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**DIE JIDDISCHE SCHULE DER ERWACHSENEN:
WARSAW YIDDISH PRESS AND GERMAN-JEWISH
CONTACTS IN 1915–18**

Abstract

The article discusses the complex situation of Warsaw Yiddish press during the German occupation of Warsaw (1915–18), entangled in contacts with both the official German authorities as well as representatives of German Jewish milieus (namely, Zionist and Orthodox ones). It is based on press reports from Yiddish and German-Jewish newspapers, archival sources and some personal memoirs. The newspapers taken into account are *Haynt*, *Der Moment*, as well as the German-oriented *Varshaver Tageblatt* and *Dos Yudishe Vort*.

Keywords: Yiddish press, German-Jewish press, Polish Jewry, German Jewry, Jews in Warsaw

The First World War was a peculiar period in the history of Yiddish press circulating in the Polish territory incorporated in the Russian Empire.¹ On the one hand, the outbreak of the war and its

¹ This article is part of a broader research project on the history of mass Yiddish press in Warsaw before 1918. For more on the development of the press before the First World War, see Joanna Nalewajko-Kulikov, “‘Who Has Not Wanted to Be an Editor?’ The Yiddish Press in the Kingdom of Poland, 1905–1914”, *Polin. Studies in Polish Jewry*, xxvii (2014), 273–304. The situation of the Jewry in Polish lands during the war is discussed in, e.g., Egmont Zechlin (in collaboration with Hans Joachim Bieber), *Die deutsche Politik und die Juden im Ersten Weltkrieg* (Göttingen, 1969); Konrad Zieliński, *Stosunki polsko-żydowskie na ziemiach Królestwa Polskiego w czasie pierwszej wojny światowej* (Lublin, 2005); Marcos Silber, *Leumiut shona, ezrahut shava! Ha-ma’amats le-hasagat otonomia li-yehudei polin be-milhemet ha-olam ha-rishona* (Tel Aviv, 2014); *idem*, ‘Ambivalent Citizenship – The Construction of Jewish Belonging in Emergent Poland (1915–1918)’, *Simon Dubnow Institute Yearbook*, x (2011), 161–84; *idem*, ‘Yiddish Language Rights in Congress Poland during the First World War: The Social Implications of Linguistic Recognition’, *Polin. Studies in Polish Jewry*, xxvii (2015), 335–65.

consequences increased an enormous importance of the informative role of the press. The danger, insecurity and uncertainty of tomorrow made the need for last breaking news so great that even some of the religious Jews, who would have never done it before the war, came around to reading the daily press. On the other hand, resulting from the military operations, evacuations, and other developments, both the authors and the readers were dispersed or separated from one another, while the pieces of news coming over were subjected to strict military censorship. With more and more failures suffered by the tsarist army, the head staff were influenced by increasing anti-spy and anti-Semitic sentiments, which affected the Jewish press, suspected of intermediation in transmitting secret information to the enemies. Finally, publication of journals and magazines in Yiddish and Hebrew was barred as from 18 July 1915.² In Warsaw, the order affected three daily newspapers: the Hebrew-language *Ha-Tsefirah*,³ and the Yiddish dailies *Haynt*⁴ and *Der Moment*.⁵

The ban was abolished in August 1915, by means of one of the first orders imposed by the German occupiers in Warsaw. This produced, however, completely new conditions for the functioning of the Jewish press, since a multiplicity of levels on which Jews encountered the Germans was characteristic of the German occupation. Describing these relations as 'German-Jewish' would certainly bear their extensiveness, for neither of the parties was a monolithic group. On the German side, the Jewish question was investigated by the civil and military administration in the occupied territory, as well as by German Jewish milieus, Zionist and Orthodox alike. If there was any common

² Mendl Mozes, 'Di ershte yorn funem varshever "Moment"', in David Flinker, Mordechai Tsanin, and Shalom Rozenfeld (eds.), *Di yidishe prese vos iz geven* (Tel Aviv, 1975), 81.

³ Established 1862 in Warsaw by Haim Zelig Slonimski and produced until 1931, *Ha-Tsefirah* was the first Hebrew weekly (and daily, from 1886 on) in the Kingdom of Poland. Originally a science popularisation magazine, it later on turned, with Nahum Sokolow as the chief editor, into a Zionist periodical with a political commentary bias.

⁴ Issued 1908–39, *Haynt* was a daily set up in Warsaw by Shmuel Yankev Yatskan. Considered a tabloid before 1914, it functioned since 1920 as the official organ of the Zionist Organisation in Poland.

⁵ Published between 1910 and 1939, *Der Moment* was a daily edited by Tsevi Prylucki; this strongest competitor of *Haynt* represented (since 1917) the Folkist party.

denominator for the thus-defined ‘German party’, probably the German stereotypes regarding the *Ostjuden* and the Yiddish language – the views worth some attention – and the will to use the *Ostjuden* in supporting the Germans in the war would be the one.⁶ There were at least two related groups among Polish Jews: the so-called national Jews (commonly referred to as ‘Jewish nationalists’), represented by *Haynt* and *Der Moment*, and an Orthodox milieu (putting aside the assimilated Jews, who, owing to the language barrier, were not readers of Yiddish/Hebrew-language press, and were not represented by it). It was not long afterwards that the milieus of *Haynt* and *Moment*, which usually described themselves as *natsyonal-yeidn* or *natsyonal-bashtimte yidn* supported the Zionist or Folkist movement; their conviction that being a Jew was not only about religion, because nationality came first, was the reason for either cooperation or conflict when it came to coexist with the German Jews.

I

THE VIEWS ON THE OSTJUDEN AND YIDDISH

September 1914 saw an appeal to Polish Jews announced in the German and German-Jewish press, and distributed also as leaflets,

⁶ The reference literature is extremely rich; hence, the subject-matter can be discussed herein very much in brief: this essay basically seeks to outline the background for the period’s complex contacts between the Germans, German Jews, and Jews in the occupied territory. Cf., in the first place, Steven E. Aschheim, *Brothers and Strangers. The East European Jew in German and German Jewish Consciousness, 1800–1923* (Madison, 1999²); *idem*, ‘Eastern Jews, German Jews and Germany’s Ostpolitik in the First World War’, *Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook*, xxviii (1983), 351–65; Sarah Panter, ‘Zwischen Selbstreflexion und Projektion. Die Bilder von Ostjuden in zionistischen und orthodoxen deutsch-jüdischen Periodika während des Ersten Weltkriegs’, *Zeitschrift für Ostmitteleuropa-Forschung*, lix, 1 (2010), 65–92; Wilhelm Terlau and Beate Wunsch, “‘Ein Gespenst geht um in Deutschland (...)’”. Die ‘Ostjudenfrage’ im Spiegel der deutschsprachigen jüdischen Presse während des Ersten Weltkriegs’, in Achim Jaeger, Wilhelm Terlau, and Beate Wunsch (eds.), *Positionierung und Selbstbehauptung. Debatten über den Ersten Zionistenkongress, die ‘Ostjudenfrage’ und den Ersten Weltkrieg in der deutsch-jüdischen Presse* (Tübingen, 2003), 67–109; Yfaat Weiss, ‘East European Jewry as a Concept and Ostjuden as a Presence in German Zionism’, *Gal-Ed*, xviii (2002), 73–88; *eadem*, “‘Wir Westjuden haben jüdisches Stammesbewußtsein, die Ostjuden jüdisches Volksbewußtsein’”. Der deutsch-jüdische Blick auf das polnische Judentum in den beiden ersten Jahrzehnten des 20. Jahrhunderts’, *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte*, xxxvii (1997), 157–78.

in Yiddish and Hebrew.⁷ The phrase ‘Muscovite iron yoke’ was used; persecutions imposed by Russia, the pogrom and the Beilis trial, were recalled; and, a promise was made: “Our banners shall bring you law and freedom, equal civic rights, freedom of religion, freedom of living without obstacles, in your own spirit, across the domains of economic and social life.”⁸

The appeal was produced in the milieu of elder-generation German Zionists who perceived the support offered to the Germans – the victorious party, as they believed – as an opportunity for Zionism to meet its goals in the Middle East, by gaining support for the idea of developing a Jewish state in the historical territory of Palestine, then part of the Ottoman Empire. Max Bodenheimer, one of the influential leaders of the Zionist movement in Germany, submitted (from the earliest days of the war) to the German authorities memoranda postulating the foundation in the Polish territory of a multiethnic buffer state, which would be allied with Germany and Austria-Hungary. This vision granted a special role to East European Jewry, who were meant to constitute a sort of vanguard of the German authority, a concept founded upon the kinship of the Yiddish and German languages and a shared hatred toward Russia.⁹

Since the postulate proposed by the Zionists was welcomed by the authorities, in the middle of August this group, led by Franz Oppenheimer and Max Bodenheimer, founded a ‘German Committee for Liberation of the Russian Jews’ (*Deutsches Komitee zur Befreiung der russischen Juden*). The body was equipped with its own propagandist journal *Kol Mevaser*, whose title explicitly evoked one of the earliest Jewish periodicals in tsarist Russia.¹⁰ The first (and penultimate) issue contained, apart from the aforesaid appeal, an essay by Nahum Sokolow, in Yiddish, clearly opting for the German stance, against

⁷ ‘Eine Proklamation an die Juden in Polen’, *Jüdische Rundschau* (4 Sept. 1914), 3. For more on the background behind the appeal, see Jay Ticker, ‘Max I. Bodenheimer: Advocate of Pro-German Zionism at the Beginning of World War I’, *Jewish Social Studies*, xliii, 1 (1981), 11–30; Zosa Szajkowski, ‘The German Appeal to the Jews of Poland, August 1914’, *The Jewish Quarterly Review*, N.S., lix, 4 (1969), 311–20.

⁸ “... die Freiheit, ungestört auf allen Gebieten des ökonomischen und kulturellen Lebens in eurem Geiste zu leben”; ‘Eine Proklamation an die Juden in Polen’, *Jüdische Rundschau* (4 Sept. 1914), 3.

⁹ Ticker, *Max I. Bodenheimer*, 15–16.

¹⁰ *Kol Mevaser*, published between 1863 and 1871, was an Odessa-based Yiddish periodical, a supplement to the Hebrew weekly *Ha-Melits*.

Russia.¹¹ When it became clear, however, that the war would go on for well longer than a mere few weeks, the Committee was renamed, under the pressure from the World Zionist Organisation into a ‘Committee for the East’ (*Komitee für den Osten*; KfdO)¹² – the ideology it advocated remaining unchanged, though.

What is striking in Bodenheimer’s reminiscences of a journey he made in autumn 1914 to the headquarters of the *Ober-Ost*, is a leitmotiv characteristic of many a memoirs of German Jews who first saw some of the *Ostjuden* by themselves – namely, an astonishment with their peculiar ‘oriental’ appearance (perceptible at first sight) as well as their number: “After a drive of about three hours we reached Radom, where the picture that presented itself to our view was one altogether new to us. On the long street which traversed the city, a stream of men was meandering about – all in dark kaftans and caps. Among them, at first, we saw few women and girls, but later the picture was colourfully enlivened by the latter. It seemed as if in this city there were only Jews”.¹³ Elsewhere, Bodenheimer remarks that the Jews he encountered on his way had already heard about the appeal: “They felt a certain pride at being addressed in their language in order to establish friendly relations.”¹⁴

The experience of encounter or contact with the exoticism of Eastern Europe caused that the *Ostjudenfrage*, which became an object of much attention in the public discourse, functioned as a ‘sensitive barometer for a Jewish-German self-definition’ to a larger degree than ever before.¹⁵ This topic was making headlines in the German-Jewish press, particularly in the KfdO organ entitled *Neue Jüdische Monatshefte* (which was initially meant to be named *Ostjüdische Revue*¹⁶). The frequency of its appearance best testifies to the mixed feelings

¹¹ Ticker, *Max I. Bodenheimer*, 18. As Bodenheimer remarks in his memoirs, *Kol Mevaser* was not ever distributed; see *idem*, *Prelude to Israel: The memoirs of M. I. Bodenheimer*, ed. by Henriette H. Bodenheimer (New York, 1963), 238.

¹² For more on the KfdO, see Zechlin, *Die deutsche Politik und die Juden*, 126–38; on the influence of WWI on German Zionists and their contacts with the World Zionist Organisation, see Stefan Vogt, ‘The First World War, German Nationalism, and the Transformation of German Zionism’, *Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook*, lviii (2012), 267–91.

¹³ Bodenheimer, *Prelude to Israel*, 247.

¹⁴ *Ibidem*, 245.

¹⁵ Aschheim, *Brothers and Strangers*, 156.

¹⁶ *Ibidem*, 169.

associated with the coreligionists from the East. On the one hand, they were perceived with a bit of a thrill, for the misery of the local people reinforced the worst of the *Ostjuden* stereotypes prevalent in German culture.¹⁷ On the other hand, KfdO's propagandists portrayed East European Jews as, in a sense, *Kulturträger*: the Yiddish language and anything related with it was harnessed for the task. Participation in the warfare in the Polish territory implied contact with the traditional Jewish community and its language.¹⁸ For a group of German-Jewish activists, who had by then expressed their disdainful opinions on Yiddish or treated it as a bashful thing,¹⁹ the language was raised to the status of an instrument of promotion of German culture: "The thing is, we were not made aware yet that several millions of Polish and Russian Jews that had fled from there to beyond the Ocean were now paving the way for the German language far away in the East and beyond the seas, as long as we do not contribute to annihilating this powerful instrument of [advancing] Germanness abroad."²⁰ Hence, the KfdO earnestly promoted Yiddish before the German authorities as a *mittelhochdeutscher Dialekt*.²¹ Franz Oppenheimer, the KfdO chairman, described in his memoirs the moment he instructed some that short stories and poems in Yiddish, written down phonetically in the Latin alphabet, be included in one of KfdO's publications, to the enthusiasm of German readers. "A stunning thing, that! His Majesty must see this", one aristocrat commented.²² As Steven Aschheim

¹⁷ Aschheim, *Eastern Jews*, 353.

¹⁸ For a young German-Jewish soldier, Yiddish "initially sounds like some caricature, but has quite an expressive power to it, and a virtually unbelievable vitality"; see Dorothee Wierling, *Eine Familie im Krieg. Leben, Sterben und Schreiben 1914–1918* (Göttingen, 2013), 109.

¹⁹ Shulamit Volkov, 'Język jako przestrzeń debaty na temat Żydów i żydowskość w Niemczech (1780–1933)', in *eadem*, *Pomysł na nowoczesność. Żydzi niemieccy w XIX i na początku XX wieku*, trans. by Justyna Górny and Patrycja Pieńkowska (Warszawa, 2006), 96; Delphine Bechtel, 'Cultural Transfers between "Ostjuden" and "Westjuden". German-Jewish Intellectuals and Yiddish Culture 1897–1930', *Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook*, xlii, 1 (1997), 67–83.

²⁰ Heinrich Loewe, 'Di jüdischdeutsche Sprache der Ostjuden', in Andreas Herzog (ed.), *Ost und West. Jüdische Publizistik 1901–1928* (Leipzig, 1996), 40.

²¹ Zosa Szajkowski, 'The Struggle for Yiddish during World War I: The Attitude of German Jewry', *Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook*, ix (1964), 134.

²² Franz Oppenheimer, *Erlebtes, Erstrebt, Erreichtes. Lebenserinnerungen* (Düsseldorf, 1964), 106. The item in question was probably the pamphlet by Heinrich Loewe, *Die jüdischdeutsche Sprache der Ostjuden* (Berlin, 1915).

aptly put it, “[y]esterday’s cultural and linguistic vices were metamorphosed into today’s political virtues.”²³

Journalistic commentaries regarding the *Ostjuden* quite frequently mentioned Yiddish press (regrettably, in a rather shallow manner). In his brochure *Was sind die Ostjuden? Zur ersten Information*, Nathan Birnbaum made the readers realise that “the ever-more-extensive and influential Yiddish-language press comes as the achievement of the two recent decades. Warsaw and New York, in particular, have seen the existence of enormous modern enterprises of Yiddish daily newspapers of varied party-related views – from the most passionate socialism, to the most provident conservatism.”²⁴ The KfdO lobbied with the German authorities in favour of the Yiddish press in the occupied territories, arguing that the opportunity to read newspapers in Yiddish would keep the local Jews from reading Polish publications.²⁵ Yiddish press could seem a good ally to acquire, especially once the plans to establish a Polish state under the auspices of the Reich modified the visions proposed by Bodenheimer and the far-reaching goals advocated by the KfdO – the latter had ever since begun lobbying for a national-and-cultural autonomy for the Jews within the Polish territory. It soon turned out, however, that the German civil administration of the Governorate-General (*Generalgouvernement*) of Warsaw was an important engine to be reckoned with – and one whose interests were not always convergent with those of the exponents of the German Jewry.

II

YIDDISH PRESS WITHIN THE GERMAN CENSORSHIP SYSTEM

Historians and memoirists emphasise that on entering Warsaw on 5 August 1915, around seven in the morning, the German troops were welcomed the warmest by the Jewish people:²⁶ “... the Warsaw public behaved decently by showing calm and cold blood; only our dearest

²³ Aschheim, *Eastern Jews*, 357.

²⁴ Nathan Birnbaum, ‘Was sind die Ostjuden? Zur ersten Information’, in Herzog (ed.), *Ost und West*, 22.

²⁵ Szajkowski, *Struggle for Yiddish*, 144.

²⁶ Krzysztof Dunin-Wąsowicz, *Warszawa w czasie pierwszej wojny światowej* (Warszawa, 1974), 22; Piotr Wróbel, *Wielka rozszada. Syjoniści warszawscy pomiędzy Niemcami a Rosją w czasie pierwszej wojny światowej*, in Eleonora Bergman and Olga

Yids gave a very hot and applausive welcome to the Germans – something we would have expected, actually”, Stanisław Dzierzbicki, economist and sociopolitical activist remarked.²⁷ As it seems, however, this very fact should not be quite surprising, given the experience of the first year of the war: compared against the tsarist army, the disciplined German troops seemed to ensure a respite from persecutions and pogroms (albeit the destruction of Kalisz was broadly covered in the Jewish press²⁸).

Before the Germans entered the Polish capital, the *Haynt* editorial and publishing team met and resolved to reactivate the daily as soon as practicable.²⁹ The *Der Moment* team had similar plans. Nehemiah Finkelshtayn of *Haynt* and Tsevi Pryłucki of *Moment* met on the same day (5 August), together with other Warsaw-based magazine editors, on invitation of the new city commandant, Count von Arnim, at his office. The host of the meeting remarked that the Germans did not treat Warsaw as an inimical territory, expecting in exchange the local press to respond adequately. In reply to an interpellation from the Jewish editors, the Count reassured that as soon as the fighting around Warsaw comes to an end, the Jewish press will regain the freedom to appear in circulation again and will be treated in the same way as the Polish press. On the following meeting, held on 6 August, von Arnim reconfirmed that the dailies that had been issued for a long time, Jewish ones included, might be issued continually, with the editors remaining personally responsible for the content published until a censorship office is established. As Tsevi Pryłucki remembered,

[t]he shelling coming from [the district of] Praga, along the entire section of the Vistula, ... made walking in the streets dangerous. Therefore, I found it hard to convoke a few type-setters at the editorial office. There was no-one of the associates present, so I eventually had to work the whole night, in order to get published *Der Moment* in the morning, on 7 August, after the three weeks of forced silence. ... The paper was reissued now, but

Zienkiewicz (eds.), *Żydzi Warszawy. Materiały konferencji w Żydowskim Instytucie Historycznym w 100. rocznicę urodzin Emanuela Ringelbluma* (Warszawa, 2000), 169.

²⁷ Stanisław Dzierzbicki, *Pamiętnik z lat wojny 1915–1918* (Warszawa, 1983), 63.

²⁸ See, for instance, *Haynt* (1[14] Aug. 1914), 2; (3[16] Aug. 1914), 2; (4[17] Aug. 1914), 2.

²⁹ Moyshe Grosman, ‘*Haynt*’. *Ershter period 1905–1915*, in *Fun noentn over* [a collection of essays; no editor specified], ii (New York, 1956), 52.

had no distribution outside Warsaw, since the railway was not in operation and there was no communication with the outer world whatsoever. This being the case, we could only draw the news from the German newspapers sent to us via the army postal service. Thus, we published the communiqués of the German General Staff.³⁰

Haynt issued (probably in the night of 6/7 August) a two-page special supplement, dated 6 August and with continuous page numbering, filled with notices of the new authorities and brief reports, neutral in tone, on the subsequent stages of taking over the power in the city. The vignette featured the old-style date, for the last time.

The following issue, published on Sunday, featured a blank spot left of a censorship intervention, right next to an announcement for the press signed by General Reinhard von Scheffer-Boyadel, which warned that publishers, editors and printers will be punished for distributing military news (unless with a special permit), false information or hearsays that might arouse disputes of a social or public, national or ethnic nature.³¹ This same issue of *Haynt* offered the readers an editorial article (the first after a long break) by the Editor-in-Chief, Shmuel Yankev Yatskan, inducing to give the situation due weight, observe judiciousness and foresight.³² Judging by the reserved tone and the quite cautious choice of the words used, even Yatskan – a *enfant terrible* of the Jewish journalism – was impressed by the first moments of the German occupation in Warsaw.

Initially, the Warsaw press was subordinated to the Board of Press under the High Command East; then, once the Governorate-General of Warsaw was established, it reported to the Press Section of the GG's Civil Board (based in Warsaw). The Board as well as the Section was managed by Georg (Jerzy) Cleinow, German publicist, born and educated in the Lublin region.³³ “Jerzy Cleinow was ... an excellent

³⁰ Cwi Pryłucki, *Wspomnienia (1905–1939)*, ed. by Joanna Nalewajko-Kulikow, trans. by Agata Kondrat (Archiwum Ringelbluma. Konspiracyjne Archiwum Getta Warszawy, 28, Warszawa, 2015), 92.

³¹ ‘A ferordnung far der prese’, *Haynt* (8 Aug. 1915), 3.

³² S. Y. Yatskan, ‘Fun tog cu tog’, *Haynt* (8 Aug. 1915), 3.

³³ For more on Cleinow, see Heinz Lemke, ‘Georg Cleinow und die deutsche Polenpolitik 1914–1916’, in Fritz Klein (ed.), *Politik im Krieg 1914–1918. Studien zur Politik der deutschen herrschenden Klassen im ersten Weltkrieg* (Berlin, 1964), 134–66; Jan Molenda, ‘Relacje z rozmowy Waclawa Podwińskiego z Jerzym Cleinowem (przyczynek do zagadnienia polityki władz niemieckich w kwestii polskiej

connoisseur of the relations in the East of Europe; nonetheless, he tended to draw biased conclusions based on his knowledge”, Count Bogdan Hutten-Czapski cautiously remarked in his memoirs.³⁴ In the first days of the occupation, Cleinow invited representatives of Warsaw press to visit his office where he briefed them on the main guidelines of the German policy for Congress Poland, making his expectations pretty clear:

You have to intermediate between the postulates of the fighting German army, on the one hand, and the views and wishes of the Polish nation, on the other. I have put trust in you, Gentlemen, to the extent that you shall work together with me in this emollient sense, and it is based upon this trust that we also have abolished the ban on publishing newspapers; thus, you are elected to play a role, and act fully responsibly. Warsaw is the hub of any and all spiritual and nationalistic strivings of the Polish nation. Yet, Warsaw has the largest Jewish community in Europe. All the contradictions existing between the two groups must now fall silent, in the face of the historic events of major importance. As for the Poles, they have to hold back their anti-Semitic inclinations, whilst the Jews shall be barred from raising objections against Poles or denounce them; in a word, a complete ceasefire, in nationalistic terms, must prevail.³⁵

Tsevi Pryłucki, chief editor of *Der Moment*, instantly published a report on the meeting, as he aptly reasoned that for the Jewish people, extremely weary of the war, this would come as a portent of appeasement and reassurance. But Cleinow chastened him harshly for that; as it later appeared, after Pryłucki left the meeting, the attendees were told that the exposé was strictly confidential. *Der Moment* was not punished with suspension by intercession of Dr Ludwig Haas, head of the Jewish Department at the Warsaw *Generalgouvernement*'s Civil Board – the main institution the Jewish populace was directly subject to.³⁶

w sierpniu 1915 r.)', *Najnowsze Dzieje Polski. Materiały i Studia z Okresu 1914–1939*, i (1958), 161–82.

³⁴ Bogdan Hutten-Czapski, 'Zdobycie Warszawy w 1915 roku', in Krzysztof Dunin-Wąsowicz (ed.), *Warszawa w pamiątkach pierwszej wojny światowej* (Warszawa, 1971), 126.

³⁵ Cracow, Archiwum Narodowe [hereinafter: ANK], Naczelny Komitet Narodowy, Prezydium (akta), Sekretariat Generalny, 29/530/0/NKN 87: The German occupation in the Kingdom of Poland. Press-censorship relations, I. 30.

³⁶ Steven Aschheim is not the only historian to have observed that Haas, "a man of great personal integrity and political acumen, ... was nevertheless quite unsuited

The other editors, Polish and Jewish alike, who had to do with Cleinow, remembered him afterwards as a man hard to cooperate with, putting it mildly. Yeshaye Uger, Editor-in-Chief with the *Lodzer Tageblatt*, recollected the moment Cleinow demanded from him, in the spring of 1915, that he wrote an article on anti-Semitic riots in Kalisz. Not willing to yield, Uger argued that a large daily, like, for instance, *Haynt*, would not ever be requested to do such a thing. At that point, Cleinow sought what the *Haynt* thing actually was; having heard that it was a “newspaper supported by the Jewish society in its entirety”,³⁷ he burst into laughter, asking, “Ah, a Jewish *The Times* of sorts? *Lieber Redakteur*, come on!, we apply no ‘class’ difference: a *Times* or a *Tageblatt* is one and the same thing for us. We are waging a war, and are inconsiderate to everyone.”³⁸ A few weeks later, Uger was secretly told by a censor – a Jew himself – that Cleinow ordered for a pile of *Haynt* copies, got a few articles translated for his use, and compiled a ‘long and, certainly, unfavourable’ report for Field Marshal Paul von Hindenburg himself.

Uger, who says he read, in 1918, a copy of the report as well as the reply from Hindenburg’s staff, reports that Cleinow described *Haynt* as a “nationalist” newspaper, and remarked that the Yiddish press was managed by *unzuverlässig* (unreliable, untrustworthy) Litvaks and that *Haynt* wrote “the meanest lies and calumnies” about the German army. The reply suggested that he took resolute measures against the daily – the best solution possibly being for him to launch a Yiddish paper of his own, in Warsaw, and ensure it the largest promulgation possible.³⁹

to the task. He was an assimilated Jew and had no sympathy or understanding for the folk dimension of Jewish life.” (Aschheim, *Brothers and Strangers*, 180). Prylucki, for a change, remembers Haas quite sympathetically, remarking that after his arrival in Warsaw, the German authorities’ attitude towards the Jews improved remarkably (Prylucki, *Wspomnienia*, 94). Prylucki first met Haas via Paul Nathan, Vice Chairman of the Hilfsverein der deutschen Juden.

³⁷ Y. Uger, ‘Hindenburg kegn “Haynt”’, in ‘*Haynt*’ *yubiley-bukh 1908–1928* (Varshe, 1928), 12 [a *Haynt* jubilee book; no editor specified].

³⁸ *Ibidem*.

³⁹ *Ibidem*. I have found no confirmation of this story, whether in Hindenburg’s recollections (Paul von Hindenburg, *Aus meinem Leben* [Leipzig, 1920]) or in his most recent biography (Wolfgang Pyta, *Hindenburg. Herrschaft zwischen Hohenzollern und Hitler* [München, 2007]). The episode was probably one of those Hindenburg quite frequently dealt with at the time. For more on the importance of the German-inspired press as a warfare tool, see Friedrich Bertkau, *Das amtliche Zeitungswesen*

Set up in September 1915 in Warsaw, *Varshaver Tageblatt*, the new daily, was one of the magazines created out of Cleinow's initiative or bought out by him.⁴⁰ Considered a 'pledged pro-German magazine', one which supported KfdO's policies in Poland, the paper reportedly received 200,000 marks of a subsidy.⁴¹ The editorial in the first issue declared:

We are unconditionally loyal towards the Polish nation. What is more, we recognise, with no subterfuge, the Polish nature of this country and have the highest regard for the upstanding Polish culture. Yet, we shall demand that the rights of the ethnic minority, the one that we really are, be respected. We shall endeavour, earnestly and openly, to render the Polish-Jewish relations improved, whilst we believe that it is not assimilatory manners that might ameliorate these relations. ... it is only upon the footing of justice and equality that better, human, Polish-Jewish relations may develop.⁴²

Courland-born Lazar Kahan, a journalist of experience, whom Cleinow earlier on made the editor with *Lodzer Folksblat*, was now to run the *Varshaver Tageblatt*. Hersh Dovid Nomberg, before then regular contributor of *Haynt*, made his debut as the literary director; moreover, Samuel Hirschhorn and Saul Stupnicki cooperated on a regular basis with the new newspaper.⁴³ Nomberg, Hirschhorn, and Stupnicki all ranked among the best, and best recognised, Jewish publicists or commentators in the Kingdom of Poland. Apart from Nomberg, four other *Haynt* contributors joined *Varshaver Tageblatt*: Lipe Kestin, Hilel Maymon, a certain A. Zinger, and A. L. Yakubovitch, the author of extremely popular roman-feuilletons.⁴⁴ It was a blow for *Haynt*; even

im Verwaltungsgebiet Ober-Ost. Beitrag zur Geschichte der Presse im Weltkrieg (Leipzig, 1928), 7–9. More generally on the German press policies pursued during the war, see Martin Creutz, *Die Pressepolitik der kaiserlichen Regierung während des Ersten Weltkriegs* (Frankfurt am Main, 1996).

⁴⁰ This was also true for *Dziennik Polski*, *Gazeta Łódzka*, *Deutsche Lodzer Zeitung*, *Lodzer Folksblat*, *Deutsche Warschauer Zeitung*, and *Polski Kurier Narodowy*; cf. Molen-da, 'Relacje z rozmowy', 176–7.

⁴¹ *Żydzi w Królestwie Polskim [w 1917 r.] (Zarys informacyjny)*, in Czesław Brzoza (ed.), *Żydowska mozaika polityczna w Polsce 1917–1927. Wybór dokumentów* (Kraków, 2003), 35.

⁴² 'Cu unzere lezer', *Varshaver Tageblatt* (26 Sept. 1915), 2.

⁴³ Kalman Weiser, *Jewish People, Yiddish Nation: Noah Prylucki and the Folkists in Poland* (Toronto, Buffalo, and London, 2011), 125–6.

⁴⁴ Ber Kutsher, who started working for *Haynt* in June 1916, mentions that the editorial board consisted of Avrom Goldberg, Aron Einhorn, Aron Riklis, Moyshe

though a lesser-than-usual number of journalists coped well with editing the daily paper whose volume was reduced in the wartime to a mere four pages, the *Varshaver Tageblat*, once emerged, doubtlessly posed a competitive threat to any journal. Not only its strong team of publicists reinforced its position: its infrastructure, fed with Cleinow's money, did the job well enough. Within less than a fortnight of its opening, *Tageblat* was distributed to all the larger cities in the GG of Warsaw (later, the reach was extended to the General-Governorate of Lublin). A single issue of *Tageblat* cost 5 pfennig, which was one pfennig cheaper than the charge for a *Haynt*. Those who paid the subscription for *Tageblat* for the year 1916 were promised a whole heap of bonuses: an interesting potpourri of works of Yehoyesh, Arthur Schnitzler, Émile Zola, Eliza Orzeszkowa, and Leo Tolstoy, along with a 'portrait of Jewish writers, poets, and journalists', and a map of Europe.⁴⁵ At that moment, *Haynt* could only offer its subscribers E. N. Frenk's book *A History of Jews in Poland*⁴⁶ as a bonus, although in October and November 1915 its editors made noticeable efforts to increase the newspaper's attractiveness: more advertisements and announcements were published, instalment novels printed, the afternoon edition issued again, and important articles announced.

The key question that made headlines in all the newspapers at the time was a school system regulatory act made effective by the German authorities in September 1915. Under the new law, German and Polish were made the obligatory languages taught at Jewish elementary schools.⁴⁷ This caused a stir in the milieu of Jewish nationalists; the everlasting debate reopened over the language to be considered

Gershon Feldshteyn, Aron Gavze, Eliezer David Finkel, Menachem Kipnis, Pinhas Kats, Henoch Ish, Benjamin Kremer, Moyshe Khaykin, and himself; B. Auerbach, Yankev Rayzfeder, and the reporter Shloyme Faynkind contributed on a freelance basis. See Ber Kutsher, 'Sh. Y. Yatskan – "Haynt" un "Hayntige Naves"', in David Flinker, Mordechai Tsanin, and Shalom Rozenfeld (eds.), *Di yidische prese vos iz geven* (Tel Aviv, 1975), 65.

⁴⁵ *Varshaver Tageblat* (17 Dec. 1915), 7.

⁴⁶ *Haynt* (23 Dec. 1915), 1. For more on Ezriel Natan Frenk, who contributed to *Haynt* on a regular basis, see François Guesnet, 'Geschichte fürs jüdische Volk: Ein vorläufiges Porträt des Historikers Ezriel Natan Frenk', in *idem* (ed.), *Zwischen Graetz und Dubnow: Jüdische Historiographie in Ostmitteleuropa im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert* (Leipzig, 2009), 119–45.

⁴⁷ Zieliński, *Stosunki polsko-żydowskie*, 196.

‘national’ for Jews: Yiddish, or Hebrew? And, is the former a full-fledged language, or ‘just’ a dialect? In any case, Yiddish recognised as a language would not imply lobbying for Yiddish as a language of instruction. Saul Stupnicki put forth the argument, in *Haynt*, that a dialect becomes a language when it already has a literature written in it, which was exactly the case of Yiddish.⁴⁸ He gladly welcomed the establishment of separate Jewish schools, for which he postulated Hebrew being extensively taught as part of the syllabus, thus enabling to develop a ‘Jewish spirit’ to prevail in the Jewish school:

Hebrew is a repository of our cultural treasures; it is within Hebrew that the source lies of our national specificity, our morality, and knowledge. This is why every national Jew [*natsyonaler yid*], or even, just a Jew who belongs to the nation [*folk*] and wishes the nation to subsist, must endorse this scheme and put forth the demand for a possibly big number of hours of Hebrew taught at public [i.e., elementary] schools.⁴⁹

Finally, German was accommodated as the language of instruction at some Jewish schools; elsewhere, Yiddish, pretending to be a ‘German dialect’, was employed.⁵⁰ Aleksander Kraushar wrote scornfully of the trend: “This jargon, being a spoiled German language, was accepted by the unenlightened Jewish rabble, corrupt by the Russians and with support from the Litvak element, for their mean schools as the language of instruction.”⁵¹

In contrast to *Varshaver Tageblat*, *Haynt* unceasingly contended with the German censorship (as did the other periodicals, not under Cleinow’s control). In September 1915, exactly the moment the first issue of *Tageblat* was published, editorial teams received from the Press Board a circular which read: “The incidents of jargon periodicals disturbing the home peace [*Burgfrieden*] by partly ungrounded attacks on the Polish populace are proliferating. In the event that, with this circular letter having been received, spiteful articles against Poles continue to be published in these periodicals, I shall thence seek to

⁴⁸ Saul Stupnicki, ‘Yidishe tsayt-fragen (1). Tsi iz yidish a shprakh?’, *Haynt* (20 Sept. 1915), 3.

⁴⁹ *Idem*, ‘Yidishe tsayt-fragen (2). Kheyder un folks-shule’, *Haynt* (27 Sept. 1915), 3.

⁵⁰ Zieliński, *Stosunki polsko-żydowskie*, 197.

⁵¹ Aleksander Kraushar, *Warszawa podczas okupacji niemieckiej 1915–1918. Notatki naoczego świadka* (Lwów, Warszawa, and Kraków, 1921), 54.

punish the responsible editors and printers.”⁵² Cleinow demanded from the Yiddish newspapers, in October 1915, that they reprint the headquarters’ communiqués in German with use of the Hebrew alphabet⁵³ – the official reason being the will to facilitate the work of the censors, who, purportedly, could not fluently read in Yiddish. Jewish journalists could guess that the actual point behind it was to accustom the readers to the German language, which was to gradually replace Yiddish.⁵⁴ Konrad Olchowicz Jr., editor of the leading Polish daily *Kurier Warszawski*, observed that there was not much difference between Russian and German censors:

For the press, the change brought-about was the most directly reflected in the transition from the embrace of Russian censorship into the no-less-caring hug of its German peer. The character of this occurrence, which we essentially perceived as jumping out of the frying pan into the fire, is well illuminated by a handwritten remark made by a German censor on the margin of one of the first rough-proof ever sent to the German censors. Having crossed the whole text out with a red ink, this is what the German censor wrote, in Russian, in a Latin transliteration [of the Cyrillic]: ‘*Vsyo mozhno, no tolko ostorozhno*’ [‘Any content is allowed, just always be careful’]. In spite, though, of this humorous reassurance of a German censor, you could afford in print certainly not anything, and very little in fact, even if you made the best of your prudence. ... the German censorship sieve turned out to be no less dense and tight than, previously, the Russian one.⁵⁵

Ber Kutsher, a journalist with *Haynt*, was of the same opinion: “There were days when more than a half of the material submitted was crossed-out by the censors, in its entirety or in part.”⁵⁶ Mendl Mozes,

⁵² *Tajne dokumenty cenzury niemieckiej 1914–1918*, trans. by Stefan Podkomor-ski (Warszawa, 1919), 12. The circular was dated 26 Sept. 1915.

⁵³ The ordinance was in force from 12 Oct. 1915 to 13 Aug. 1916; cf. Szajkowski, *Struggle for Yiddish*, 144.

⁵⁴ Mozes, ‘Di ershte yorn’, 81.

⁵⁵ Konrad Olchowicz, *Ćwierć wieku z ‘Kurierem Warszawskim’* (Kraków, 1974), 62–3. Ferdynand Hoesick was of a similar opinion: “... gradually, also they [i.e., the German censors – note by J.N.-K.] followed, soon afterwards, the practical example of their Russian predecessors, the only difference being that the Germans were more zealous and smarter, which means, more sophisticated (even in bribe-taking).”; Ferdynand Hoesick, *Ze wspomnień o cenzurze rosyjskiej w Warszawie* (Warszawa, 1929), 44.

⁵⁶ Kutsher, ‘Sh. Y. Yatskan’, 65.

a *Der Moment* contributor, made acquaintance with the censors of Yiddish press in Warsaw: Stein, ‘a typical German Junker’, and Arnold, Lutheran pastor: “Both ... were agents of the German secret police and informed it on the Jewish press and Jewish journalists. Both could manage written Yiddish and could understand the language well.”⁵⁷

The rebellious press lent itself easily to various sorts of chicanery. As an anonymous memorial stated:

The Press Board has not shied away from bribing the press-men and individuals. One powerful means of corruption is rendering the paper supplies for dailies conditional upon their political line. Mr. Cleinow prevents paper supplies from reaching Warsaw; the editorial boards are only allowed to fetch [some paper] by his intermediation (may it be added that Mr. Cleinow charges very big prices for the paper, almost twice as high as the previous charges ...). Mr. Cleinow furthermore keeps the press dependent upon him by furnishing it with dispatch-messages (the thrifty entrepreneur never neglecting minding his own business as he bars the daily newspapers from publishing special supplements announcing pieces of news of importance, so as to prevent competition to such extras issued by his own newspaper).⁵⁸

Records repeatedly tell us about Cleinow’s actions interpreted as “dirty competition pursued by a privileged entrepreneur”;⁵⁹ this might have been the main reason why Mendl Mozes set up a private press agency, in November 1915 in Warsaw, named *Biuro Wiadomości Dziennikarskich* (Journalist News Bureau), meant to supply the Jewish press.⁶⁰ Otherwise, access to news concerning local events tended to pose problems: for example, at a party for the press people held at Warsaw’s Bristol Hotel relative to the proclamation of the 5 November 1916 Act, the only Jewish journalists invited were *Varshaver Tageblat*’s Lazar Kahan and his brother Israel Kahan of *Lodzer Folksblat*.⁶¹

The editorial teams of both *Haynt* and *Der Moment* sighed with relief as Cleinow resigned in 1916 as head of the Press Board. *Haynt*,

⁵⁷ Mozes, ‘Di ershte yorn’, 81–2.

⁵⁸ ANK, Naczelný Komitet Narodowy, Prezydium (akta), Sekretariat Generalny, 29/530/0/NKN 87: The German occupation in the Kingdom of Poland. Press-censorship relations, l. 47.

⁵⁹ *Ibidem*, l. 36.

⁶⁰ *Ibidem*, l. 192. For more on the Bureau, cf. ‘Żydowska Agencja Telegraficzna’, [entry] in Jerzy Tomaszewski and Andrzej Żbikowski (eds.), *Żydzi w Polsce. Dzieje i kultura. Leksykon* (Warszawa, 2001), 553.

⁶¹ ‘Der prese-ovend [!] in Bristol’, *Haynt* (9 Nov. 1916), 3.

reportedly, refused to publish materials received from Cleinow, which implied severe financial consequences, almost leading the newspaper to bankruptcy.⁶² But this did not mark an end of their troubles with competitors.

III RELIGION, OR NATIONALITY?

The aforesaid proclamation called ‘Act of 5 November’ signalled a turn in the German policy toward Poland. It also marked a changed attitude to the Polish Jewry: winning the Jews over for the German cause was no more as important as co-opting the Poles. The authorities consequently came to the conclusion that *Varshaver Tageblat* would be of no use anymore: “... in certain Jewish-German circles that are fearing the strengthening Jewish nationalism and Jewish emigration to Germany, an action was initiated against the periodical’s nationalistic militancy”, an anonymous, pretty well-informed contributor to Piotrków-based *Wiadomości Polskie* wrote.⁶³ The last issue of the *Tageblat*, dated 31 January 1917, informed that the journal was to be suspended in order to give way to a new one.⁶⁴ This procedure, imposed by the authorities, is said to have aroused criticism “across the segments of Poland’s population”.⁶⁵

A new daily, entitled *Dos Yudishe Vort*, set up in February 1917, came in lieu of *Varshaver Tageblat*. The newspaper was endorsed by “two fanatically pious Jews, in the nature of the Frankfurt-style godly Orthodox”,⁶⁶ namely, Pinhas Kohn and Emanuel Carlebach, German field rabbis. The idea of publishing a daily paper for masses of Orthodox Jews in Polish lands first appeared in German Orthodox milieus in autumn 1914.⁶⁷ The rabbis also initiated the establishment

⁶² Chaim Finkelstein, *‘Haynt’ – a tsaytung bay yidn (1908–1939)* (Tel Aviv, 1978), 63; Kutsher, ‘Sh. Y. Yatskan’, 65.

⁶³ *Żydzi w Królestwie Polskim [w 1917 r.]*, 36.

⁶⁴ ‘Aus dem Warschauer Leben’, *Neue Jüdische Monatshefte* (10 Feb. 1917), 262–3.

⁶⁵ ‘Von der Warschauer Presse’, *Jüdische Rundschau* (9 Feb. 1917), 53.

⁶⁶ Finkelstein, ‘Haynt’, 64.

⁶⁷ Tobias Grill, ‘Die polnisch-jüdische Tageszeitung “Das Yudishe Vort” als Versuch eines deutsch-jüdischen Kulturtransfers nach Osteuropa’, in Eleonore Lappin and Michael Nagel (eds.), *Deutsch-jüdische Presse und jüdische Geschichte. Dokumente, Darstellungen, Wechselbeziehungen* (Bremen, 2008), 187.

of *Agudat ha-Ortodoksim*, known afterwards as the *Agudat Israel* (*Agudas Yisroel*) – a new political party of Orthodox Jews, which at its founding convention in November 1916 had 17,000 members. As an expert in *Aguda's* history remarks, “Polish orthodoxy turned to politics not to preserve a dwindling minority group, as in Germany, but to provide a spokesman for a hitherto silent majority”.⁶⁸ It seemed that an own daily paper would best act as ‘spokesman’, but the reality turned more complex. Tzaddik Abraham Mordechai Alter of Ger (Góra Kalwaria), whose support was sought by German rabbis, was not completely enthusiastic about Orthodox Jews reading the press, even if a newspaper would itself be Orthodox. While he encouraged the subscription of *Dos Yudishe Vort*, he remarked in an open letter to his followers: “One ought not to infer that I consider it an obligation to read some newspaper. If a Jew reads no newspapers and remains pre-occupied with the Torah only, it is a very good and salutary thing.”⁶⁹ It is hard to tell how many Jews might have obeyed their tzaddik at this particular point; what we are told, though, is that the daily, filled with “articles of German rabbis and scholars, being not quite easy reading”, proliferated in 10,000 copies.⁷⁰

Haynt and *Der Moment* were perfectly aware of the threat posed to them by the newspaper whose reach extended to a so-far-neglected segment of the reader market, and whose publishers were free of financial problems. A counteroffensive was launched immediately; as rabbi Carlebach bitterly put it in a private letter:

What these Zionist and nationalistic beasts, who have been holding a monopoly for the press as a whole, do and write against the *Yudishe Vort* and how much worry there is about the labour, is unbelievable. Articles and malicious remarks in their organs would have been pretty complimentary for us if there hadn't been the necessity (which we have always dodged) of getting entangled in polemics which are pursued otherwise than in the cultural countries. Clearly, the German-Jewish newspapers also informed in a tendentious [and] mendacious manner; [but] there [i.e., in Germany – note by J.N.-K.] we defend our position based upon the press law. Here, in the city, *Haynt* and [*Der*] *Moment* have taken liberties with the following

⁶⁸ Gershon C. Bacon, *The Politics of Tradition. Agudat Yisrael in Poland, 1916–1939* (Jerusalem, 1996), 43.

⁶⁹ ‘Polen’, *Neue jüdische Monatshefte* (24 April 1917), 424.

⁷⁰ Dovid Druk, *Tsu der geshikhte fun der yudisher prese (in Rusland un Poylen)* (Varshe, 1920), 139.

ribs, among others: The roundsmen delivering papers for the subscribers – surely, those small brats – were bribed, so the 300 subscribers for whom those boys had been dispensed the paper simply didn't receive a single copy over the whole day. The paper deliverers in the street were bribed so they replied, if enquired, that *Yud[ishe] Vort* has ceased being issued, or the like thing. In the province, with no-one there who would be able to explain and defend our rights, they act even more brazenly: the copies sent over were simply robbed from the boxes, so nobody finally received their copy of the paper.⁷¹

The main arena of conflict between the periodicals of 'national' Jews and the new, 'orthodox' daily was the defining of Jews in ethnic/national categories. 15 November 1916 saw the occupational authorities publish an ordinance establishing a 'Jewish Religious Community' in the Governorate-General of Warsaw.⁷² Recognising the Jews as a 'religious group' and rendering their communities denominational, rather than offering them a status of national-and-cultural autonomy units, expectedly triggered criticism from *Haynt*, along with the concern that lack of autonomy would cause adverse consequences for the Jews in Poland, once it re-emerges as a state. In an article entitled *Di frayhayt fun gevisn*, Aron Einhorn noticed that (insofar as the fear of equal rights for Jews was, to a considerable degree, a fear of economic competition) the fear of being given a national and cultural autonomy ensued from the disinclination of the Poles to recognise that Poland was the Jews' *own country* as well. Whilst admitting that religion was once the determinant of Jewishness, Einhorn remarked that the times have now changed:

The Yiddish language, the Yiddish literature, the Yiddish education is not a whim of some individuals who are willing to pursue their political purposes through it. It is a form of our socio-cultural life, one of the manifestations of our inner national conscience that is alive and is burning within every Jew. Whoever lay his hand on all this, thusly he makes an attempt on our freedom of conscience [stressed as in the original – note by J.N.-K.].⁷³

⁷¹ Alexander Carlebach, 'A German Rabbi Goes East', *Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook*, vi (1961), 106–7.

⁷² For more on this topic, see Marcos Silber, 'The German "Ordinance Regarding the Organization of the Religious Jewish Community" (November 1916–1918)', *Studia Judaica*, xviii, 1 (2015), 35–55.

⁷³ Aron Einhorn, 'Bletlekh. Di frayhayt fun gevisn', *Haynt* (24 Nov. 1916), 3.

In general, however, *Haynt* had a rather limited room for manoeuvre left. Indeed, its editors mocked at the *Dos Yudishe Vort's* advertising brochure which promised golden mountains to the Jews.⁷⁴ It is true that Yatskan no less ironically wrote of the closedown of *Tageblat*, jeering its editorial board's farewell article which stated that the paper's team should take credit for having raised the ethnic, or national, awareness of Polish Jewry.⁷⁵ Nonetheless, *Haynt* would not publish as many hectoring polemics, or critiques as open, as those appearing, for instance, on the occasion of the Fourth Duma election carried out in Warsaw in 1912.⁷⁶ Instead, the newspaper confined itself to somewhat maliciously commenting on some articles, limiting this to the section '*In unzer velt!*' ('In our circle') and thus as if suggesting that those were internal affairs of the journalist milieu. This might have ensued from the actions taken by the German censors (if not, additionally, from the editors' self-censorship). Another possible reason was that the winter and early spring of 1917 were marked by the formation of a new Jewish party, called *Folkspartay* ('People's Party') and run by Noyekh Pryłucki.⁷⁷ Judging by the numerous enunciations, the *Haynt* milieu was preoccupied by this issue to a much greater extent than by the actions of the Orthodox party: Pryłucki's political activities posed a threat that *Der Moment*, the periodical he co-edited, would definitely be ranked first amongst the newspapers deemed to represent a Jewish national point of view and the politically aware Jewish masses.⁷⁸

A thorn in the side of both dailies was, doubtlessly, the fact that Carlebach and Kohn highlighted the loyalty of the Orthodox Jews with respect to Polish interests.⁷⁹ A correspondent with *Wiadomości Polskie* in 1917 described *Dos Yudishe Vort* thus: "The magazine fights the nationalistic and separatist tendencies, strives for harmonious coexistence between the Jews and the Polish society. ... The periodical is

⁷⁴ 'In unzer velt!', *Haynt* (30 Jan. 1917), 3.

⁷⁵ Yatskan, 'Fun tog tsu tog. Di 16 khadoshim ...', *Haynt*, 28 (1 Feb. 1917), 3.

⁷⁶ This aspect is dealt at some length in my essay 'Myśli nowoczesnych Żydów. Wybory do IV Dumy, bojkot ekonomiczny i stosunki polsko-żydowskie (1912–1914)', *Kwartalnik Historii Żydów* (forthcoming).

⁷⁷ Weiser, *Jewish People*, 150–60.

⁷⁸ See, for instance, Aron Einhorn's *Folkizm*, a cycle of articles published in *Haynt* in January and February 1917.

⁷⁹ Grill, *Die polnisch-jüdische Tageszeitung*, 189.

edited meticulously, the articles therein published being imbued with a sense of responsibility. The entire Jewish press has opposed it, since *Dos Yudishe Vort* has proved courageous enough to come out against the machinations of peasant party activists and the utopias of the Zionists.”⁸⁰

1918 saw the German-Jewish press reveal a private memorandum of rabbi Pinhas Kohn, which characterised the specified circles of Polish Jews based on their disposition to cooperate in political terms. The memorandum regarded the Orthodox the easiest controllable group, the Zionists being the toughest to control. A separate category, ‘destructive element’, was coined for the Litvaks,⁸¹ which certainly reflected the bad experiences of the German rabbis: with the Germans eventually leaving Warsaw, and in the face of the ever-worsening financial situation of *Dos Yudishe Vort*, they resolved, in February 1919, that the daily be closed down.

V

CONCLUSION

Beginning with November 1916, the Jewish press’ attention was increasingly absorbed by Polish-Jewish relations and the situation of Jews in the emerging Poland. The necessity to collaborate with the German authorities, or with German Jews, perforce, ceased to be perceived as a first-rank task. All the same, the German occupation years marked the beginning of a new epoch for the Yiddish press. As Dovid Druk, a journalist, wrote:

The situation changed once the Germans seized the whole of Poland. The Yiddish press begins going out ‘into the world’ and thus gets drawn into the orbit of the European press. Taken into account for the first time now, the Yiddish press becomes, all of a sudden, an international factor [stressed as in the original – note by J.N.-K.]. ... Reports are prepared on what the Yiddish press writes about. With yet another important official notice coming out, questions appear the very next day: What are the Yiddish press saying?⁸²

This opinion is confirmed by the numerous mentions about Warsaw Yiddish press in wartime magazines and brochures. Bernard Lauer’s

⁸⁰ *Żydzi w Królestwie Polskim [w 1917 r.]*, 36.

⁸¹ ‘Alljüdische Politik’, *Der Israelit* (17 Jan. 1918); quoted after Aschheim, *Eastern Jews*, 361.

⁸² Druk, *Tsu der geshikhte*, 125.

brochure *La question polono-juive d'après un juif polonais* and an article by Wolfgang Heinze, published by the *Preussische Jahrbücher* (both of 1916), ranked among the most important such publications. An assimilated Polish Jew, Lauer accused the Yiddish press of having aroused hatred towards Poles among the Jewish masses, and concluded: "These weeds could only have grown in the heavy climate of Russian dominance It was only under these completely abnormal conditions that a press like that could ... terrorise the people whose interests it allegedly defended."⁸³

Wolfgang Heinze, author of probably the first article focused solely on the Yiddish press in the Polish territory and published in the German press during the war, criticised Lauer's approach, for a change, deeming it overly negative. With no elementary-level universal education offer present (other than heders), Heinze emphasised the didactic role of Jewish press, naming it a 'Yiddish school for adults' (*die jiddische Schule der Erwachsenen*)⁸⁴. Referring to the aforementioned *Haynt's* article by Stupnicki about Yiddish as a language having its own literature (*Literatursprache*), he concluded: "The visits I paid to the editorial offices of Warsaw Yiddish magazines have made me convinced that their editors I encountered proved to be ones whose educational background well bore comparison with some of their European colleagues."⁸⁵

Reports and articles published by German-Jewish periodicals dealt at times with Litvak-related threads. For instance, Otto von Zwiedineck tried to persuade the readers of the *Neue Jüdische Monatshefte* that the development of the Jewish national movement in Polish lands did not come in consequence of the inflow of Litvaks, whom he otherwise (not quite consistently, in fact) termed 'General-Staff officers for the national movement' (*die Generalstabsoffiziere für die nationale Bewegung*).⁸⁶ KfdO activists, having met some representatives

⁸³ Bernard Lauer, *La question polono-juive d'après un juif polonais* (Paris, 1916), 9.

⁸⁴ Wolfgang Heinze, 'Die polnisch-jiddische Presse', *Preussische Jahrbücher*, 163 (1916), 508.

⁸⁵ *Ibidem* ("Meine Besuche auf den Redaktionen der Warschauer jiddischen Blätter überzeugten mich, dass ich in den Schriftleitern Männer vor mir hatte, deren Bildung sehr wohl den Vergleich mit der von so manchen ihrer europäischen Kollegen aushält.")

⁸⁶ Otto von Zwiedineck, 'Die Litwaki. Eine Tatsachenbeleuchtung zur Ostjudenfrage', *Neue Jüdische Monatshefte*, 17 (1918), 394.

of Yiddish press on one of their trips to Warsaw, reported later on that “[i]n many respects the Yiddish press was well in advance of official Jewish bodies in expressing the wishes of the Jewish population. ... more unity and desire not to give in to Polish pressure were observed at a meeting with representatives of the press than at similar meetings with other Jewish leaders.”⁸⁷ No doubt, the years of German occupation solidified the hegemony of the Yiddish press as a guard of Jewish interests and consciences. Having regard to the politicisation extending to the Orthodox strata of the Jewish community, it seems that the press as such conclusively won the battle, becoming an inseparable element in the life of every Jew, regardless of his (or her) political convictions.

trans. Tristan Korecki

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⁸⁷ Szajkowski, *Struggle for Yiddish*, 145.