

**“LES VOYAGES DE L’INTELLIGENCE”  
CULTURAL TRANSFERS  
BERLIN-PARIS-JERUSALEM  
March 21-23, 1999**

This Franco-German-Israeli conference had dual objectives. The first was to present, in Jerusalem, research on cultural transfer which has been conducted for over ten years by Michael Werner and Michel Espagne and their colleagues in Paris. The second was an attempt to apply their methods and relate some of their findings to both pre and post-state Israel.

The conference was organized jointly by three institutions: the Franz Rosenzweig Center of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, the CNRS-UMR 8547<sup>1</sup>, and the CRFJ.

It is well known that Jews were among those who promoted cultural transfers in nineteenth century Europe and the first third of the twentieth century; hence the focus of the conference was on this heterogeneous group. The lectures, which were also made available in simultaneous translation, fall into two periods – the nineteenth and the twentieth century – and two directions – within Europe, and towards Palestine and Israel.

Michel Espagne, the author of a recent major publication on the subject, spoke on the Bohemian milieu in Paris.<sup>2</sup> He charted the itineraries of Moritz Gottlieb Saphir, Julius Dessauer, Moritz Hartmann, Alfred Meissner and described the reception of Leopold Kompert who was born in Prague; the Bohemian Judaism of this city often served as the literary model of Jewish everyday life in France. Katarina Middell’s discussion of economic history dealt with the commercial ties between Brody, Leipzig and Lyon and the “merchant republic” forming a real zone within Europe. Under the control of the Potocki family, Brody (on the border of eastern Galicia and Russia) became a major commercial center through the efforts of its Jews (part of the Habsburg Empire after 1772). Jews were present at the famous Leipzig fairs where the Huguenots carried merchandise as far

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<sup>1</sup> UMR 8547 “Germanic countries: history, culture, philosophy” combines URA 106 and URA 1999.

<sup>2</sup> *Les Juifs allemands de Paris à l’époque de Heine. La translation ashkénase*, Paris, PUF, 1996.

as Lyon. These trader Jews were often the fathers of a Freud or a Kafka. Norbert Waszek discussed the almost total lack of interest in Israel to Eduard Gans (1799-1839). A student and successor to Hegel, one of the greatest jurists of his time, this Jewish convert was at the hub of intellectual exchanges between Paris and Berlin. Ambassador of German culture in France and representing the French spirit in Prussia, he underwent baptism in 1825 in order to be appointed university professor, after a very official refusal in 1822, ten years after the so-called emancipation of the Jews in Prussia.

Olivier Agard presented Isador Kracauer (1852-1923) whose personal trajectory started in Sagan in Lower Silesia and continued through Breslau to Berlin. His monumental *History of the Jews of Frankfurt*, (1925-1927) moves from a 'tearful' history to a justification of emancipation. The community itself served as the model for the transition to modernity. This *History* is thus the lay equivalent of the *Memorbuch*. Delphine Bechtel analyzed the impact of the 13,000 Russian students in Germany between 1900 and 1914. She describes the various groups (Bund, Revolutionary Socialist and Zionist) and shows that exile was prime reason prompting writers to deal with the issue of Jewish national identity, a topic which was explored in the paper presented by Ewa Berard. Among the constellation of writers publishing in Russian or in Yiddish, three portraits were presented: Chaim Zhitlovsky, Zev Latzky (Bartholdi) and Isaac Nachman Steinberg. Florence Heymann remained in this Jewish multilingual milieu with her presentation of Bukovina. She takes Rose Auslander – the name itself is emblematic – (1901-1988) to exemplify three points: Jewish identification with German culture, the features of these German speaking Jewish writers in a region where Rumanian was spoken, and the anxiety of survivors to write in German after the Holocaust.

The second half of the conference dealt with the twentieth century and relationships with Palestine and the State of Israel. Marc B. de Launay raised the philosopher Leo Strauss' own question of why although a Zionist he remained in the Diaspora and continued to proclaim himself a Jew. His travels from Berlin to New York via London and Paris also reflected his changing interests, from the interpretation of Maimonides then to the debate on Spinoza, and finally to classical philosophy. For Strauss "the Jews were chosen in order to prove there is no redemption." The State of Israel clearly constitutes a radical change in the history of the Diaspora (*Galut*) but in no way marks its end. Isaac Gerchon argued that the origins of much of the kibbutz philosophy in Europe can be traced to movements such as the *Jung jüdischer wanderbund*, *Kadimah Haolim*, *Habomim*, as outgrowths or splinter groups. In Palestine as well there was no communication between the Ostjuden and the German Jews. Some

kibbutzim such as *Hephzibah* remained purely German speaking for quite some time.

Anthony Skinner provided a dual metamorphosized portrait of the aristocratic and scholarly figures of Gershom Scholem and Salman Schocken through the libraries of these book lovers. Scholem brought his library from the *Scheunenviertel* of Berlin to the bourgeois neighborhoods of this city and then to Jerusalem while Schocken's books came back to Paris (the Heine collection) after a brief sojourn in Jerusalem, or to Germany where they originally came from. One was a famous scientist the other a great entrepreneur who, from Zwickau to Tel Aviv, had enormous impact on the life and times of his country.

Ewa Berard compared the fates of Ilya Eherenburg and Osip Mandelshtam, superimposing their relationships to Judaism with their ties to Russia, a relationship that touched the most profound reaches of memory. Exile (French and German) heightened Russian nationalism. The West/ Russia dichotomy enabled the third term – Jewish identity – to play a role. Ehrenburg was drawn to Francis Jammes whom he had translated, and then turned to Leon Bloy after Peguy. Mandelshtam decided to be baptized in 1910 after three-year “grand tour” (Sorbonne and Heidelberg). He believed he had solved the problem permanently whereas Ehrenburg would remain a wandering Jew.

Dominique Trimbur illustrated how the Hebrew University was indebted to German culture from its inception (1902) to its official opening (1925) and in the first decades of existence. The “German model” with its emphasis on research, was often challenged especially after 1933. The case of Adold Frankel exemplified the vagaries of what emerges as a highly complex relationship. Jacques Ehrenfreund dealt with a conceptual translation; namely the domestication by Jewish scientists of German historical methods. Ehrenfreund showed that Jewish historical discourse cannot be understood independently of German historicism and that the negation of German nationalism in German historicity reveals the creative and innovative features of cultural transfer. He describes the “*Historical commission for the history of Jews in Germany*” (founded in 1885), the “*Society for the advancement of the Science of Judaism*” (founded in 1902) and the founding in 1905 of the “*General Archives of German Jews.*” Science here clearly has an integrative and then a redemptive function without chauvinistic or nationalistic coloration. Universalism is clearly the core of Jewish culture.

Claude Klein went beyond the framework of the university to deal with legal practices in the young State of Israel. The figures of Pinhas Rosen, Uri Yadin and Haim Cohn illustrate the positive and durable effects of this Jewish German culture that was so denigrated at the time. Klein drew attention to the common roots and backgrounds of several generations of

jurists, and hinted at the influence of Carl Schmitt. Out of the 26 Supreme Court judges, seven were born in Germany and eight studied there. Guido Liebermann and Doron Liederland described the extraordinary German impact on the history of psychoanalysis and medicine in Palestine. It is known that Max Eitingon founded the Institute of Psychoanalysis in Berlin... and in Jerusalem. Aside from allusions to the thorny issue of translations of Freud into Hebrew and the complexity of his relationship with Judaism, Liebermann pointed to the work done by Dorian Feigenbaum who practiced as of 1921 in Jerusalem where he directed a mental asylum, *ezrat nashim*. The Zionist Left introduced Freud but the resistance was so strong that Feigenbaum emigrated to the USA. After mentioning the surgeon Max Markus and the Hermann brothers, Bernhard and Samuel Zondek, Doron Neiderland discussed three fields: psychoanalysis, radiology and mental health, while highlighting the exceptional self awareness expressed by this group of German physicians.

Marc Crepon's analysis of the use of German as a vehicle for cultural transfer in the writings of Jean Amery, Nelly Sachs and Hannah Arendt recapitulated points made elsewhere in this conference. Jean Amery states persecution disrupts the relationship with the language; Sachs argues that "the only thing that remains is the mother tongue" However, is there really a totally autonomous and historically uncontaminated German language to claim as one's own? The issue holds for any national culture. Nelly Sachs believes that the basic issue is on the contrary to use this language for the good of Israel as a testimony of martyrdom, as a victory over six million deaths. When these writers answered questions on language and the groups speaking it, this was also expressed in terms of the community. Jonathan Judaken traces a real and imaginary journey in the life and thought of Sartre from Berlin to Jerusalem, showing that Sartre remained a prisoner of the sixth and seventh districts of Paris. His relationship to Israel was three-fold -- a concept, an identity, and a geographical location. The itinerary traces little known or weakly contextualized works from *La Nausee* and *l'Enfance d'un chef* to the double issue of *Temps modernes* in 1967, and naturally the *Reflexions sur la question juive* and his trip to Israel (March 14-30, 1967).

Stephane Moses, the founder and former director of the Franz Rosenzweig Center explored a more difficult topic: rather than dealing with fascination or a debt to a culture he analyzed rejection, concealment and scorn. In Palestine and in Israel there was a "resistance to transfer" which virtually prohibited the reading and reception of Emmanuel Levinas, Edmond Jabes, Manes Sperber and Franz Rosenzweig himself. These "omissions" have meanings that call for interpretation.

The first lesson to be drawn from these very intense conference days is that ideas, texts, and writers circulate and are linked to their impact on

the present and the future. Over and beyond this spiritual wandering (and this is the second lesson of this conference) which is often the lot of the exiled, the excluded or the abandoned, we see how a national culture is built, in what ways the foreigner shapes me to be “himself like someone else.” When applied to the Mediterranean, it is worth inquiring what use was made of Europe in this region. Here as well cultural and social memory is intersection, hybridization, and sedimentation.

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