Chapter 9

“Irgendwo auf der Welt”:
The Emigration of Jews from Nazi Germany as a Transnational Experience

JOACHIM SCHLÖR

Refuge and Promise: Memory-Work and the Creation of a
“Thirdspace” between Israel and Germany

In January 1936, Arthur Prinz published an article, “Voraussetzungen jüdischer Auswanderungspolitik,” in the journal Der Morgen. Prinz, a leading member of the Hilfsverein der deutschen Juden (German Jewish Aid Society) and editor of the organization’s bulletin Jüdische Auswanderung, took a close look at the existential need of kleine Leute1—individuals, families, and groups of German Jews marginalized and alienated by the Nazi regime—to find a home, a new home—elsewhere, or even between different places. Since April 1933, he wrote, the idea of emigration has reached even those families who had been “most rooted to the German soil,” and the necessity to leave Germany had become the focal point of discussions in the Jewish public sphere. About one hundred thousand people, one-fifth of Germany’s Jewish population, had already made the decision, despite harsh German laws regarding the export of currency on the one hand and other countries’ laws severely restricting immigration on the other. As Prinz wrote, “At most, barely one-third of these 100,000 emigrants are still in Europe today. A second third lives in Palestine [and] at least a third in overseas countries. In particular, the Jewish emigration is, as far as one knows, spread over 40 states. These 100,000 people probably form just the vanguard of a continued vast emigration.”2

As Patricia Clavin writes in her seminal text “Defining Transnationalism,” the concept, “despite its early identification with the transfer or movement of money and goods, is first and foremost about people: the social space that they
inhabit, the networks they form and the ideas they exchange.”3 The same is true for memory and both public and academic work relating to it. Memory is not an abstract concept; it is closely related first and foremost to people, but also to specific places and to a specific time. In Israel, the criticism directed toward German-Jewish immigrants in the 1930s has long since been replaced by an admiration for the ways in which they tried to retain some aspects of their German and European identity and culture; their language; their love for books, music, and education; and many other aspects of their former life that they did not want the Nazis to take away from them.4 And what was initially described as a failure—to completely fulfill the Zionist requirements of equality, adaption (“Einordnung”), and making a break with Diaspora traditions and relations—has since turned into a very successful story of integration without complete assimilation. Walking around Jerusalem’s Rehavia quarter, Haifa’s Carmel Mount, or Tel-Aviv’s “Rehov Ben Yehuda Strasse,” we can still find traces of the German-Jewish heritage, and parts of it have been wonderfully preserved and presented in the German-Jewish museum in Tefen/Galilee, which today serves as a depository for the “material” (letters, diaries, photographs) that document the experience of Jews from Germany in Palestine and in the State of Israel. Memory-work based on these sources, such as the exhibition “Zuflucht und Verheiβung”5 (Refuge and Promise) or similar projects that study the historical events with the intention to pass on information to, and indeed evoke empathy among, members of the next generations, creates a new space—to use Edward Soja’s notion, a “thirdspace”—between one place in Israel, Shavei Zion on the shores of the Mediterranean, and one place in Germany, Rexingen in the Black Forest, where the founders of Shavei Zion had come from.6 The exhibition could not have been realized only “here” or “there.”7

Obviously there is a certain uniqueness to the experiences of German Jews in Palestine after 1933.8 But at the same time, the hopes, the illusions, the successes, the disappointments, and all the practical experiences of the German immigrants in Palestine and Israel are not so different from those in New York, Buenos Aires, Shanghai, Cape Town, or London. Finding a job, mastering the new language, adjusting to the climate, creating little Heimat amidst foreign circumstances, thinking about Germany and the loss of friends and family—all these feelings and experiences were central to all emigrants.9 Based on my research in Israel, and between Israel and Germany, and inspired by a number of sources that show how families have been travelling all over the world in order to escape persecution and trying to build up networks of communication and support, this paper traces both geographical imaginations and topographical practices related to this experience.
“Von der alten Heimat zu der neuen Heimat”:
Thoughts on Mapping

While the great majority of these emigrants never considered a return to Germany—a fact that makes this group different from other migrants examined by transnationalism studies—there have been connections, partly through private initiative, partly in organized encounters (from the early 1960s on). Gal Engelhard wrote a dissertation at the University of Haifa on the institutionalized visits of emigrated Jews in their former German hometowns, concentrating on Leipzig, Nürnberg, Halberstadt, and Rexingen. As an ethnographer, he used participant observation to find out more about the spatial relationships between the visitors, their former hometowns, and their new homes. The returning Jews experience their visits in Halberstadt or Rexingen—and of course in Berlin, Frankfurt, and many other German cities—from perspectives that have been formed by their own diverse histories of migration and integration.

These visitors arrive, invited by German municipalities, from all around the world. As Anja Kräutler has shown, sometimes they even meet friends and relatives while visiting the places they had left between 1933 and 1939 (and thought they would never see, or return to, again): “Often such group visits offer the opportunity, for the first time in decades, to see relatives or former schoolmates, friends, and acquaintances scattered all over the world. It is not uncommon that they learn about the fate of others only through the invitation to Germany, and so the stay in the country from which they were once expelled, sometimes turns into a family reunion.”

Thus, it seems necessary for research to integrate the idea of transnationalism—which, for the purpose of this study, might have to be reconceptualized—and the relationships created, maintained, forgotten, or reestablished between friends, relatives, and members of one single family whose members have been dispersed by force and found (and still find) themselves “irgendwo auf der Welt.” The processes of emigration required a new “geographical imagination.” In order to find a practical way to approach the specific “social space(s)” that these emigrants and their descendants “inhabit,” to describe and analyze “the networks they form and the ideas they exchange,” we need to study cultural practices related to the emigration process, such as the use of atlases and maps and the difficult art of gathering knowledge about far-away places and the opportunities they offer. German-Jewish writer Hans Sahl, regarded during the 1960s and 1970s as one of the last emigrants, lived in New York, where he wrote for European newspapers. In his memoirs, he describes the cultural situation of Jews in Berlin forced to face the prospect of
emigration: “Once more I went to the Romanisches Café where the ‘Einhergewehten’ sat and wondered that they still were sitting there, reading newspapers, and playing chess. They sat there like beings who had grown stiff in their postures and waited to be blown away, cleared away. It seemed as if they had lost their identity and waited for a new one that would save their lives. Some of them pored over railway and ship timetables or wrote letters to a relative who had once emigrated to America and seemed to have made it there. Blessed were those who had an uncle in Amsterdam or a nephew in Shanghai, a cousin in Valparaiso. I had no relatives overseas. My family remained in this land and fed itself honestly.”17

There is a certain, delicate tension between those who emigrated to the one “promised land” that Zionism suggested, Eretz Israel (for example, to Shavei Zion) and the many other “lands” whose mere names at least suggested the promise of a refuge.18 Cartographical evidence can be found in a drawing by a young boy, Fritz Freudenheim, who emigrated with his parents in 1938 from Berlin to Montevideo, Uruguay. Under the heading “Von der alten Heimat zu der neuen Heimat!” (From the old homeland to the new homeland), Fritz drew a colored map which shows a short voyage by train from Berlin to Mühlhausen in 1925 (and, presumably, back in 1927) and a very long and extensive journey that brought the family, in 1938, from Berlin to Montevideo and Rio de Janeiro via Hamburg, Antwerp, and Casablanca.19 The map shows a straight line for the earlier, “normal” train ride—from a house in Berlin to another house in the province. The second trip starts with a second straight train line, from a new house in Berlin to the port city of Hamburg, from where a large ship finds its way, outside of a relatively over-large Germany (the old “Heimat”), along the coasts of Belgium, France, and Portugal, to northwest Africa and across the Atlantic to South America.

While the African continent is represented on a small scale, there is no Asia—not even Palestine—no Australia, and no North America, but there is a very detailed representation of South America (the new Heimat). This is a striking and moving example of a migration process—remembered or “stored,” one might say, in the form of an image, a map, which contains, for those who can “read” it, the story not just of this German-Jewish family’s emigration from Nazi Germany to the New World but also, in a nucleus, the larger history of the global experience of persecution and exile in the twentieth century. As Deborah Dwork and Robert Jan van Pelt have stated, “Fleeing does not write refugees out of the story [of the Holocaust]; it simply takes the story elsewhere. Indeed: it takes it everywhere.”20

There are many more such examples of maps drawn by “people who are
emigrants and want to become immigrants,” as Ernst Freudenheim wrote in his Palestine diary in 1936. In more general terms, there are more examples of cultural practices related to maps, atlases, and the geographic imagination, that in their own way tell the story of those German Jews who, after 1933, were forced to search for “promised lands” elsewhere. Maps are graphic representations “that facilitate a spatial understanding of things, concepts, conditions, processes or events in the human world,” and “all mapping involves much more than the drawing of lines. Map construction, no less than writing text, is essentially a social act, one which involves the thoughts and beliefs of both map-maker and culture.” In this context there may have been different motives for the “social act” of drawing a map: to mark a “definitive” end to a multistage journey; to give a (perhaps false but reassuring) sense of having reached “journey’s end”; to make a multistage journey that in reality had pit-stops and deviations look as if it was “planned” or “worked out” in advance; to preserve the memory of an experience that was in itself, although of life-saving importance, relatively short and fluid; to establish one’s place on the map of the

Fig. 9.1. Federico (Fritz) Freudenheim, “From the Old Homeland to the New Homeland, Hamburg-Montevideo, 1938.” (Private Collection Irene Freudenheim.)
world—between two homelands; and to create an awareness of the many places of refuge friends and family members have been dispersed to.

Jewish history in general has sometimes been described as “a journey.” As Todd Presner has noted, “the spaces of German/Jewish modernity are marked by and inscribed with bodies traversing places, from the mass migration of Jews westward during the latter half of the nineteenth and early part of the twentieth century to the transnational swath of Yiddish modernism from its Eastern European roots to Western Europe, North America, and Israel.” It is necessary (and even of actual impact for an understanding of current migration experiences) to shed more light on the intermediate, the transnational, the moving elements in travel and migration as cultural practices and on their representation in memory. This aspect is especially relevant for the study of the manifold forms of the continuation of German-Jewish history and culture outside Germany since the Nazi persecution. Forced migration has dislocated German Jews, in Fritz Freudenheim’s words, from their “old Heimat” to so many different new ones. The analysis of mapping as a cultural practice in the processes of migration makes it obvious that both spatial and temporal elements belong closely together and cannot really be separated. To quote Adrienne Rich, “A place on the map is also a place in history.”

Movement matters. James Clifford has evoked the transitional spaces—hotels, train stations, airports, “somewhere you pass through”—as “chrono-topes of the modern.” The starting point for his thoughts on “Traveling Cultures” can be found in “the diverse, interconnected histories of travel and displacement in the twentieth century.” In an effort to open up the question of “how cultural analysis constitutes its objects—societies, traditions, communities, identities—in spatial terms and through specific spatial practices of research,” Clifford makes a plea for the integration of external connections beyond the “field” of study itself. In anthropological research “the means of transport is largely erased—the boat, the land rover, the mission airplane etc.,” and “the discourse of ethnography (‘being there’) is too sharply separated from that of travel (‘getting there’).” This seems to be the case also in traditional studies of refugee experiences where the “arrival” is somehow taken for granted, whereas, in the minds and memories of so many refugees, the journey has not yet come to an end. “A tale of exile,” says Philip Schlesinger, “in broad outline recounts a rite of passage: it is a process of symbolic transition that involves stages of separation, marginality and reaggregation.” Fritz Freudenheim’s map brings the points of departure (the old Heimat) and arrival (the new Heimat) together and combines them by lines, by images of moving ships, by dates (15.11.38 Casablanca, 30.11.38 Montevideo). It even integrates images
of “home,” old and new—Levetzowstrasse in Berlin and Calle Sotelo in Montevideo—and it follows personal views and memoirs rather than an actual or “real” topography. Mental maps of the migration processes have been constructed before the actual trip took place: by looking at an atlas, by choosing the countries of transmigration and immigration, by playing the “Aliyah Game,” by hearing news from relatives about where better (not) to go, by studying the guides of the shipping companies, or by following the news about world politics before or even during World War II. A fascinating source for this can be found in the German-language exile newspaper *Pariser Tageszeitung*, which, between February and July 1939, published a series under the heading “Wohin auswandern?” (“Where to emigrate?”) with tips, reports, statistics, and other important information about immigration countries from Uruguay to New Caledonia, from Australia to Shanghai—a map of places “irgendwo auf der Welt.”

Such maps offer “a visualization of narratives of dislocation, encounter, and dispersal.” They represent the wide world of Jewish longing and belonging in terms of “spatial imaginaries” relating to Buenos Aires and Argentina, to
South Africa, to Canada and the United States, to Birobidzhan, to Shanghai and China, and of course to Palestine.  

Work on the transnational character of this German-Jewish emigration has only recently begun. Among the many and varied documents that former German-Jewish refugees donated to the Leo Baeck Institute’s archive, there are—as Atina Grossmann has observed—“plastic bags filled with postwar aerogrammes linking friends and relatives scattered all over the globe, from Tokyo to Tel Aviv, Capetown to Canberra, Buenos Aires to Boston.”  

Grossmann’s article on “Versions of Home” has been written from “the vantage point of someone who grew up in the 1950s and 1960s in New York City in a family of former Berlin Jews, for whom the Upper West Side of Manhattan became in some ways an inadequate ersatz extension of Weimar Berlin and in other ways a new and even better urbane metropolis.”  

This past, Grossmann argues, “had, after all, been not only exterminated, but also transferred in countless lifts carrying the accoutrements of German-Jewish life to all corners of the globe.”  

Sifting through the papers of her mother and aunt, she found “Baedeker guidebooks to virtually everywhere,” as well as “letters written by my aunts in London to the British relief agencies [that] beg for passage for their parents trapped in Berlin; letters exchanged by my maternal grandfather in Berlin and an uncle in Buenos Aires [that] try to arrange last minute passage out of Germany . . . ; letters between a young cousin who had ended up in (what was then called) Bulawayo, Rhodesia, and her sister in London [that] show both of them laboring desperately and in vain to organize emigration for parents left behind in Berlin.”  

When, after the Nazis’ rise to power in 1933, German-Jewish families decided to emigrate, they had to acquire new cultural techniques: studying maps and atlases, identifying possible destinations, reading shipping time-tables—and trying to build up a network of international relations between the different places of transmigration and immigration. As David N. Myers put it, “travel is not only a condition but a practice.”  

Maps are constant presences at all different stages of the process: back in Berlin or so many other German cities, when people prepared their emigration; in the transit places of Vienna, Prague, Paris, Marseille, and Lisbon; on the ship and during the passage; and on arrival. In many of these places, different forms of memory-work, from individual autobiographies to large exhibition and museum projects, have tried (and still try) to document the experiences and cultural practices connected to the emigration and immigration processes, including relations and communications between members of families and friends “scattered all over the globe”—often including, as mentioned above, the former hometowns in Germany.
It is hard to say when this experience ends. Elizabeth Colson has argued “that those who have been displaced fear further displacement even after years of resettlement.” Referring to former European refugees in the United States who claim to live as though with packed bags even forty years after their first flight, she says: “A settlement (for these people) is never a final settlement. Life is always at risk. Whether or not they suffer further displacement, once people have learnt from bitter experience that life is uncertain, possessions transitory, and human relationships brittle, it is to be expected that their coping strategies will take account of such possibilities even though these conflict with other urgent goals that they wish to attain.” In this situation, refugees turn to one another for mutual support, rather than to host societies, as supportive as they might try to be. Refugee communities “re-create viable societies” as far as the authorities and their own resources allow; and these societies are, by character, transnational—they cross borders, and they discover places.

Transnational Connections

There is a certain evocative quality to the names of the port cities (another hint to the close relationship between travel and migration) in the lists Petra Löber and Steve Hochstadt have put together for their research on German-Jewish refugees in Shanghai: “For the most part, young German and Austrian Jewish refugees boarded the ocean liners to Shanghai in Italy—Trieste or Genoa. In the course of the 1930s, the big passenger ship lines adjusted to the increased demand for travel to East Asia. The ports of departure were: Oslo, Danzig, Hamburg, Bremen, Rotterdam, Antwerp, Liverpool, London, Marseille, Genoa, Trieste, and Venice. . . . The crossing took between three and four weeks and went through Suez, Bombay, Colombo, Singapore, and Hong Kong.”

Later, ships had to take the longer route around the Cape of Good Hope, until in 1940 transport by sea was no longer possible and refugees depended on transit visas to cross the Soviet Union by train. During the earlier period, however, younger emigrants in particular could have experiences such as these related by Alfred Federer from Breslau: “I had a good time on board. It was over a three-week trip, and I had a real good time. I was very excited. Great big adventure. And I must say so did my parents. My mother had a great time playing bridge with all kinds of interesting people, and we had balls every other day. There were parties and people. There was dancing on the top of Vesuvius. It was the last ‘hurrah’ for people. And they were very conscious of it. I know
my father was very conscious: let’s do it properly because once we land, we
don’t know what is going to happen. As long as we were on board we had
money, we were all paid up, we had a home. Once we landed . . . people
couldn’t even fantasize what it would be like because nobody knew. It was
absolutely unknown territory.”42

*Feeling at home on the ship*—this seems like a surprising idea, and it
should not be romanticized. It was true for a small number of people and only
at certain times. Still, we can find the notion of a “suspended time” on the ship,
between the acts of leaving and arriving, in many testimonies.43 This memory
stayed with them after arrival in Shanghai and even after their continuing voy-
ages to the United States, Australia, Israel, or, in some cases, back to Germany.
In many cases, families were split up and had to reconstruct ties through diffi-
cult attempts at transnational communication. A file in the archive of the Ka-
plan Centre for Jewish Studies and Research at the University of Cape Town
documents Sigmund Rosenbaum’s complete process of emigration from Ber-
lin to South Africa, where one of his daughters was married to Bernhard Schra-
genheim in Johannesburg: business cards to use as an introduction to Dr. Feske
at the bank of Mendelsohn & Cie. in Berlin who would arrange for the clear-
ance of property to be moved in accordance with the German *Devisenstelle*;
communication with the Palestine & Orient Lloyd about bookings of tickets on
the *Pretoria*; provision of ritually pure food, organized by the Religiöse
Auswanderer-Betreuung Agudas Jisroel Berlin; letters to and from the Paläs-
tina Treuhand-Stelle about certificates (unused); application for a passport to
South Africa; letters from the relatives; attestations and birth certificates; docu-
ments on the sale of the house and other property; payment of emigration taxes
(the *Reichsfluchtsteuer*); and handwritten notes from hotels on the way to the
port. In a letter to his Jewish lawyer, written shortly before his own emigration,
which the Schragenheims supported with an affidavit, Rosenbaum states that
his other children now live “irgendwo auf der Welt”:

- Julius Rosenbaum, born in Giessen on 28.3.1889—residing in Chicago,
  USA
- Moritz Rosenbaum, born in Giessen on 11.12.1892—residing in
  Tucuman, Argent[ina]
- Rudolf Rosenbaum, born in Giessen on 10.1.1903—residing in Petach
  Tikvah, Palestine
- Melita Stillschweig, née Rosenbaum, born in Giessen on
  14.7.1899—residing in Berlin.44
How did they communicate? What did they write in their letters to each other? What did the network they created—out of sheer necessity—consist of? Did they ever meet again? In the case of the Rosenbaum family, they did, and their papers have even been saved and donated to an archive.

The history of this emigration has been partly written, but it has not yet been mapped. How did Jewish individuals, families, and groups decide on the route(s) to take, and how did “cartographic knowledge” help in such processes? How—and with what results—did individuals, families, and groups communicate and interrelate over quite substantial geographic distances (between Berlin, London, New York, Buenos Aires, Cape Town, Shanghai, and Melbourne)?

Attempts have been made to research the “macro-level” of emigration and immigration processes. Armin Bergmann’s dissertation, “Die sozialen und ökonomischen Bedingungen der jüdischen Emigration aus Berlin/Brandenburg 1933” (“The Social and Economic Conditions of Jewish Emigration from Berlin/Brandenburg 1933”), is one of the very few studies based on statistical as well as biographical information gathered by the German authorities (rather than on emigrants’ personal documents and accounts). The files that he discovered in “Personenakten der sogenannten Devisenstelle des Landesfinanzamtes Berlin” (personal files in the Foreign Exchange Office of Berlin’s finance authority) contain such information. Even based on such a relatively substantial amount of sources, generalizations seem nearly impossible. Still, some observations are interesting in terms of differences between families and single emigrants. Destinations in the United States, in Central and Latin America, as well as in South Africa were preferred by applicants who did not have children, whereas applications for Palestine were made by families with children. Towns and regions of origin also seemed to influence the emigrants’ decisions in their choice of country of refuge. Bergmann found decisive differences between applicants with an urban background and those from rural areas. Only 10 percent of those emigrants who applied for visas to the United States came from Berlin, while the percentage was much higher in certain rural regions—namely those, and this is important for our context, from where high numbers of German Jews had already emigrated during the nineteenth century.

Bergmann argues that immigration to the United States, which was dependent on affidavits by relatives already residing there, was especially high in such regions. The newcomers formed part and made use of an already existing transnational network! We can find access to the life-stories of German-Jewish emigrants and the “geographical imagination” that took them to so many places all over the world somewhere between such deeply needed conceptual reframing on the one hand and the banalities of bureaucracy and transport on the
other. Financing an emigration was a crucial problem. Obviously, there were the direct costs for travelling, but beyond that, countries of immigration required money that could guarantee the costs for entry and maintenance (known in German as “Einreise- und Vorzeigegelder”). This is one reason why many emigrants, especially in the early years, opted for neighboring countries such as France, The Netherlands, Austria, and Czechoslovakia. If families did not have enough reserve assets or savings, they were forced to sell property—houses, furnishing, cars, and art collections, but also life insurance policies and securities. The very words convey the fact that the foundations of a living had to be sacrificed in order to achieve the means to find a new home. The applicants had to state where exactly financial support for their emigration came from: loans, donations, or an inheritance. One hundred and eighty-nine persons named family members—parents, grandparents, uncles and aunts, sisters and brothers—and close friends as their source of support—another piece of evidence of transnational communication and another source of primary material when we manage to locate relevant letters and documents. In this context, the obvious document one might wish to find is an address book. But, as Bertha Zuckerkandl writes in her memoirs, often old and established connections had become useless, and address books had to rewritten: “When a person escapes, he tends to forget the necessary things and takes along the most superfluous ones. This also happened to me. When I left Vienna, I left precious things behind. And when in Paris I opened the few manuscripts and books I had taken along, the first thing I found was my Viennese address book. Who had had the stupid idea to pack this now deadest of all books? . . . Memory wanders, homeless, back to home. It looks for a place among these names and numbers.”

While Bergmann’s sources offer an insight into the statistical dimensions of the decisions made by German Jews on where and when to emigrate, there is still a lack of documents that illustrate individual experiences. We can identify different periods of time—immediately after the Nazis’ assumption of power on January 30, 1933, after the anti-Jewish boycott of April 1, 1933, after the Nuremberg Laws in 1935, after the Olympic Games in 1936, after Kristallnacht in 1938—and the respective interconnections with anti-Jewish actions and Nazi laws. Bergmann recounts the necessary steps potential emigrants had to undertake: emigrants had to consult different offices and collect official documents before they even could make an appointment with the “Auswandererberatungsstelle”; they had to apply for visas and bring supporting evidence; and they had to cancel bank accounts, life insurance policies, leases, and to organize the sale of property. They had to “take away mezuzahs, remove nameplates”; they had to sign their children out of school; and they had to say
good-bye to friends and family members. Finally, in terms of planning a life in lands envisioned as potential future Heimaten, time played a crucial role: “Every applicant needed time in order to find out the most fitting and most realistic country of immigration for themselves or for their families. They had to take into account important aspects such as language, climate tolerance, medical provision, the opportunity to find work in their old professions or to discover new professional openings.” One important but also delicate source for personal testimonies that can put individual faces to such general observations is the correspondence between the Jewish Museum Berlin and displaced Jews of German origin, which was collected during the preparation of the exhibition “Heimat und Exil. Emigration der deutschen Juden nach 1933,” starting in 2004. For future research, hopefully use can be made of the much wider and larger set of documents stored with the Berlin city-state government’s “Emigrantenreferat,” an institution that started to invite “former Berliners” as early as 1967. Going through the various letters and documents preserved in the Jewish Museum Berlin and reading answers to a questionnaire filled in by German Jews who had emigrated from Germany after 1933 and since lived in one of the countries of immigration and refuge is an exercise in the study of transnationalism. The last question in the questionnaire, number 27, was: “Do your relatives still live in different countries today? Are you in touch with each other?” In many cases, the responses to this question open a window into the transnational connections between family members and friends. But how do we read such sources? In the introduction to his edited volume Exile and Otherness: New Approaches to the Experience of the Nazi Refugees, Alexander Stephan asks why the study of German exile “has so rarely moved beyond the restrictive boundaries set in the early stages of basic research with their emphasis on positivistic data,” and he suggests the introduction of “new ideas into the field”: an interdisciplinary collaboration with anthropologists, scholars of art, communication and literature, political scientists and sociologists; the integration of notions such as “multiculturalism” and “creolization” into the research; and its placement, in general terms, in the wider field of the study of “transnational processes,” with the aim “to provide an arena for discussions of national identity, belonging, the sense of homeland, the crossing of borders, deterritorialization, as well as exile.” Informed by recent research in the areas of Diaspora studies and globalization studies, Stephan quotes terms and phrases that indeed sound exciting and suggestive: “hybridity,” “diasporic subjectivity,” “a liminal, dialogic space,” or “contributions to cultural formation by diasporas, migrations.” How such concepts can be applied to the experience of German Jews after 1933, especially those of kleine Leute, beyond the well-known fig-
ures in literature and the arts, will remain to be seen—in the context of a larger research project based on the letters from “Irgendwo auf der Welt.” Further information can be obtained from the many different newsletters and journals created by emigrants, the Exilpresse. An important means of communication and mutual information was the German-language newspaper Aufbau published in New York. As Atina Grossmann states, “Our family bible was the Aufbau.” Other, smaller periodicals, such as Das Jüdische Familienblatt in Johannesburg, had a similar function: “We know about the situation of Jews in emigration. The letters we receive from all parts of the world tell us enough.” This is no exaggeration. The editors of exile papers followed such reports closely and passed the information on to their readers. For example, an article from June 1939 related: five Hungarian steamers with three thousand emigrants on board had been stuck for four weeks in the Black Sea Port of Sulina. In Constanța, Romania, one hundred and fifty Austrians, escaped from Dachau, dwelled in some customs booths and did not know where to go. Two thousand Jews, deported from the Reich, found themselves in a no-man’s-land on the German-Polish border. All Jews from eastern Prussia had to leave the province by June 20: “No one knows were to.”

A certain discrepancy between such reports and the current celebration of homelessness and cosmopolitanism as the only possible form of existence in modern times cannot be ignored. This is not a general experience of mankind in the twentieth century. It is a very specific Jewish experience that cannot easily be translated into a kind of role-model for other migrant groups or indeed for the exiled situation of modern man (and woman) today. The “thirdspace” created between Rexingen and Shavei Zion presents a moving example of memory-work that opens the chance for a dialogue between “alte Heimat” und “neue Heimat”—but there are still many more spaces to be discovered and mapped.

NOTES

2. Arthur Prinz, “Voraussetzungen jüdischer Auswanderungspolitik,” Der Morgen 12, no. 1 (April 1936): 10. (“Höchstens ein knappes Drittel dieser 100 000 Auswanderer dürfte sich heute noch in Europa befinden; ein zweites Drittel lebt in Palästina, mind- estens ein Drittel in überseiseischen Ländern. Im einzelnen verteilte sich die jüdische Auswanderung, so viel man weiß, auf etwa 40 Staaten. Diese 100 000 Menschen bilden aber wahrscheinlich erst die Vorhut einer weiteren gewaltigen Auswanderung.”)


8. Rexingen was one of the most important *Judendörfer* in Württemberg, rural settlements far removed from the better-known centers of German-Jewish life. The community was established already around 1650, and Rexingen has often been cited as one of the examples of neighborly togetherness for Jews and non-Jews before the Nazis’ rise to power. The generation of emigrants from Rexingen and immigrants to Shavei Zion lived the experience of leaving Germany; arriving in Palestine; and the early years of struggle between the British administration, Arab neighbors, and their own need to find a place of refuge (and promise). Perhaps they did not feel the immediate need to actively “remember” what happened in these years and to document their experiences. The need for memory-work arrives when the next generation, and maybe even more so the one after them, begins to ask questions. Barbara Staudacher and Heinz Högerle moved to Rexingen; discovered the (partly hidden and forgotten) Jewish history of the place; followed the traces of historical evidence to Shavei Zion; met and interviewed people; and thereby initiated a series of visits, talks, exchanges of letters, and a collection of documents that resulted in the exhibition. Cf. also Joachim Schlör, *Endlich im Gelobten Land? Deutsche Juden unterwegs in eine neue Heimat* (Berlin: Aufbau, 2003).


10. See, for example, Nicholas Van Hear, *New Diasporas: The Mass Exodus, Dispersal and Regrouping of Migrant Communities* (London: UCL Press, 1998), 5: “Members of the group are bound by retained collective memory of the homeland, partial alienation from the host society, an aspiration to return to the homeland, commitment to the ideal of return and a collective consciousness derived from the relationship to the homeland.”


19. Cf. figure 1.

21. Original: “Menschen, die Emigranten sind und Immigranten werden wollen.” A big thank you, as ever, to Tom Freudenheim, who allowed me to use his father’s diary and photo album.


23. The title of the permanent exhibition at the Jewish Museum New York is “Culture and Continuity: The Jewish Journey.”


30. A game devised by the Zionist Organization, it provided a virtual migration experience in the context of the Youth Aliyah. Herbert Sonnenfeld took a photograph of youngsters playing the game. The only example of the game that has survived was donated by David Tartakower of Tel Aviv to the Jewish Museum Berlin; cf. figure 2.


32. Presner, “Remapping German-Jewish Studies,” 298.


39. Elizabeth Colson, “Coping in Adversity,” Documentation Centre of the Refugee


44. http://www.kaplancentre.uct.ac.za/research/library. Many thanks to Veronica Belling for letting me read the files donated by a member of the Schragenheim family.


46. Bergman has analyzed 763 of these files for the year 1933. Armin Bergmann, “Die sozialen und ökonomischen Bedingungen der jüdischen Emigration aus Berlin/Brandenburg 1933” (PhD diss., Technischen Universität Berlin, 2008), 20.

47. Bergmann, “Die sozialen und ökonomischen Bedingungen,” 133.


die wenigen mitgeführten Manuskripte und Bücher auspackte, fiel mir als erstes mein
Wiener Telefonbüchlein in die Hand. Wer hatte die stupide Idee gehabt, dieses nun toteste
aller Bücher einzupacken? [. . .] Heimatlos irrt Erinnerung zur Heimat zurück. Hier, an
diesen Namen und Zahlen, rankt sie sich empord.”

derung und die NS-‘Volksgemeinschaft,’” in Nationalsozialistisches Migrationsregime

of Material Objects to Palestine,” in Jewish Cultural Studies, vol. 1, Jewishness: Ex-
pression, Identity, and Representation, ed. Simon J. Bronner (Oxford: Littman Library
of Jewish Civilization, 2008), 133–50.


55. I contributed (with Katharina Hoba) to the exhibition catalogue: Joachim Schlör
and Katharina Hoba, “Die Jeckes—Emigration nach Palästina, Einwanderung ins Land
Israel,” in Heimat und Exil. Emigration der deutschen Juden nach 1933, ed. Jüdisches
Museum Berlin and Stiftung Haus der Geschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland
(Frankfurt am Main: Jüdischer Verlag, 2006), 103–10. Additionally, I loaned some
items from my own collection to the museum. Leonore Maier, the museum’s curator for
“Alltags- und Familiengeschichte,” and Aubrey Pomerance, head of the archive, were so
kind to give access to this correspondence that fills about twenty file folders.

56. Jüdisches Museum Berlin. (“Leben Ihre Verwandten heute noch in verschie-
denen Ländern? Haben Sie Verbindungen zueinander?”)

57. Alexander Stephan, ed., Exile and Otherness: New Approaches to the Experi-
cence of the Nazi Refugees (Bern: Peter Lang, 2005), 10.

58. One venue for discussing such matters was the conference “Netzwerke des Exils.
Künstlerische Verflechtungen, Austausch und Patronage nach 1933,” hosted in November
2010 by the Institut für Kunstgeschichte of the Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München;
cf. Karin Wimmer and Burcu Dogramaci, eds., Netzwerke des Exils. Künstlerische Verfel-

Sprachrohr. Heimat. Mythos. Geschichte(n) einer deutsch-jüdischen Zeitung aus New

60. R. L[indemann], “Emigranten,” Das Jüdische Familienblatt, early March
1939, 3. (“Wie es den Juden in der Emigration geht, wissen wir. Die Briefe, die wir aus
allen Teilen der Welt bekommen, sagen uns genug.”)

61. “Irrend und hoffnungslos. Einige trockene Zahlen aus der Schicksals-Arena des
jüdischen Elends,” Aufbau 5, no. 11 (June 15, 1939): 5. (“Niemand weiß, wohin.”).

62. Such statements often refer to Siegfried Kracauer’s notion of the “Niemands-
land” as the only possible home for the exiled (“Tatsächlich hat er aufgehört ‘anzuge-
ören.’ Wo lebt er denn? Im fast vollkommenen Vakuum der Exterritorialität, dem
wahren Niemandsland”); see Siegfried Kracauer, Geschichte—Vor den letzten Dingen.
Werke in neun Bänden, vol. 4, ed. Ingrid Belke with assistance from Sabine Biebl (Ber-
lin: Suhrkamp Verlag, 2009), 84. Cf. also Olivier Agard, Kracauer, le chiffonnier mélan-