, Poland or elsewhere in their first section, but all of them entered their experiences of war-time imprisonment on Nazi-occupied territory as well as in the Soviet Union under “camps”. See, Bund-Archives, RG 1400, MG 2, #429, ##different questionnaires, TYP III, for relevant typology, see: Wolff, *Neue Welten in der Neuen Welt?*, p. 319.

³⁵ Gertrud Pickhan: *Das NKVD-Dossier über Henryk Erlich und Wiktor Alter*. In: *Berliner Jahrbuch für Osteuropäische Geschichte* 2 (1994), pp. 155-186.

³⁶ See especially the furious commemoration issue: *Unzer tsayt* (New York) 4 (1943); furthermore: Y. Hart: *Henryk Erlich und Viktor Alter. A leb'n fun kemfer - a toyt fun martirer*, New York, Amerikanische representatsye fun “bund” in Poyln, 1943; *Erich-Alter-Memorial-Conference* (ed.): *In Memoriam Victor Alter, Henryk Erlich. The Living Record of Two Leaders of Labor*, New York, 1943; Samuel A. Portnoy: *Henryk Erlich and Victor Alter. Two Heroes and Martyrs for Jewish Socialism*, New York, 1951.

³⁷ For this purpose the Bund even intensified its English-language publications which were only directed to the outside of the movement and served propagandistic purposes. See especially: *Jewish Labor Bund Bulletin*, New York (1947-1949), which extensively covered the Bundist problems in Europe.

³⁸ *Jewish D.P. Camps in Germany*. In: *The Jewish Labor Bund Bulletin* 2 (1949), 14, p. 7.

Zionists finally led to an unbridgeable rift between the movements.³⁹ Therefore the mere fact that it took Goldberg two months to prove that he was not a Zionist was not only a personal insult for him as a Bundist activist. It also indicates that the British officials in their political imagination had no room left for non-Zionist Jewish movements – a fact that reveals the inevitability of the British political orientation towards Zionism in the post-War world. All accusations brought against Goldberg connected him with his and his movement's enemies. This might well explain why he describes the interrogations with so much emphasis, in expressed pain and comparably detailed. He could be sure that his fellow Bundists in New York were able to fully understand his distressed personal situation, comrades who partially also had suffered under Communist persecution and were now facing aggressive marginalization by Zionists.

Of course, for British officials other problems counted. And they were of increasing importance. First the complications between the Western Allies and Stalin opened out into the Second Red Scare (later manifesting itself through the McCarthy era in the US) and into the Cold War on the global level which experienced its early climax during the Berlin Blockade in 1948/49. The analysis of these developments lies beyond the focus of the article. However, secondly Zionist organizations in Palestine mobilized against the British mandate, especially the Jewish terrorist organizations of *Irgun* and *Lehi* as well as the growing Zionist underground army *Haganah*. Together they led a radical fight for an independent nation and caused hundreds of deaths and much turmoil in post-War Palestine. Most infamously, *Irgun* in June 1946 bombed the King David Hotel, killing 91 persons of different nationalities. All forces involved fought with a mixture of open revolt and guerilla-terrorism, creating an immense and constantly growing problem for the British mandatory troops and administration.⁴⁰ Still, the only factual "links" between Goldberg and the Zionist underground were his activism and his Jewishness. It was irrelevant that Goldberg carried material of an organization which openly opposed these trends and which used to be central to Jewish political life, but which now, within only a few years of horror and mass-murder, had completely lost its connection to the contemporary Jewish politics and Leftist *realpolitik*.

Looking at these constellations, one can explain why the British interrogators put so much emphasis on Zionism and Communism. But what about Trotskyism? Goldberg refers to this case twice. This accusation was, like in the case of Communism, deeply interwoven with the establishment of stereotypes and can only be understood by asking for the possible presence of Trotskyism in the British mind. Despite the fact that Goldberg was on his way into Belgium, the Belgian situation had little to do with this accusation. Belgium, of course, had had a stronger revolutionary Trotskyist movement before the war as well as the one which emerged in the 1960s.⁴¹ After the war, however, it was shattered to pieces. When the Trotskyist groups joined the ranks of the Socialist Party in 1950, they had no more than twenty members.⁴²

Things were somewhat different in Great Britain. Here groups were small as well. But they actively fostered the formation of independent and revolutionary circles in Europe. Especially

³⁹ On the personal consequences of Socialist Zionists attempts to remove Bundists from all international associations, see: Susanne Miller: German Social Democrats and Polish Bundists in Exile in London. 1939-45. Memories. In: Jacobs (ed.), *Jewish Politics in Eastern Europe*, pp. 179-182.

⁴⁰ Gudrun Krämer: *Geschichte Palästinas. Von der osmanischen Eroberung bis zur Gründung des Staates Israel*, München, C.H.Beck, 2003, pp. 351-362.

⁴¹ The life and activism of Ernest Mandel, one of the major figures of Trotskyism in Belgium, has only recently been subject to a first voluminous biography: Jan Willem Stutje: *Ernest Mandel. A Rebel's Dream Deferred*, London, Verso, 2009.

⁴² Robert J. Alexander: *International Trotskyism. 1929-1985. A Documented Analysis of the Movement*, Durham-London, Duke University Press, 1991, p. 107.

the Revolutionary Communist Party (RCP, 1944-1949) exercised fervent activism, guided by a certainty of social revolution after the war.⁴³ Despite a small membership of only a few hundreds the RCP reached broader masses in Great Britain especially through its mouthpiece, the '*Socialist Appeal*', which sold copies in the lower tens of thousands. After the war the RCP strongly supported Indian independence and the Chinese revolution.⁴⁴ With some success the party also utilized recent debates for their aims: After the Nuremberg trials had been opened in November 1945, the RCP ran a campaign in order to again direct interest to Stalinist show trials and the false accusation brought against the absent main defendant Trotsky in Moscow 1936-38.⁴⁵ This brought British Trotskyism into public consciousness – and surely also stirred up the ranks of British police and military. For the latter another activity might have been even more important. According to Martin Upham, it was a key feature in the international program of the RCP that many of its branches fraternized with German war prisoners. Among them they spread Trotskyist material, trying to win the German soldiers over to their revolutionary causes. This political contact was highly illegal and was persecuted by the authorities, at least one activist got arrested.⁴⁶ When Goldberg wanted to cross the border to Belgium, he was arrested because he carried suspicious propaganda material, most likely in Yiddish and therefore illegible for British soldiers. He furthermore was a member of a socialist party, identified by his confession as well as by his membership card. But what was the bridge between the RCP's militancy and Goldberg's Bundism?

Inside British society, especially in the higher ranks, the notion of "Jewish Bolshevism" has been increasingly gaining support. This had started directly after the October revolution. Indeed, in 1918 the Bundists within the British Socialist Party, which later turned into the British Communist Party, had proposed a resolution stating "that the Jewish question must be solved by the Russian Revolution."⁴⁷ The party accepted unanimously. Decision such as this coined the notion of "Jewish Bolshevism."⁴⁸ But on the other side, strict Bundist anti-Zionism had a much smaller impact on public opinion. The named resolution demanded the revolutionary solution of the "Jewish problem" by strongly rejecting any Zionist or Territorialist stands. On the contrary, it was additionally adopted that "[t]he home of the modern Jew was in Eastern Europe."⁴⁹ However, anti-Semitism does not leave room for subtleties and therefore the synonymization of "Jews" with "activists" and "troublemakers" was fundamental to the formation of British anti-Semitism when it increased during the 1930s through the Second World War. As Tony Kushner has demonstrated, in these years anti-Semitism left behind the exclusionary violent circles of radical right-wing groups and entered mainstream consciousness as well as higher strata of British society.⁵⁰ From these anti-Semites'

⁴³ Jens-Peter Steffen: *Militant Tendency. Trotzismus in der Labour Party*, Frankfurt am Main e.a., Lang, 1994, p. 48.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 49-51.

⁴⁵ Alexander, *International Trotskyism*, p. 467.

⁴⁶ Martin Upham: *The History of British Trotskyism to 1949*. Univ. Diss., Hull, University of Hull, 1980, pt. III. XIII, FN 47. URL: <<http://www.marxists.org/history/etol/revhist/upham/upmen.htm>> [accessed: June 13 2011].

⁴⁷ Sharman Kadish: *Bolsheviks and British Jews. The Anglo-Jewish Community, Britain and the Russian Revolution*, London, Frank Cass, 1992, p. 233.

⁴⁸ Lately two studies examined the emergence of this picture. Especially Herbeck's discourse analysis provides deep insights into the emergence of this anti-Semitic stereotype, a depth that Gerrits' highly problematic "historical interpretation" cannot reach. See: Herbeck, *Das Feindbild vom "jüdischen Bolschewiken"*; André Gerrits: *The Myth of Jewish Communism. A Historical Interpretation*, Bruxelles e.a., Lang, 2009.

⁴⁹ Kadish, *Bolsheviks and British Jews*, p. 233.

⁵⁰ Early research only emphasized the rare but violent character of British anti-Semitic groups. Since Tony Kushner's pivotal book, which revealed the broader basis of British anti-Semitism, much of this has been revised. Gisela C. Lebzelter: *Political Anti-Semitism in England 1918-1939*, London-Basingstoke, Macmillan, 1978; Colin Holmes: *Anti-Semitism in British Society. 1876-1939*, London, Edward Arnold, 1979; Tony Kushner: *The Persistence of Prejudice. Antisemitism in British Society During the Second World War*, Manchester-New York,

perspective it must have been “revealing” to see that the small British Communist groups were among those who countered British anti-Semitism with greatest effort.⁵¹ But to include Goldberg into this group, apart from his and the Bund's activism against those features of Trotskyism and Communism which the British officials also opposed, meant to suspect Jewish activists of some sort of Judeo-Bolshevism just because of political activism and their Jewishness.⁵²

In such a mindset Zionism and any forms of Communism were the Jewish standard against which Goldberg had to prove his innocence. His activism was a reason to suspend the principle of *in dubio pro reo*. Clearly it must be said that the presumptuous identification of a Jewish activist either with Communism or Zionism constitutes an act of practiced anti-Semitism. It rejects the person's individual right to self-determination and group-affiliation and rather identifies him with movements of allegedly “Jewish” character which furthermore posed nothing but a threat to British interests.

Additionally it must also be noted, that Goldberg's ongoing imprisonment together with German perpetrators was cruel in our understanding of the collective and psychological consequences of the Holocaust, but it was not distinctively anti-Semitic. It rather was pure ignorance. It is important to understand that the Holocaust had not yet been framed. Despite rare contemporary usages of the term “Shoah” in the Warsaw Ghetto, the horror did not even have a name.⁵³ For British officials the treatment of survivors, as comes to light in this case, was marginal in comparison to the containment of old and new threats.⁵⁴ The ongoing presence of old enemies was embodied by the German prisoners – and Goldberg finds only a strikingly clear language for them. The absence of discursively established labels and names for the German perpetrators is striking, he apparently lacked coherent terms and therefore could only use the empathic description of “*dem gantsn kloper getseyg dem banditishn*”, an expression that can barely be translated into any language. Of course, British officials also were aware of the brutality of the German criminals. This and their military defeat were the reasons for their incarceration. But also on this side many war crimes had not yet been implemented in collective memory, they had only been exposed to a broader audience by the Nuremberg trials which just begun to uncover most important cornerstones of Nazi atrocities. However, Montgomery himself had commanded the troops which liberated Bergen-Belsen, he definitely knew about the horrors committed in camps under Nazi rule. Yet, Goldberg, as a Jew, remained imprisoned with the Nazis and also the interrogation continued, this time for unexplained reasons and despite the acknowledgment of his harmless “Socialist” conviction. Goldberg does not offer any explanations why he was held captive nor does he introduce his fellow-prisoners or their previous fate. The only aspect of the second part lacks factual descriptions and concentrates only on unjust martyrdom, it forgoes the later canonization of Holocaust narratives of the post-war period, which focused

Manchester University Press, 1989; Id.: *Beyond the Pale? British Reactions to Nazi Anti-Semitism. 1933-39*. In: Tony Kushner, Kenneth Lunn (eds.): *The Politics of Marginality. Race, the Radical Right, and Minorities in Twentieth Century Britain*, London, Frank Cass, 1990, pp. 143-160; Louise London: *Whitehall and the Jews. 1933-1948. British Immigration Policy, Jewish Refugees and the Holocaust*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2003.

⁵¹ Henry Srebrnik: *The British Communist Party's National Jewish Committee and the Fight Against Anti-Semitism During the Second World War*. In: Kushner, Lunn (eds.), *The Politics of Marginality*, pp. 82-96.

⁵² For the specific formation of this stereotype in post-war Poland, see: Jan T. Gross: *Fear. Anti-Semitism in Poland after Auschwitz. An Essay in Interpretation*, New York, Random House, 2006, pp. 199-243.

⁵³ Münz, 'Wohin die Sprache nicht reicht...', p. 163; Ulrich Wyrwa: *Holocaust. Notizen zur Begriffsgeschichte*. In: *Jahrbuch für Antisemitismusforschung* 8 (1999), pp. 300-311.

⁵⁴ The same argument counts for the case of the Hungarian Jews. Most of them could have been easily rescued from the death camps if the Allied had bombarded the railway tracks leading there. Despite the knowledge of the ongoing deportation to the death camps in the ongoing war these railways were not considered targets of major priority. Christian Gerlach, Götz Aly: *Das letzte Kapitel. Ideologie, Realpolitik und der Mord an den ungarischen Juden*, München, Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 2002; Saul Friedländer, Martin Pfeiffer: *Das Dritte Reich und die Juden. Die Jahre der Vernichtung 1939-1945*, München, C.H.Beck, 2006, pp. 653-657.

on witnessing and malady to a much greater extent than later postmodern depictions.⁵⁵ For him this situation, as much as the depictions of Holocaust prisoners, was characterized by the absence of individual and collective agency. This imprisonment therefore drastically differs from usual Bundist depictions of political imprisonment in Russia, which was shaped by political action and propaganda. For Bundists, especially the workers, imprisonment in Russia functioned as a biographical watershed which converted an activist life into a truly revolutionary one.⁵⁶ For Goldberg it only meant suffering.

Shortly after his final liberation Goldberg was already driven by the later so dominant "obligation to narrate," yet still lacking an audience willing to listen as well as genres which could provide models of narration.⁵⁷ But despite all stylistic similarities there is a dramatic difference between Goldberg's letter and known Holocaust-narrations: he recalls a case that happened *after* the Holocaust. Whereas most early memoirs of survivors focus on the time period between the German attack on Poland and the individual liberation from the concentration camp, Goldberg cannot tell an equally framed story. His struggle for freedom had still been going on.

Furthermore Goldberg did not only lack an established discourse, there were also no central institutions for commemoration. Therefore it is only natural that Goldberg used the Bundist questionnaire-campaign for his purposes and, like his last line reveals, takes the Bund in general as a mediator of his experiences towards a public – of whatsoever kind. More precisely, he confused the New York Bundists, who were mainly busy with recreating the internal functionality of the party, with *the* public which he furthermore expected to be addressed in Yiddish. Erroneously enough, for him Yiddish still was a language of a movement, of a public, of the *folksman*.⁵⁸

How about the recipients? His letter found the New York Bundists in a state of greatest awareness. The Bund had been one of the first actors to distribute the knowledge on the Holocaust in the United States.⁵⁹ Now directly after the war, the Bund was engaged in a continuing fight for memory. For their whole lives, Bundists went on to commemorate the Warsaw Uprising, a tradition which was initiated in very first years after the wars end, when

⁵⁵ See for instance: Claudia Brecheisen: *Literatur des Holocaust. Identität und Judentum bei Jakov Lind, Edgar Hilsenrath und Jurek Becker*. Univ. Diss, Augsburg, 1993; Eichenberg, *Zwischen Erfahrung und Erfindung*; for a popular example of more recent narrations, see: Ruth Klüger: *Landscapes of Memory. A Holocaust Girlhood Remembered*, London, Bloomsbury, 2003.

⁵⁶ Frank Wolff: *Heimat und Freiheit bei den Bundisten Vladimir Medem und Hersch Mendel*. In: Julia Herzberg, Christoph Schmidt (eds.): *Vom Wir zum Ich. Individuum und Autobiographie im Zarenreich*, Köln, Böhlau, 2007, pp.301-323; Wolff, *Neue Welten in der Neuen Welt?*, pp. 103-106.

⁵⁷ See esp.: Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi: *Zachor. Erinnere Dich! Jüdische Geschichte und jüdisches Gedächtnis*, Berlin, Wagenbach, 1996; more precisely: Manuela Günter: *Identität und Identifizierung. Einige Überlegungen zur Konstruktion des 'Juden' nach dem Holocaust*. In: Pól O'Dochartaigh (ed.): *Jews in German Literature since 1945*, Amsterdam, Rodopi, 2000, pp. 435-446; Katja Schubert: *Notwendige Umwege. Voies de traverse obligées. Gedächtnis und Zeugenschaft in Texten jüdischer Autorinnen in Deutschland und Frankreich nach Auschwitz*, Hildesheim-Zürich-New York, Olms, 2001; Münz, 'Wohin die Sprache nicht reicht...'

⁵⁸ On the decrease of Yiddish, see: Joshua A. Fishman: *Yiddish in America. Socio-Linguistic Description and Analysis*, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1965; Holger Nath: *Yiddish as the Emerging National Language of Eastern European Jewry*. In: *Sociolinguistica* 6 (1992), 52-64; Nina Warnke: *Immigrant Popular Culture as Contested Sphere. Yiddish Music Halls, the Yiddish Press, and the Process of Americanization. 1900-1910*. In: *Theatre Journal* 48 (1996), 3, pp. 321-335; Nathan Cohen: *The Yiddish Press and Yiddish Literature. A Fertile but Complex Relationship*. In: *Modern Judaism* 28 (2008), 2, pp. 149-172; Gertrud Pickhan: *Yiddishkayt and Class Consciousness. The Bund and Its Minority Concept*. In: *East European Jewish Affairs* 39 (2009), 2, pp. 249-263.

⁵⁹ Many reports were issued in 'Unzer tsayt', but the Bund also started publishing in English for this purpose, see: *Free Poland. Joint Declaration by the Representatives-in-Exile of the Polish Socialist Party and the General Jewish Workers' Union of Poland Who Represent Today the Entire Polish Labor Movement*, New York, Delegation of the Polish and Jewish Labor Movements of Poland in the United States, 1941; Yankel Wiernik: *A Year in Treblinka. An Inmate Who Escaped Tells the Day-To-Day Facts of One Year of His Torturous Experience*, New York: The American Representation of the General Jewish Workers Union of Poland, 1944.

the Holocaust yet still was a nameless tragedy.⁶⁰ Bernhard Goldstein's book "The Stars Bear Witness", one of the first books published by the Bundist publishing house *Unzer tsayt*, is known as a cornerstone among the earliest expressions of survivor memoirs.⁶¹ Yet, Goldberg's letter was a challenge to the Bundists. American Bundists were about to re-establish the party and its archives in New York. This was no historical project, it had to serve party goals, mainly the reconnection of its members by gathering information about the defunct movement.⁶² But the bandwidth of problems raised in Goldberg's letter seemed to exceed Bundist attention – it was handled carefully, but finally only added to the files and the questionnaires as merely personal information of one of many survivors.

This depiction of a Bundist between their enemies' struggles was overwhelming also for the Bundist leaders in New York. Goldberg, who slipped between every chair possibly available, provided too much information and problems to connect his experiences to the problems of the day – yet still his martyrdom was not born out of nothing. It was a result of actions, convictions and ideology – on all sides – as well as of spontaneous migration and mere coincidence in a world that tried to minimize the very facts of coincidence and spontaneous migration by re-establishing order. But this order turned out to be entirely new. Herman Goldberg certainly was right: This was a paradox. But exactly this makes his case a revealing expression of the political constellations of the post-war-world. And maybe that is why the public never heard of his case so far.

For all actors involved, the World was in the process of re-framing. Bundism was a feature of the pre-Holocaust world. The tragic aspect is that neither Bundists nor British officials saw the similarities of many of their positions when it came to Communism or Zionism. This, of course, has much to do with the Bund's rising sectarianism. Before the Second World War, the movement, in a unique way, knew how to merge Utopian ideals with fervent activism. But now it was as remote from contemporary politics as any social movement could possibly be.⁶³

It is rather emblematic than irony of history that Goldberg, the Bundist who once proudly carried the flags of a revolutionary secular Jewry, was freed thanks to the agency of a Rabbi. Bundism, the once so strong opponent of Religion and Zionism now was reduced to an

⁶⁰ This was not only done in the well-known annual acts in Warsaw, also in Buenos Aires first Bundists and now their children keep commemorating the uprising. IWO Institute for Jewish Research, Buenos Aires, #1114, ##various posters and leaflets; Konstany Gebert: Poles Commemorate Warsaw Uprising in Marek Edelman's Style, With Silence. In: *The Jewish Daily Forward*, 30. April 2010, URL: <<http://www.forward.com/articles/127434>>.

⁶¹ Bernard Goldstein: *Finf yor in varshever geto*, New York, *Unzer tsayt*, 1947; it has been translated very early: Bernard Goldstein: *The Stars Bear Witness*, New York, Viking Press, 1949; the earliest Bundist reports and autobiographies on the Holocaust found only little response in the English-speaking world, they were published either on individual initiative or in Bundist publishing houses. For instance: P[inkhas] Shvarts: *Dos iz geven der onheyb*, New York, *Arbeter ring*, 1943; Wiernik, *A Year in Treblinka*; Yosef Rotnberg: *Fun Varshe biz Shanghai*. *Notitsn fun a polit*, Mexico, Shloyme Mendelson *fond bay der gezelschaft far kultur un hilf*, 1948; Pinkhas [Aleksander] Mints: *In di yorn fun yidishn umkum un vidershtand in frankreykh*. *Perzenlekhe zikhroynes*. Buenos Aires, *Yidbukh*, 1956; Yakob Tselemenski: *Mitn farshnitnem folk*. *A kuryer fun bund dertseyt vegn yidishn khurbn un vidershtand unter di deyshe natsim*. New York, *Unzer tsayt*, 1963; Fayvel Shrager: *Oyfn rand fun tsvey tkufes*, Paris, 1976.

⁶² Norma Fain Pratt: *Archival Resources and Writing Immigrant American History*. *The Bund Archives of the Jewish Labor Movement*. In: *The Journal of Library History* 16 (1981), 1, pp. 166-176; Web, *Between New York and Moscow*; Iu. N. Amiantov, I. S. Rozental': *Iz istorii Arkhiva Bunda i fonda Bunda v Rossiiskom gosudarstvennom arkhive sotsial'no-politicheskoi istorii (RGASPI)*. In: *Arkhiv evreiskoi istorii* 5 (2009).

⁶³ However, it must be noted that the Bund had a small but important political comeback after its reformation 1947/48 and that it became a carrier of the Yiddish revival of the 1960s and furthermore an important cultural institution in Argentina and Australia for a couple of decades. Whereas David Slucki emphasized the political content of this comeback "in the regions", I have argued elsewhere that the Bund rather contributed to and profited from the emergence of a new commemorative culture. See: Slucki, *The Bund Abroad in the Postwar Jewish World*; Slucki, *The Jewish Labor Bund after the Holocaust*; Frank Wolff: *Historiography on the General Jewish Labor Bund. Traditions, Tendencies and Expectations*. In: *Medaon* 4 (2009), URL: <http://www.medaon.de/pdf/M_Wolff-4-2009.pdf>; Id., *Neue Welten in der Neuen Welt?*, pt. III.

object in-between emerging forces. Yet, this does not render Goldberg's experiences marginal to the currents of contemporary history. To the contrary, his story reveals the relevance of Zionism even far from its direct reach. It also allows a deep insight into British fears as well as it clearly shows the differences between the pre- and the post-war world.

It is my argument that Goldberg's experience may well speak for the post-war Bund in general. He was entirely misunderstood because he only spoke Yiddish – which he, on the other hand, needed to have a room for speaking at all.⁶⁴ He furthermore experienced greatest problems by being pushed between the forces of the post-Holocaust world precisely because he did not belong to them, but yet seemingly was an activist of a very devoted kind. As a member of the Bund, Goldberg belonged to the circles of the old social movements and European parties which tried to maintain what has been left of them. Most of them struggled hard to re-emerge as social and political players, Bundism and Trotskyism among them. Many entirely lost momentum after 1945. For the Bund this was not only a result of the German mass-murder, also the emerging Cold War pushed it between a rock and a hard place. As a result of the entirely national orientation of Zionism after the end of the Second World War also problems between the internationalist Jewish Labor Movement and Zionist Labor branches rapidly increased.⁶⁵ The Bund re-constituted itself as the internationalist World-Bund in 1947, a move of great devotion to its ideals but barely fit for constructive politics in a nationalizing world. This only increased isolation. Drawn by emerging opportunities, now even left-wing Zionist groups left behind old alliances and entirely oriented themselves towards the creation of the state of Israel. As Eric Hobsbawm noted, even for the rather left-wing Zionist labor movement, “internationalism was insignificant in practice.”⁶⁶ This was, by no means, Bundist politics.

The obvious irrelevance of Goldberg's life to 20th century politics makes his story a showcase for the constellations of the emerging world order. Just because he was active but not yet involved, he represents what has changed from the first to the second half of the “age of the extremes.” Therefore his letter also is a challenge to historians: In order to explain his few lines, almost every aspect of Jewish politics in the 20th century history must be considered, from the old social movements and the Holocaust-experience, over British re-orientation in the post-war world and the dominant discourses of suspicion and red-scare, to refugee-migration as well as to conflicts in and between different generations of Jewish social movements and parties. Goldberg's letter yet is another case to demonstrate that “marginalities” reveal much better insight to the effect of politics and ideologies than the pure observations of centers such as party programs or leaders.⁶⁷

Goldberg's case shows that social history as well as cultural history may do well to stronger re-connect the levels of personal and cultural involvement and public discourse with the persistent force of ideology and highly politicized practices of activists who, to a large part, determined their self-orientation despite all differing and contemporary trends and discourses

⁶⁴ On this necessary connection, see: Wolff, *Neue Welten in der Neuen Welt?*, pt. IV.

⁶⁵ This was a problematic constellation. 'Labour' traditionally had a rather critical stand towards Zionism and yet it took office in London in 1945, right when the Zionism pressure rose to a new level. See: Yosef Gorny: *The British Labour Movement and Zionism. 1917-1948*, London-Totowa, N.J., Frank Cass, 1983; Peter Weiler: *British Labour and the Cold War. The Foreign Policy of the Labour Governments 1945-1951*. In: *The Journal of British Studies* 26 (1987), 1, pp. 54-82; David Cesarani: *Anti-Zionism in Britain, 1922-2002. Continuities and Discontinuities*. In: *Journal of Israeli History* 25 (2006), 1, pp. 131-160.

⁶⁶ Eric J. Hobsbawm: *Opening Address. Working-Class Internationalism*. In: Frits van Holthoon, Marcel van der Linden (eds.): *Internationalism in the Labour Movement 1830-1940*, Leiden, Brill, 1988, p. 13.

⁶⁷ Andreas Renner: *Ad marginem. Europäische Aufklärung jenseits der Zentren*. In: Alexander Kraus, Andreas Renner (eds.): *Orte eigener Vernunft. Europäische Aufklärung jenseits der Zentren*, Frankfurt am Main-New York, Campus, 2008, pp. 9-28.

of power and dominance. Goldberg stands for an omnipresent mode of human behavior which opposes contingency by group affiliation and uses political conviction, ideology and Utopian thought in order to maintain a coherent collective self – even if his orientation exceeded the schemes which the interrogators had developed according to their own interests. Therefore Goldberg's story, as a historical source, also calls for a stronger consideration of politics and ideology in cultural history.

On the other hand, the explanation of the ideological side of this story requires a shift from classical intellectual history towards a history of practices of ideologies. In social movements, rank-and-file activists like Goldberg were the multipliers, propagators and recipients at the same time. As such they had no elevated stand, they were in the middle of history – for the better or for the worse. But especially in order to capture the immense power of political and ideological identification – even after such traumatic experiences like the Holocaust – individuality and personal experiences came back into play for understanding the intellectual and ideological strength of a movement or a party.

Still, power is a factor of highest relevance. However ideological confrontation were exercised, they were superseded by simple ignorance and stereotyped suspicion by the more powerful actors in this story. The shared humiliation of being imprisoned together with the German perpetrators well exceeds political history. Michael Brenner in his crucial book on displaced persons called the general situation of the Jews in post-war Germany as “liberated – but not free.” Goldberg, in this sense, represents an extreme case.⁶⁸ He had only been saved from the Nazis as perpetrators, but neither freed from imprisonment nor from forced passivity. Liberation for him was only to come in 1946, when he could finally escape imprisonment and the German perpetrators as well.

As a whole piece Goldberg's letter is a challenge to simplified interpretations of Jewish identity. He strongly reminds us of the power of heterogeneity in Jewish life and subsequent political orientation. Speaking for many other authors, Cilly Kugelman once argued that “to live as a Jew after the Holocaust left little room for self-determination of ones Jewish identity.”⁶⁹ Yet, Goldberg reveals that this is not necessarily the case.⁷⁰ For him offered and purely nationalized identifications were irrelevant, he determined his Jewish identity by referring to his activism and very own political conviction which had been challenging any cultural mainstream within Jewry for decades. Jewish life indeed had been irreversibly changed by the German mass murder – but the actors themselves had by no means given up their will for self-definition and free association.

⁶⁸ Brenner, *After the Holocaust*, 7.

⁶⁹ Cilly Kugelman: *The Identity and Ideology of Jewish Displaced Persons*. In: Y. Michal Bodemann (ed.): *Jews, Germans, Memory. Reconstructions of Jewish Life in Germany*, Ann Arbor, MI, University of Michigan Press, 1996, p. 66.

⁷⁰ For the former Bundists and Communist Hersh Mendel the experience of the Holocaust determined his final orientation towards Labor Zionism. In mainstream historiography this Zionist bias of political determination tends to be reproduced. Yet it must be noted that among Bundists Mendel was the extreme case and not Goldberg. Not surprisingly Mendel's memoirs have been translated into various languages, whereas those of devoted Bundist workers are available in Yiddish only. See: Hersch Mendel: *Zikhroynes fun a yiddishn revolutsyoner*, Tel Aviv, Peretz, 1959; Id.: *Zikhronot mahapkhan yehudi*, Tel Aviv, ha-Va'ad la-hintsiat zikhro shel Hersh Mendel al yad Hotsa'at sefarim M. Niuman, 1974; Id.: *Erinnerungen eines jüdischen Revolutionärs*, Berlin, Rotbuch, 1979; Id.: *Mémoires d'un révolutionnaire juif*, Grenoble, Presses universitaires de Grenoble, 1982; Id.: *Memoirs of a Jewish Revolutionary*, London-Wenchester, Mass., Pluto Press, 1989; for a contextualization, see: Wolff, *Heimat und Freiheit bei den Bundisten Vladimir Medem und Hersch Mendel*; strict Bundist examples are: Layb [Leybethske] Berman: *In loyf fun yorn. Zikhroynes fun a yidishn arbiter*, Varshe, Aroysgegebn durkh memuar-komitet baym Dvinsker “Bund” brentsh 75 fun arbeter-ring in Amerike, 1936; Yoel Novikov: *Zikhroynes fun a yidishn arbiter*, Tel Aviv, Kultur Lige, 1967; Hersh Metaloviets: *A veg in lebn. Fragmente fun an oytobiografie*. 2 vols., Tel Aviv, Farlag Y.L. Perets, 1982.