IHRS The Institute for Holocaust Research in Sweden

Contextualizing the Holocaust in the Nordic Countries

Contextualizing the Holocaust
in the Nordic Countries

IHRS The Institute for Holocaust Research in Sweden

Contextualizing the Holocaust in the Nordic Countries

Karin Kvist Geverts (ed.)

Stockholm 2024

IHRS Conference Proceedings Series vol. 1
ISBN 978-91-527-9862-4

Content

Introduction

Karin Kvist Geverts[1]

This edited volume is the first in a new series of Conference Proceedings by the Institute for Holocaust Research in Sweden (IHRS). The IHRS was founded in 2021 by Joel and Ulrika Citron, children of Holocaust survivors who came to Sweden after the war, with the aim to initiate and conduct research on all aspects concerning the Holocaust and to spread new research to a wider audience. The volume contains papers from the annual conference which IHRS arranged in August of 2023 in collaboration with The Norwegian Center for Holocaust and Minority Studies (HL-senteret), Norway. The theme of the conference was *Contextualizing the Holocaust in the Nordic Countries. November 1942 and October 1943.*

The year 2023 marked the 80th Anniversary of the flight of the Danish Jews in October 1943 to Sweden, and the year before marked the 80th Anniversary of the deportation of the Norwegian Jews in November 1942. The aim of the conference was to contextualize the Holocaust in the Nordic countries by using these two events as its starting point. Both events marked very different fates of Jews in the Nordic countries. At the same time, they call our attention to cross-border interconnections on both individual, communal and state levels.

The programme contained one keynote, three sessions and a round table.[2] The introduction was held by the hosts of the conference, Director of HL-senteret Professor Guri Hjeltnes together with Director of IHRS Associate Professor Karin Kvist Geverts. The keynote lecture was held by Associate Professor Sofie Lene Bak of the University of Copenhagen. Her lecture was called *Contextualizing October-43: Temporality, Methodology and Historicising* and elaborated on the importance of context in order to understand the events of history, and especially when it comes to time and space, what methods are used and how an event is historicised. She used

[1] Karin Kvist Geverts is an Associate Professor in History and the Director of IHRS.
[2] The conference was filmed and the sessions can be watched here: https://ihrs.se/en/seminarier/

the flight of the Danish Jews in October of 1943 as a case to highlight the arguments. Her keynote is included in this volume.

The first session evolved around the theme *Survivors* and had paper presentations by Dr. Silvia Goldbaum Tarabini, Dr. Dóra Pataricza & Dr. Kata Bohus, and artist Joanna Rubin Dranger, and was chaired by Karin Kvist Geverts. The presenters proposed new research ideas which they have not yet begun researching and thus none of their papers are published in this volume, but their presentations can be found online on the IHRS website.

The second session focused on *Perpetrators* and had paper presentations by Dr. Claus Bundgård Christensen, Dr. Oula Silvennoinen, Dr. Øystein Hetland and Dr. Bjørg Eva Aasen, chaired by historian Lars M. Andersson. The papers by Hetland and Aasen are published in this volume, but all presentations can be found on the IHRS website.

The third session was called *Testimonies* and had paper presentations by Dr. Victoria Van Orden Martínez, Dr. Bjarte Bruland, and Associate Professor Henrik Rosengren chaired by senior researcher Vibeke Moe. All three papers can be found in this volume as well as on the website.

Finally, the conference ended with a round table on *The future for Holocaust Research in the Nordic countries: What's next?* An introduction was given by Professor Ulf Zander (Sweden), and then followed a conversation with senior researcher Terje Emberland (Norway), Associate Professor Sofie Lene Bak (Denmark) and Dr. Oula Silvennoinen (Finland) moderated by Karin Kvist Geverts. In his introduction, Ulf Zander argued that one challenge is the idea that Holocaust Research is so important in itself that we don't need to argue why research is needed, and that this can be a hindrance for creating new perspectives and concepts. He also suggested that it is due time to co-write a book where we focus on the Nordic periphery to give new input and perspectives to Holocaust studies at large. Sofie Lene Bak suggested that focusing on the victims is a good choice to engage students to understand the difference between the universal and historical aspects of the Holocaust. The panel also discussed myths in popular culture and what function for instance "October -43" have in the Danish narrative. Oula Silvennoinen argued that history is complex and therefore we must write history as accurate as possible, even though it might not be an easy narrative. Terje Emberland agreed with Silvennoinen and urged us not to underestimate our audience arguing that they are indeed interested in history even when we present it in all its complexity.

The IHRS and the HL-senteret would like to thank all the presenters, panelists, chairs and the audience for interesting discussions during the conference. A special thanks goes to senior researcher Synne Corell at HL-senteret for a good cooperation with all the preparations before the conference. With this, I wish you a good reading.

Contextualizing October-43: Temporality, Methodology and Historicising

Sofie Lene Bak[3]

INTRODUCTION

When I was asked to be keynote speaker at this conference – and promptly accepted with delight and honor – uncertainty immediately struck me: What does "contextualizing" really mean? Is it not what historians constantly do? Is it not the trademark of our profession; as we argue that in order to understand events and actions, we have to place them in context? So, to contextualize is what I have been doing my entire professional carrier. Sometimes, we discover the crucial importance of the choice of context through a conscious process, at other times by chance or coincidence. So let me take you down memory lane and present examples of how shifting context has enriched, expanded and changed my research and understanding of the events affectionately referred to as "October-43": The spectacularly famous rescue of the Danish Jews during the Holocaust.

TEMPORALITY

Once you see it, you cannot un-see it. The narrative of October-43 is astonishingly narrow and limited in time and space. In fact, national and international historiography has their eyes focused on a very limited timespan of a few weeks in late September and early October 1943. All the drama, insights and implications are set to derive from these weeks, and most historians seem to lose interest in the Jews the moment they leave the Danish shores, as they are no longer instrumental in telling the story of rescue. This is true for the unfortunate Jews, who did not escape but were arrested and deported to the ghetto Theresienstadt; for the adults and children, who stayed behind in Denmark, and it is true as to the exile experience and

[3] Sofie Lene Bak is an Associate Professor at the Saxo Institute at the University of Copenhagen.

the repercussions on Danish-Jewish post-war identity. At present, I will focus on the latter, to demonstrate the impact of the exile on the Danish Jewish community.

During the Second World War, approx. 20.000 Danish Nationals took refuge in Sweden, of which 40% were of Jewish family. The Jews were the first, and for quite a while the largest refugee group in Sweden. However, as refugees they stayed in Sweden together with other groups of Danes: People from the resistance movement and intellectuals, who had expressed aversion toward the occupying power, and was threatened by arrest and deportation. Historically, the integration and inclusion of the Jewish community in Danish society had been relatively frictionless. Much to their surprise, many Danish Jews had their first encounter with antisemitism ever – during the exile.

On September 1, 1943, the Royal Danish Legation in Stockholm, the formal representation of the Danish state in Sweden, had declared independence of German-occupied Denmark. The legation's decision was a precondition for supporting Danes who fled to Sweden from German persecution. This means that the legation took on the financial and social responsibility for the Danish citizens who now arrived in Sweden as refugees. A task that took on a massive scale just a few weeks later, when the Germans attempted to deport the Danish Jews and the number of refugees arriving to Swedish ports escalated. Early on, the Danish refugee administration was aware of the potential conflicts between the refugee groups. By November 1943, at the Refugee Office at the legation in Stockholm, steps were taken to respond to antisemitic prejudice aimed at the staff of the office and its head, Doctor of Laws Stephan Hurwitz. From the very beginning, he had arranged an even distribution between Jews and non-Jews in filling the positions in the refugee office. Nonetheless, this did not prevent the frequent characterization of the refugee administration by the term "the Jewish Office" ("*Jødekontoret*") among non-Jewish refugees.[4]

The archive of The Danish refugee administration not only reports of an increasing level of conflict among the refugees, the mood in Sweden soon shifted from fear of contact and uncertainty to explicit antisemitism, as the refugee administration registered a growing number of conflicts in relation to the Swedish hosts and the local communities too. At Frostavallen camp, northeast of Malmö, the residents complained of the antisemitic disposition of the Swedish management,

[4] See Michael Mogensen, "Det danske flygtningesamfund i Sverige og "jødespørgsmålet" 1943–45 [The Danish refugee society in Sweden and the "Jewish question" 1943–45], *I tradition og kaos. Festskrift til Henning Poulsen*, Johnny Laursen et. al. (eds.): (Aarhus Universitetsforlag 2000).

who discriminated among the camp residents in withholding tobacco cards, ration cards and pocket money. Consequently, several members of the kitchen staff had to be fired due to antisemitic remarks about Jewish refugees, who had helped out in the kitchen.[5] The situation in the Grand Hotel refugee camp in Mölle was miserable in December 1943. Fourteen children of school age from the refugee camp had been sent to the local school, but on a number of occasions, the Swedish children had yelled antisemitic insults at them, and the parents had felt it was necessary to take the children out of the school. The camp department sent an inspector to Mölle. He thought, "the issue should now be smoothed over as the local pastor has apologised and the Swedish children have been reprimanded."[6] Even so, the inspector pressed urgently for a school exclusively for the Danish children to be set up close to the camp to avoid further friction.

In June 1944, the head of the refugee camp department reported on its activities. He expressed himself directly:

> A question that I cannot neglect to mention in this report is the Jewish problem. In the last three to four months there has been a strong antisemitic atmosphere, not only among a great many of the Danish refugees, but to an even greater degree in the Swedish population – including the Swedish authorities … The cause of the antisemitism is apparently two things. First, on the outside, people think that the Jews have taken the management positions. Second, because they (the Jews) out around the country have been less than tactful. It ought to be impressed upon the Jews by the Jewish Community or other Jewish organisations, that they should be careful both what they say, and what they do, as they, not least due to their racial character, differ from the other Danish refugees. I believe that we would do the Jews a big favour by making them aware of these matters before it is too late.[7]

In just a few sentences, the head of the department placed the responsibility for antisemitism with the Jews themselves, legitimized the prejudices as basically rational and reasonable, and defined the Jews as a separate race. He checked a lot of boxes as to the basic features of antisemitism.

---

[5] Inspection report 29 October 1944, Journal item 525, Forlægningsafdelingen [Camp Department], Den danske flygtninge-administration i Sverige [The Danish Refugee Administration in Sweden], Danish National Archives.

[6] Inspection report 17 December 1943, Journal item 520, Forlægningsafdelingen [Camp Department], Den danske flygtninge-administration i Sverige [The Danish Refugee Administration in Sweden], Danish National Archives.

[7] Report from the head of the camp department […] on the department's activities from 1 November 1943 to 1 June 1944. 26 May 1944, p. 88, Journal item 1006, Forlægningsafdelingen [Camp Department], Den danske flygtningeadministration i Sverige [The Danish Refugee Administration in Sweden], Danish National Archives.

That antisemitism was widespread among members of the Danish resistance, now exiled in Sweden, is supported by letters by Danish refugees intercepted by the Swedish security service (SÄPO). Antisemitism was instrumental in the increasing tension between activism and passivism, as Jews were accused of lacking engagement in active resistance toward the Germans. Yet the letters also reveal a readiness to use racial and racist language.[8] An analysis of the archives of the refugee administration further substantiate that the Jewish refugees experienced antisemitism in the camps both from their co-refugees, the hotel landlords and the local community. It was an antisemitism which interpreted any character trait whatsoever as especially "Jewish", and explained this behaviour with reference to antisemitic stereotypes and a racist distinction between "Danes" and "Jews".

Previously, historiography has discarded the antisemitic tendencies as individual incidents caused by "refugee psychosis", or downplayed the effects by referring to their limited prevalence as they were only expressed in narrow circles of people with similar views.[9]

However, the number of episodes and the refugee administration's alertness to the tendencies makes it impossible to dismiss the phenomenon as individual episodes caused by individual persons. The fact that the refugees also encountered antisemitism in their Swedish hosts indicates that the antisemitic prejudices must be understood as an integrated part of the discourse of both Danish and Swedish societies, which were naturally not unaffected by the long history of racialism and racism.[10]

Antisemitism was a shocking burden for the Jewish refugees and raised uneasiness for the future that peace would bring. This led the exiled leadership of the Jewish community to work for the establishment of a fund – through voluntary

[8] Mogensen, "Antisemitisme i det danske flygtningesamfund i Sverige 1943–45?", *Antisemitisme i Danmark?*, Michael Mogensen (ed.), (Copenhagen: Dansk Center for Holocaust og Folkedrabsstudier, 2002).

[9] The comprehensive work *De danske flygtninge i Sverige [The Danish refugees in Sweden]* published in 1945, which dedicates a whole chapter to the subject of "refugee psychosis," makes no mention at all of antisemitic tendencies. The historian Leni Yahil referred to "bad feelings" in her book *Test of a democracy: The Rescue of Danish Jewry in World War II* from 1966, but dismissed the antisemitic tendencies as individual incidents caused by "refugee psychosis.", See Per Møller og Knud Secher, *De danske flygtninge i Sverige* (Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 1945), p. 229ff and Leni Yahil, *Et demokrati på prøve* (Danish edition) (Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 1967), p. 312–314. However, over a quarter of a century later, in 2000, the Danish historian Michael Mogensen demonstrated that antisemitism among the non-Jewish refugees in Sweden was not only far more widespread than previously acknowledged, often the antisemitic remarks had a threatening character and referred to the necessity for "a reckoning" with the Jews when the war ended. Despite these findings, it was Mogensen's conclusion that antisemitism was only verbal in nature and was expressed in narrow circles of people with similar views. Mogensen 2000. See also Mogensen 2002.

[10] For Sweden, see for instance Karin Kvist Geverts, *Ett främmande element i nationen. Svensk flyktingpolitik och de judiska flyktingarna 1938–1944 [A foreign element within the nation. Swedish Refugee Policy and the Jewish refugees 1938–1944]* (Uppsala: Acta universitatis Upsaliensis, 2008); Lars M. Andersson, *En jude är en jude är en jude … : Representationen av "juden" i svensk skämtpress omkring 1900–1930 [A Jew is a Jew is a Jew …: Representation of "the Jew" in the Swedish satirical press 1900-1930]* (Lund: Nordic Academic Press, 2000) and Henrik Rosengren, *Judarnas Wagner – Moses Pergament och de kulturella identifikationens dilemma omkring 1920-1950 [The Wagner of the Jews – Moses Pergament and the dilemma of cultural identification 1920-1950]*. (Lund University Publications, 2007). For Denmark, Sofie Lene Bak, *Dansk Antisemitisme 1930–1945 [Danish Anti-Semitism 1930–1945]* (Copenhagen: Aschehoug, 2004).

contributions and a property tax – that could help less fortunate Jews to re-establish their homes and businesses on the return to Denmark. The leaders knew that the eventual return was of outmost importance. As the chairman of the community put it: "We have to return as persecuted refugees, as soldiers after a victorious war, not as the Jews who instantly want to reclaim their old status".[11] A fund would send the right message of gratitude and self-help. The fund was never established, but the fear, expressed by the community leaders, had not disappeared. Any claims, Jewish families would raise for restitution for damages, implied the risk of evoking prejudice of demanding Jews, who exploited their victimization, and such did not correspond with the expectation of humidity and gratitude. On returning home, the exiled Jews were frequently met with stories of the hardship suffered by Danes during the last years of the German occupation while implicitly insinuating that the Jewish refugees had lived in comfort and abundancy in neutral Sweden. Among former members of the resistance, the old accusation, that the Jews had not contributed to the active resistance towards the Germans, resurrected.[12]

Contrary to the often idealizing stories of the rescue of the Danish Jews during the Holocaust, on their return to Denmark, Danish Jews felt their status more challenged than ever. The Jewish community never made collective claims for restitution nor questioned the conduct of their fellow Danes. They embarked on a strategy of repeatedly and undivided gratitude toward Denmark.

Instead, the Danish state provided housing, immediate relief and compensation – and made the original idea of a Jewish fund unnecessary. It is obvious why: The compensation cases involved painful conflicts, which could have driven a serious wedge into Danish society. The politicians wanted to avoid this at any cost. Danish authorities were do only committed to the reintegration of the Jewish community; they had a vested interest in silencing potential ethnic conflict.[13]

In memory culture – just as in historiography – all attention was diverted towards the rescuers rather than the victims and any hardship during the exile or on returning was excluded from the narrative.

[11] Minutes from the Danish Jewish Community during the exile in Sweden 1943–45, Arthur Henriques: *Møder i Sverige. Det mosaiske Troessamfunds Forhandlingsprotokol fra flygtningetiden i Sverige 1943-45.* (Copenhagen: Erik Henriques Bing, 2011), p. 25.

[12] See for instance Morten Møller, *Mogens Fog.* (Copenhagen: Gyldendal 2009).

[13] Sofie Lene Bak, *Da krigen var forbi: De danske jøders hjemkomst efter besættelsen [When the war was over. The return of Danish Jews after the German occupation].* (Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 2012); Sofie Lene Bak, "Repatriation and restitution of Holocaust victims in post-war Denmark", *Jewish Studies in the Nordic Countries Today*, Ruth Illman & Björn Dahla (eds.), (Turku University Press, 2016), p. 134–152.

METHODOLOGY

The example leads us to consider methodological problems related to context and perspective. The now prevalent approach of entangled and transnational history teaches us the constrains of methodological nationalism, that makes us blind to transnational phenomenon and sources, that may lay beyond our national archives. Not only is the Holocaust by definition a transnational event with a global scope, perpetrators and victims crossed borders, whether voluntarily or under duress. This opens op for several national contexts that might be considered relevant for our studies. The same is true for the survivors, who ended up in once again different national contexts.

However, another less obvious methodological problem has to do with narrative and perspective.

In Denmark, there were no round ups of Jews after the central raid on October 1st, 1943. The 1500 police soldiers available for the raid were never used to search for Jews, or for patrolling the Danish coast. The persecution of the Jews after the raid was now left to a small group of Gestapo men, who by no means had the resources to control the Danish coastline.[14]

Hence, Jews were often caught by coincidence, usually at harbors crowded with people. Let us zoom in on Taarbæk, a small fishing hamlet north of Copenhagen. On the 9th of October, two Gestapo agents who were tipped off arrived at the port just as a fishing boat with refugees was leaving the quay. Thirteen people were arrested that night; five were later deported to the Theresienstadt ghetto. Witnesses at the war crimes trials in Denmark after the war, however, reported that there were quite a lot of people at the harbor, among them several Danish police officers, who assisted the escape. Danish law during the occupation prohibited leisure boating and unauthorized traffic in the harbors. A crowd of 30 maybe 40 people in the middle of the night during curfew can hardly be considered discreet. The situation was all too obvious – and activated an informer, who alarmed the Gestapo.

The incident in Taarbæk is one of the best-documented events during the rescue operation. Because a young man was shot and killed by the Gestapo when he was assisting a group of Jews into a boat. Just as the boat was leaving the harbor, the Gestapo arrived and fired what they claimed were warning shots. However, a young man was hit and died immediately. One of the Gestapo men were a Dane, who was tried with murder after the war.

[14] Henrik Lundtofte, *Gestapo! Tysk politi og terror i Danmark 1940–45. [Gestapo! German police and terror in Denmark 1940–1945]* (Copenhagen: Gad, 2003).

Figure 1: Memorial plaque for Claus Christian Heilesen in Taarbæk (Lyngby-Taarbæk Stadarkiv).

The young man, Claus Christian Heilesen, was just 18 years old and an engineer student, and has been honored for his deed on several memorials in and around Copenhagen and is frequently mentioned in the literature as an example of the bravery of the rescuers and the brutal risk their faced.

However, nobody has paid attention to the fact, that Heilesen's mother was Jewish, hence according to Halakha, he was a Jew, according to the Nazis a "Mischling", and he was fleeing to Sweden himself! He did arrange and organized the illegal transport – in every respect a rescuer – but he was too on his way into the boat off to Sweden.

Claus Heilesen's death was exceptional but not his deeds. Personal memories and oral history with Danish-Jewish survivors challenges the notion of the Jews as passive victims, that needed saving. Rather than passive objects of persecution and rescue, they were active subjects, who tried their best to secure their possessions and belongings, who managed to obtain the cash needed for the flight with short time on their hands. Who organized transport not only for their nearest family but for relatives and friends as well. When the flight started in late September 1943, that

earliest transports were often conducted in small rowing boats. These crossings were extremely dangerous – not because of the risk of exposure – but because the rowing boats, that were sold to the Jews, were in very poor condition. Many of the known drowning accidents happened in the beginning in small boats. Transports by larger fishing vessels later on made it possible for more refugees to make the crossing under better safety conditions.

Figure 2: This is a photograph taken in Sweden, just after the safe arrival of these four Jewish siblings. Also in the boat was their aunt and a fisherman. During the crossing one of the oars broke – fortunately close to the Swedish coast (Museum of Danish Resistance).

Why has this perspective of Jewish agency been downplayed in historiography as well as in collective memory?

In Denmark – as well as in the rest of Europe – the celebration of the resistance movement and the victims of political persecution often overshadowed the persecution of the Jews. However, due to the rescue, the persecution of the Danish Jews has always been an integrated part of the commemoration of the resistance. But the collective memory did not leave much room for mourning the dead or acknowledging the racist and antisemitic motives behind the persecution. Focus has

been on the rescuers rather than the victims. The interests in such a narrative in Danish society as well as in the Jewish community were convergent. While the Jewish community chose a strategy of discretion and gratitude, the deeds of ordinary Danes washed away the shame of defeat and collaboration.

After the war, Jewish defiance was not instrumental for a nation defeated and liberated by foreign forces. In addition, Denmark desperately needed any positive PR that could appease Allied suspicion of the true motives of the Danes. The first to systematically investigate the events in the 1960ies, Israeli historian Leni Yahil, emphasized that a key factor in explaining why the Jews in Denmark was rescued from German persecution was the fact that the Danes possessed a "special character ... with its high ethical standard and its love of freedom and democracy".[15] Yahil's early interpretation established the Danish case not only as an example of the potential achievement of courageous active resistance to Nazi persecution but as an exception from the European Holocaust.

HISTORICISING

Soon, there will no longer be people, who witnessed and experienced the Holocaust alive. We are approaching the end of individual memory. So, what challenges does historicizing present for October-43?

The notion of a cosmopolitan memory culture, as argued by Daniel Levy and Natan Sznaider, implies a memory that is decontextualized from historical time and space, fueling universalism and generalizations.[16] National memory of the rescue in Denmark has increasingly assimilated into such global patterns.[17] In this process of cosmopolitanization, the complex and ambiguous aspects of the event are smoothed over, and the experience of the historical actors universalized. The universal tale derived from the experience of the victims, as well as from that of the perpetrators, can be utilized in a myriad of personal and political agendas.

Yet local historical context is paramount for the understanding of the rescue in Denmark. The exceptional character of the occupying regime in Denmark and the nature of the cooperation policy during the war make comparison with other

[15] Leni Yahil, *The Rescue of Danish Jewry. Test of a Democracy* (Philadelphia 1969, orig. Jerusalem 1966) p. XVIII.

[16] Daniel Levy & Natan Sznaider, "Memory Unbound: The Holocaust and the Formation of Cosmopolitan Memory," *European Journal of Social Theory* 5, no. 1 (2002), p. 103.

[17] Sofie Lene Bak, "Danish Heroism Revisited: The Rescue of the Danish Jews between National and Global Memory", *The Rescue Turn and the Politics of Holocaust Memory*, Edited by Natalia Aleksiun, Raphael Utz, and Zofia Wóycicka (Detroit: Wayne State University Press 2023).

countries and rescue operations an intricate endeavor and the Danish case a very unsuitable universal measuring stick for either good or evil.

Moreover, it is a widely accepted argument that the cosmopolitan memory contributes to the creation of a common European culture of memory, as cosmopolitan memory transforms the Holocaust into a transcendent idea that might provide a basis for a European identity.[18] This constitutes a paradox, since most of the examples of mediated representations, especially film and television, mentioned in the literature are American.

Hence, the patterns of the cosmopolitan memory could easily be considered an Americanization of memory, as argued by Alvin Rosenfeld. By this he means "a tendency to individualize, heroize, moralize, idealize, and universalize" [19] the Holocaust, favoring the affirmative figures of the survivor - Jews who did not die - and the rescuer, who saved them. These types are moved from the margins to the center of the narrative, despite the obvious disproportion and asymmetry as to the historical reality of the Holocaust. When rescue is the focus of the narrative – as in the Danish case – there is a risk of stereotyping the figures of the victim, perpetrator, and rescuer according to current cultural, political, and religious values and needs. Thus, the nuances carefully exposed by historiography are frequently marginalized.

Yet, there might be other advantages: as argued by Levy and Sznaider, the core of the cosmopolitan memory is "a reflexive choice to incorporate the suffering of the 'Other,'"[20] which emphasizes the victims' suffering and draws inspiration from their struggle. A cosmopolitanization of national memory might potentially entail that the fate of the Jews of Denmark is acknowledged as a part of the European and Jewish ordeal of the Holocaust, which might facilitate a new and long overdue focus on the victims and survivors.

CONCLUSION

Context is really everything! Without attention to context, we are not only at risk of overlooking crucial explanations, distorting chronology and stereo-typing the past. On the other hand, we have to constrain ourselves when placing national events in a European context, as we risk blurring the distinct national features and exceptionalities.

[18] Sharon Macdonald, *Difficult Heritage. Negotiating the Nazi Past in Nuremberg and Beyond* (London: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, 2009), p. 132.
[19] Alvin H. Rosenfeld, "The Americanization of the Holocaust," *End of the Holocaust* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press 2011), p. 60.
[20] Levy and Sznaider, "Memory Unbound," p. 103.

Remember the four siblings that made it to Sweden despite a broken oar? (Figure 2) The broken oar has always been on display at the museum of Danish Resistance in Copenhagen. It almost has the status of a relic.

Now I cannot look at the photograph without wondering: Why do we know so little about the four young people and their family? How did they manage to arrange their flight? What impact did the exile have on them? How will their story be remembered in the future?

I asked our reliable friend Google, as I did a photo search. The result is not encouraging: Just a fragment of the online reproductions of the photo links back to the original file at the museum of Danish Resistance. I did not find any reproductions that actually informed on the names of the individuals. Instead, google even suggested alternative illustrations, in contexts such as Japan, Estonia and England, and content far removed from the Holocaust.

Yet the four siblings in the photograph are members of the Znaider-family: Meet Lina, Hirsch, Wolff and Salomon. Lina had 100 Danish Crowns on her person upon arrival to Sweden. Hirsch was later killed in Action on 6 May 1945 when serving the Danish Brigade. Wolff – holding the broken oar – was a paper-hanger and Salomon had to leave his non-Jewish wife Lydia in Denmark. The couple were united in Sweden a month later in November 1943.[21]

But, who needs context?

[21] Their individual records on arrival to Sweden are included in the database of The Danish Jewish Museum, Safe-haven.dk, containing Swedish refugee protocols.

The Role of the Holocaust in the post-war legal purge of the Norwegian Police

Øystein Hetland[22]

INTRODUCTION

The fact that the Holocaust did not play a major role in the post-war purge of the Norwegian police has long been known. Researchers such as Per Ole Johansen,[23] Tore Pryser,[24] Torgeir Sæveraas,[25] Synne Corell[26] and Christopher Harper[27] who have examined aspects of the post-war reckoning with the role of the Norwegian police during the Holocaust have all come to similar conclusions: It was incomplete and inconsistent. Many who participated in arrests of Jews were never punished for it. Others were punished, but had to watch colleagues in the same role and even in the same town escape the same judgment. Yet others seemed to receive lenient sentences given their roles.

But how can this be explained? Was the outcome intentional or accidental? Were Jews simply not deemed important during the post-war legal purge of the Norwegian police? Or were there deeper structural factors at work preventing a thorough reckoning with the fact that most of the Jews deported from Norway had first been arrested by Norwegian police officers?

AMBITIONS

The first question that needs answering is whether there was any real interest on part of the Norwegian prosecution authorities to include actions against Jews in the post-war legal purge. Interestingly, the answer to this seems to be a clear "yes". In a

[22] Øystein Hetland is a researcher at the Norwegian Center for Holocaust and MInority Studies.
[23] Per Ole Johansen, «Rettsoppgjøret med statspolitiet», *På siden av rettsoppgjøret*, Per Ole Johansen (red.), (Oslo: Unipub, 2006).
[24] Tore Pryser, «Holocaust i innlandsregionen», *På siden av rettsoppgjøret*, Per Ole Johansen (red.), (Oslo: Unipub, 2006), p. 93–129.
[25] Torgeir E. Sæveraas, *I skyggen mellom trærne. Om krig og ansvar* (Oslo: Spartacus, 2018). Torgeir E Sæveraas, *Bokstaven R. Hundre landssviksaker fra Rinnan til Rød* (Oslo: Pax forlag, 2023).
[26] Synne Corell, *Likvidasjonen: historien om holocaust i Norge og jakten på jødenes eiendom* (Oslo: Gyldendal, 2021).
[27] Christopher S. Harper, *Det ufullstendige oppgjøret. Landssvikoppgjørets behandling av de som deltok i forfølgelsen av jødene i Norge under okkupasjonen 1940–1945* (Oslo: Kolofon forlag, 2023).

June 1945 interview, the leader of the secret police resistance leadership made the following promise to newspaper readers about the coming purge of the police:

> [...] We will be strictest within our own ranks. [...] Those who have been done things a normal conscience can't defend, will not be tolerated within the police [...]. Those who for example took part in the arrests of Jews or the teachers have no future within the institution.[28]

Erik Solem, one of the most prominent administrators of the post-war legal purge, in 1945 published a guide to help prosecutors handle a new and very challenging situation. Here, he emphasised that "all help in the arrest and transportation of Jews" could be punished by up to five years in prison as illegal deprivations of liberty, a punishable offence according to § 223 in the Norwegian penal code.[29] And in June 1945, Sven Arntzen, director of the Norwegian Prosecuting Authority, sent out instructions for the investigation of police officers. Here, he emphasised that investigations should document whether the officer in question had carried out political arrests, such as arresting Jews.[30]

A concrete demonstration of how serious the prosecution authorities could see participation in actions against the Jews is the case against Oliver Møystad. In 1942 he was leader of the Norwegian Security Police and thus nominally in charge of the political State Police, which administrated the main waves of arrests of Norwegian Jews. Presuming from the organisation chart that he was responsible, the prosecutors wanted the death penalty for Møystad. Further investigation, however, revealed that his nominal subordinate State Police leader Karl Marthinsen had acted on direct orders from the German Sipo, without Møystad acting as an intermediary. An updated indictment without this presumed role was issued, where authorities no longer wanted to sentence Møystad to death.[31]

REALITIES

Despite such demonstrations of willingness to prosecute participation in the arrests of Jews, the results in practice became far less sweeping. This was noted already in 1948 by Knut Sveri, a law student who had worked in the treason investigation unit

[28] «Kartotek over samtlige angivere i landet», *Indre Akershus Blad*, 12.06.1945.
[29] Landssvikanordningen (Oslo: Tanum, 1945), p. 25–26.
[30] «Etterforskningen i saker mot polititjenestemenn.», circular letter from the Director of Public Prosecutions, 23.06.1945, SAO/A-10938/D/L0002.
[31] Proposals for indictments against Oliver Møystad, 12.06.1946 and 14.10.1946, L-sak Oliver Møystad.

of the Oslo police. He pointed out that while membership in the Norwegian Nazi party *Nasjonal Samling* (NS) by police officers had been systematically examined and punished, the same was not the case for participation in the arrests of Jews, which "objectively have done far greater damage".[32] Tellingly, Sveri's call for an official inquiry into the role of the Norwegian police in arresting Jews was met with silence.

What had happened to the ambitions of 1945? Arguably the answer can be illustrated by the verdict in December 1946 against Sverre Aglen, leader of the Criminal Police in Bergen. Aglen had accepted that his men assisted the State Police in "political arrests", such as of Jews and protesting teachers. He had also been a passive member of NS. The prosecutor wanted him sentenced for both matters. The court, however, gave a succinct description of the state of things in the Norwegian police during the war, called out the Prosecution Authority's practice until then and used this as a basis for their final verdict of Aglen:

> [...] There are today senior police officers who like the indicted have transferred cases to the State Police, provided them with men for political actions and have undertaken arrests of hostages. The greater part of junior police officers has participated in some kind of arrest of teachers, Jews, hostages for people who have fled the country et cetera. The conduct of the police officers when it comes to arrests in particular was unfortunate and reprehensible. But when judging whether it is punishable by law, one cannot ignore how the police officers reacted during the war, as shown above.
>
> [...] One must also look to the fact that there have been no legal consequences for junior police officers who have shown the proper national attitude but have participated in similar arrests. This seems to show that the prosecution authorities do not seem to consider such arrests in isolation as punishable by law. These officers have not even lost their positions in the police.[33]

Accordingly, the court held, Aglen should not be convicted for such actions because he also had been a member of the NS, while his non-NS colleagues got off the hook. His NS membership, however, was deemed criminal. The result of his case is thus fully in line with Sveri's observations.

Interestingly, however, the prosecutors were not willing to accept the court's view that the behaviour of other police officers should be taken into context when

[32] «Politiet og jødeaksjonen», *Verdens Gang*, 23.06.1948.
[33] Verdict of the Bergen city court, 20.12.1946, L-sak Sverre Aglen.

judging Aglen and appealed the case to the Supreme Court.[34] It, however, supported the view of the lower court.[35] This was in line with prior and later rulings which established that political arrests on direct orders was not punishable for regular police officers. In 1946 the Frostating court, for instance, had reached a verdict of not guilty against a police officer who had guided German police officers to the cabin of a resistance fighter:

> [...] Aid of this nature was often required by the hostile power, and it was often provided by nationally unimpeachable Norwegians, because they felt forced, because they could not avoid it without considerable risk to themselves and because a refusal would not have benefitted the wanted, because he in any case without difficulty would have been found.[36]

And in 1948, in a case against a police officer who had aided in the hunt for the heavy water saboteurs, the Supreme court describe the practice that had evolved during the legal purge:

> [...] I consider it established through practice that acts carried out by Norwegian police officers during the occupation that objectively aid the enemy, for instance contributing to the arrest of patriotic Norwegians for the German Security Police, in the circumstances are not punishable because the person in question has acted on orders from a superior.[37]

"Established through practice" is here a key word. I have found no indications of that investigators or prosecutors being explicitly instructed by the Director of Public Prosecutions to ignore "political arrests" by regular police officers. Instead, it was up to their judgement whether to prosecute such matters. The inconsistent results this could produce were pointed out by Paul Greftegreff, a member of NS and former police prosecutor in Hammerfest. He was among other things, his NS membership chief among them, sentenced for having administrated the arrest of Jews in the area. In his plea for a pardon, Greftegreff pointed out that his police chief at the time had not been charged, despite the fact that he had conveyed the order

[34] «Ankeerklæring», 11.01.1947, L-sak Sverre Aglen.
[35] Verdict of the Norwegian Supreme Court, 18.12.1947, L-sak Sverre Aglen.
[36] Verdict of Frostating lagmannsrett against Gudmund Nordal Stene, 10.12.1945, referred in *Riksadvokatens meddelelesblad*, no. 17, 1946.
[37] Verdict of the Supreme Court against Torbjørn Svalastog, 09.04.1948, referred in *Riksadvokatens meddelelesblad*, no. 47, 1948.

to Greftegreff. He also noted that a policeman who had arrested Jews on his orders after the war had been appointed chief of police.[38]

WHY WERE SOME SENTENCED AT ALL?

Given this, it could seem surprising that any police officers were sentenced for contributing to the Holocaust at all. But some, like Greftegreff, were indeed judged for their participation. The senior officer administrating the arrests outside of Oslo, Sverre Dürbeck, was for example sentenced to six years in prison, with the aid during the arrests seen as a "grave matter".[39] What allowed this was three crucial distinctions that developed during the purge: between those who had served in the political State Police and those serving in the regular Order- or Criminal Police, between initiative and passiveness, and between NS members and others.

Service in the State Police was seen as criminal in its own right. Any actions you were ordered to participate in as part of this unit was taken as examples of your exceptionally poor judgement, and thus punishable. Likewise, actions beyond direct orders – such as buying confiscated property, informing, stealing or otherwise making the situation worse for wanted persons – could potentially land you in trouble. In the case of Greftegreff, for instance, his antisemitic attitude, expressed in several articles he wrote, made the court certain that his participation was something he wanted, rather than something he did with great reluctance. Notably, the court argued that Greftegreff did nothing to warn the victims.[40]

Finally, as Sveri pointed out, a crucial distinction emerged between NS members and others. Since NS membership was also outright criminalised, all NS members were investigated. If, in this process, particularly incriminating evidence came to light, participation in actions against Jews could become part of the charges against you, as in the case of Aglen.

Beyond this, several other factors also limited the role of the Holocaust in the purge. Both the "success" of the perpetrators and the way the Holocaust was carried out would contribute to reducing the consequences for those who participated. Because so many of the arrested Jews had been killed, they could not testify against those who had arrested them. And because the arrests were carried out quickly and often with a small paper trail, it was often difficult to beyond doubt prove that a given officer had participated. The effects of these factors were amplified by the fact

[38] Letter from Paul G. Greftegreff to the Ministry of Justice, 04.04.1948, L-sak Paul G. Greftegreff.
[39] Sentence of Sverre Dürbeck, L-sak Sverre Dürbeck.
[40] Sentence of Paul G. Greftegreff, 02.03.1946, L-sak Paul G. Greftegreff.

that prosecutors were under strong pressure to quickly bring cases to court. Their job was to get people convicted, not write their biographies. This was done more efficiently by questioning living witnesses or victims or by producing written documents than spending time trying to prove in the face of denials that one had arrested Jews.

A second limiting factor was the fact that people were not judged based on a single act, but by weighing a person's "good" and "bad" actions. Important aid to the patriotic cause could thus nullify other illegal acts. This saved State Police senior officer Knut Rød, the administrator of the arrests in Oslo. His presumed aid to the resistance, including facilitating warnings of the coming arrests to Jews, in the court's view compensated for his own role in the arrests of Jews, which it saw as essentially passively carrying out orders.[41]

THE IMPORTANCE OF AID TO JEWS

In the previously mentioned interview with the leader of the police resistance, he beyond police guilt in the arrests of Jews also pointed out another aspect of the events during the war: "Now we also have to mention that colossal efforts were made by police officers to save the Jews, and likewise the teachers. This will of course be credited each one."[42]

Accordingly, aid to Jews by policemen could sometimes lead to a lower sentence or even outright acquittal. This happened to Kristian T. Berg, deputy leader of the Norwegian Police Union. He was member of NS for a short period and had during this time also influenced others to join. On the other hand, he had two years later done a great effort to save Jews, including personally convincing his Jewish neighbour and her daughter to flee, saving much of their belongings and helping them with their flight to Sweden. He afterwards became part of a larger network aiding Jews to escape from Oslo. This, the court judged, outweighed his short-lived support for NS.[43]

Helping save the lives of Jews was far from guaranteed to lead to acquittal, however, as the case of the *Lensmann* Arne Tonning illustrates. He was given 7 months in prison despite two Jewish women testifying that his warnings about their coming arrests had allowed them to escape with their families. Afterwards, he tried

[41] Verdict of Eidsivating lagmannsrett against Knut Rød, 09.04.1948, L-sak Knut Rød.
[42] «Kartotek over samtlige angivere i landet», *Indre Akershus Blad*, 12.06.1945.
[43] Verdict of Oslo City Court against Kristian T. Berg, 24.05.1948, SAO/A-10085/P/Pg/L0006.

to get a pardon, arguing that "the lives of six Jews ought to compensate for my [NS] membership". The Ministry of Justice, however, flatly refused.[44]

THE LESSER OF TWO EVILS?

How could Norwegian authorities on one hand clearly define that arresting Norwegian Jews was a grave illegal act, and also punish some of those who carried it out, while letting so many others off the hook?

On the most basic level, it reflected a fundamental choice made by Norwegian authorities and resistance leaders: That it was better to have a police force where at least some of the officers were non-Nazis inclined to provide aid in various ways to people in danger, than to have a fully Nazified and unprofessional police force inviting chaos and from which no help to the resistance could be expected. One was then willing to accept the price: That "good Norwegians" ended up carrying out orders that in isolation were illegal. This was made explicit in an appeal (*parole*) by the Norwegian resistance leadership to non-Nazi police officers in autumn of 1943:

> [...] The police are to until further notice to remain in service to provide aid to the population and ward off abuse. One is aware of that the police will have to carry out illegal orders up until a certain limit.[45]

Having signalled this, it would have been difficult to conduct a thorough reckoning with the police. Doing so would to some extent repudiate the guidelines given during the war, likely producing howls of protest. The echoes of the appeal can be found in numerous judgments of Norwegian police officers. One example:

> [...] Police officers had to a certain extent provide aid to the enemy, for example by arresting good Norwegians, in order to keep their positions, because it was in the interest of the population to keep the police as intact as possible.[46]

DARKER MOTIVES?

Finally, there are factors that leave few explicit traces, but which nevertheless could have impacted investigations, decisions to indict and court verdicts. The first is

[44] «Søknad om benådning», 08.12.1948; «Benådning – Arne Tonning f. 7/12–1912», L-sak Arne Tonning.
[45] «Erklæring» by Tage Petterson and Lars L'Abbè-Lund, 03.01.1947, L-sak Knut Rød.
[46] Verdict of Gulating lagmannsrett in the retrial of Betuel A. Stangeland, 29.12.1956, L-sak Betuel A. Stangeland.

antisemitic attitudes, which continued to exist after the war.[47] The Norwegian Jew Aksel Scheer, in a comment to several court verdicts, asked in an article in 1947: "Is there a red thread between these court verdicts – a bloody red thread. Is the reason a conscious or unconscious downgrading of a certain group of people?"[48] This is hard to answer. Notably, however, on the official level the Holocaust was condemned in the strongest terms. And not only arrests of Jews by regular police officers were often not reason for indictment – the same was as we have seen the case with regards to arrests of national heroes such as protesting teachers and resistance fighters. On the other hand, several decisions are possible to interpret as influenced by at least indifference to Jews, particularly cases where acts against Jews were part of the material gathered in the investigation but ultimately not used in the indictment.[49]

The second opaque factor is the obvious problem that the police was responsible for investigating itself. There were people working in the units investigating actions during the war who themselves had been ordered to take part in the arrest of Jews.[50] For them to indict people for things they themselves had done must have felt uncomfortable, making it easier to focus on what usually divided them from the people under investigation: NS membership or service in the State Police.

CONCLUSION

The purge of the Norwegian police after the war presented the Norwegian authorities with a problem familiar to anyone trying to come to terms with years of systematic injustice: Can all crimes be prosecuted? And if not, where do you draw the line? Faced with the enormous size of the post-war legal purge, the authorities consciously and unconsciously abandoned prosecution of certain people and acts, or combinations thereof. One casualty of this was the systematic reckoning with the fact that the road to the gas chambers for hundreds of Norwegian Jews began with a knock on the door by a Norwegian police officer.

The reasons for this cannot, however, simply be ascribed to latent antisemitic attitudes. Instead, such attitudes are but one of many factors which need to be taken into account. Fundamentally, Norwegian authorities and resistance leaders

[47] See here Kjetil Braut Simonsen, *I skyggen av Holocaust - antisemittisme i norsk historie 1945–2023* (Oslo: Humanist forlag, 2023).
[48] «Epilog til Feldmann-saken», *Dagbladet*, 05.09.1947.
[49] See here for instance the case against chief of police Arne Håkenrud in Ålesund, where he was never confronted with his diary noting the deportation of Jews from the town. L-sak Arne N. Håkenrud.
[50] See here for instance Odd Biltvedt, who worked in the treason unit in Oslo police and who admitted to have taken part in the mass arrests of Jews in Oslo. «Ad jødeaksjonen 1942», report by Odd Biltvedt, 21.01.1948, RA/S-3138-01/F/Fa/L0001; Roy Andersen, *Sin egen fiende* (Oslo: Cappelen, 1992), p. 140.

determined that a tainted but still not completely nazified police was the lesser of two evils, accepting that this would mean that even non-Nazi police officers would carry out orders such as the arrests of Jews, while expecting that police officers did what they thought possible to ameliorate the consequences of such orders by warning those in danger or providing other forms of aid and comfort. Prosecuting police officers who adhered to this would have been difficult. Furthermore, the post-war legal purge threatened to overwhelm the Norwegian system of justice, leading to pressure to finish investigations and bring cases to a close. That often meant turning to live witnesses, instead of trying to find out who had arrested Jews killed in Auschwitz based on often sparse written material. The lack of trained police officers also made it difficult to conduct an even more thorough cleansing of the police, as this would have meant suspending and investigating people with skills needed for the legal purge. And it would perhaps be too much to expect that people who themselves had been ordered to arrest Jews would be eager to prosecute others who had done the same.

The Norwegian National Railway Company. A machinery of destruction for the Norwegian Jews

Bjørg Eva Aasen[51]

INTRODUCTION

The social mission of the Norwegian National Railway Company was to ensure an efficient, available, and secure transport of persons and freight. This mission was put to the test during WW2 when armed German officers and soldiers arrived at the railway stations in several harbor cities early April 9, 1940. In this paper I will demonstrate that the cooperation between the Norwegian National Railway Company and the nazi State police made the deportation of the Norwegian Jews a smooth and invisible operation.

ORGANIZATION OF THE OCCUPATION

The Germans demanded complete access to the entire railway organization for transport of German troops and were given permission right away. At the same time, the Royal family, the Norwegian government, and members of the parliament left the capitol. Most of the Norwegian Railway Company's administration left the capitol too, but only for a few days.

On April 15, the self-appointed Council of Administration ordered the business companies to keep the wheels running, without drawing a line between economic cooperation and collaboration.

A collaboration office, *Transportkommandantur*, was established on April 19. The office was located in the headquarter of the Norwegian Railway Company's management, across the street of Oslo's main railway station.[52] The Norwegian Railway Company's administration managers cooperated with German railway

[51] Bjørg Eva Aasen is a Ph. D. and a senior adviser at the Norwegian Railway Directorate.
[52] [NSB Oslo distrikt], *NSB Oslo Distrikt: Under Krigen 1940–1945* ([Oslo]), p. 252 <http://hdl.handle.net/11250/194721>.

administrative managers in operating the entire railway system for all German military transportation as well as civilian Norwegian transportation.

This meant that the Norwegian Railway Company became subordinate to *Deutsche Wehrmacht* and civilian transportation became subordinate to German military transportation. The German staff were railway engineers, administrative managers and timetable managers organizing all German military transport as well as civilian Norwegian transportation.

THE ROLE OF THE RAILWAY

The *Transportkommandantur* began its mission right away, including transporting German troops, weapons, ammunition, and supply. The teamwork was a fact remarkably long before the Norwegian capitulation in June. Later on, the mission also included the transportation of prisoners of war, civil Norwegian prisoners and, from October 1942, the Norwegian Jews. The collaboration lasted till the end of the war.

Even in Trondheim, a similar *Transportkommandantur* office was established in connection to the Norwegian National Railway Company. All German military transport depended on the competence and experience of the Norwegian railway line director, transport director and workshop director regarding logistics, rolling stock and plans to be carried out. The company consisted of a large and loyal workforce who were imposed to a duty of confidentiality in December 1940, never to be repealed.[53]

[53] Hovedstyret for Statsbanene, 'Opplysninger Om Militær- Og Ekstratog.', Takst- Og Trafikksirkulære, 322, 30/12 1940 ([Oslo]).

Figure 1: Oslo Østbanestasjon [Railway station] 1940-45. Source: Jødisk museum, Oslo.

PLANNING THE DEPORTATION

Other occupied European countries needed logistic help from the Swiss department of the IBM in planning the mass deportations.[54] In Norway this help was not needed, because the extent of the Norwegian railway lines was minor. However, the deportation of the Norwegian Jews could not have been managed without the contribution of the railway company. The Norwegian Railway Company's line director and the *Transportkommandantur* managed the deportation themselves.

In a state of emergency in Trondheim on 7-8 of October in 1942, all Jewish men were arrested and transported by train to Ronglan station north of Trondheim and interned at Falstad prison camp.[55]

[54] David Swanson, *Leaving World War II Behind* (Charlottesville, Virginia 2020).

[55] Telegram from Trondheim politikammer to Norges Statsbaner, Transportkontoret, Trondheim, 'Telegram', 25 November 1942, Statsarkivet i Trondheim, Fangetransporter med navnelister for Deutsche Wehrmacht og en del bestemmelser angående disse. A-6436, Norges Statsbaner (NSB) Trondheim distrikt, SAT/A-6436/0002/Dd/L0100/0024.

An unsuccessful escape of two Jewish men when a Norwegian Nazi border police was shot, was the excuse for the arrest of all other Jewish men on October 26. They were imprisoned at Berg camp near Tønsberg. According to historian Bjarte Bruland's debate post this accident was the reason the Norwegian Nazi Minister of Police, Sverre Riisnæs, used for "no gjør vi det av med jødene" which can be translated to "let's get rid of all the Jews".[56]

The order to arrest all Norwegian Jews was signed by the head of the Nazi State police, Karl A. Martinsen. In the evening of November 24 he gave *Hauptsturmfuhrer* Wagner, the order from the German security police, Gestapo, that all Norwegian Jews should be transported out of the country at 12 a.m. on November 26.[57]

A telephone conference regarding the transports took place on November 25, where the Nazi State police president in Trondheim attended. We do not know all the participants, but certainly the managers of the Norwegian National Railway Company and *Transportkommandantur* in Oslo and Trondheim participated. All Jews in southern Norway were arrested the same day and transported by trains to Oslo in a collective action well planned by them in a joint collaboration.[58] Both the Nazi State police and *Transportkommandantur* got so busy that they didn't get the payment for the transport cleared before departure.

The train with the Jews from Bergen and Stavanger did not arrive in time either, but the trains from many cities and towns in eastern Norway did, as did the train from the small Sem station with the Jewish men from Southern Norway. This was the first transport to which the Norwegian National Railway Company has made an official apology, although several years after.

The correspondence in relation to this transport, tells us how involved the Norwegian railway administration and *Transportkommandantur* were in the deportation of the Jews living in Trondheim.

The only description of the transport from Berg camp to Oslo harbor on November 26 is given by Herman Sachnowitz. Together with his father, four brothers and other Jews, unless they were married to a non-Jewish wife, were called up at 4 a.m. and commanded to walk to Sem station and was chased into freight wagons:

[56] Bjarte Bruland, 'No gjør vi det av med jødene. . .', *Aftenposten* (Oslo, 20 October 2011), section Debatt <https://www.aftenposten.no/meninger/debatt/i/M1Qp5/no-gjoer-vi-det-av-med-joedene> [accessed 21 September 2023]. (My translation).
[57] Bjarte Bruland, *Forsøket på å tilintetgjøre de norske jødene* (Bergen: Universitetet i Bergen, 1995).
[58] Telegram from Trondheim politikammer to Norges Statsbaner, Transportkontoret, Trondheim.

> We arrived in Oslo at noon. Cloudy and depressing. The flight alarm yelled. No Norwegian civilian should observe what was about to happen. Even though Norwegian friends were gathering outside the blockings to the "Amerika-quay". A tall, dark ship just seven to eight meters away from us. "SS Donau aus Bremen", the slave ship. Outside the wagon, a man's voice cried out desperately, something about women and children. We understood they were taken too. We all broke down, even I. The Hird, the Norwegian nazi jailers were no longer to be seen. They were replaced by SS soldiers in green uniforms. They were all over. Under the hysterical roars from the officers, they forced us out of the wagons towards the quay, to the ladders to the ship's deck. Standing last in the line of people, I could see it all. Women, children and men in a hopeless fight against a brutal and cold superior force. A living ring of iron that locked up on the miserable. Living in a country where humanity was the first and most important commandment, the sight was worse than any nightmare. This was the first chock, and we thought there never would accrue anything worse. More than six hundred people who had lived their lives in confidence of a legal state were immediately deprived everything, freedom, their fatherland and worst of all, their human dignity.[59]

THE TALE ABOUT THE DELAYED TRAIN FROM TRONDHEIM

Herman Levin was one of the prisoners held at Falstad prison camp. His wife Kristmar wasn't Jewish, and she was the sister of the foreman at the shunting yard. He was at work in the shunting house when he got the message that the train with the Jews from Falstad was on its way. He gave his sister a message about her husband's arrival so that she could meet him. In her memories she wrote that the Nazi State police president in Trondheim, Kristian Martinius Vik, tried to chase them from the train.[60] The presensce of the Nazi police president in Trondheim at the station may confirm the importance of the deportation.

The women and children were already brought from the flats, where they had been interned, and the older children were collected from their schools. Together they were seated in two passenger wagons connected to a freight train. They were all arrested in daytime, and maybe the plan was to send them and the Jewish men with the regular 1 p.m. train from Trondheim? We don't know when the Jewish men arrived from Falstad prison camp, most likely they arrived on the regular train leaving Rognan station 05:30 p.m which arrived in Trondheim two hours later.

The train with 71 Jewish prisoners and 8 armed German soldiers left Trondheim a quarter to eight in the evening after persons from The Red Cross had given them

[59] Arnold Jacoby, *Herman Sachnowitz Det angår også deg: Fortalt til Arnold Jacoby* (Oslo 1976). p. 13, (My translation.)
[60] Jan Levin, "Transporten av jøder fra Trondheim til Oslo 25. Og 26. November 1942", *Norsk Jernbanemuseum: Årbok* 2015, p. 114–21.

some food. The plan was to connect the freight train to an express train at Hamar. The train, Ekstratog nr. 702, was a military freight train supplied with two passenger wagons just for this transport.[61] According to the route of this train, the arrival at Hamar was the next day at 6:00 p.m. The passenger train, Hurtigtog nr. 402, left Hamar 6:50 p.m. and arrived in Oslo 9:50 p.m.[62]

Amongst the surviving Jews, there has been a myth telling that railway staff tried to sabotage the transport to prevent the train to arrive to the boat in time. This myth was repeated in the series "Last Jøder", "Freight jews", at the Norwegian national television this year.[63]

Potentional sabotages and convenient delays were thoroughly investigated by the NSB's leadership.[64] Correspondence about a delayed departure of a military train with German soldiers on November 27., no. 1705, tells us how such scenarios were managed. Both the locomotive driver E. Paulsen and the station master Bjølgerud at Lillehammer station had to report a delay caused by an alternator belt repairment. The German transport commander of train 705 ordered the repairment according to the report from the Station Master at Lillehammer[65] and the locomotive driver's reports.[66] The alternator belt was changed by a German solider and the Norwegian fireman according to their reports. Later on, the Station Master at Lillehammer, J. Bjølgerud, had to admit that he should have reported the transport commander's situation and refer him to *Transportkommandatur*.[67]

[61] Folstad/Dc, 'Telegram', 11 1942.
[62] NSB Hamar distrikt, *Tillegg Nr. 6 Til Rutebok for Jernbanens Tjenestemenn: Gjelder Fra Og Med 15. Desember 1940.*, Tjenesterutebok, Nr. 90 (Hamar: NSB Hamar distrikt, 1940).
[63] 'Last: jøder', *Siste sjanse*, 2022, https://tv.nrk.no/serie/last-joeder.
[64] Bjølgerud. J. to Distriktschefen, Hamar, 11 1942, Statsarkivet i Hamar, NSB Hamar distrikt J.nr. 5719 28/11 1942.
[65] Bjølgerud. J. to Distriktschefen, Hamar, 11 1942.
[66] Togfører E. Paulsen to Hr. Distriktsjefen, Hamar, 42 IIIAD.
[67] Kr. Løken to Hr. stasjonsmesteren, Lillehammer, 'Forsinkelse Av Tog 705 27/11-1942.', 7 December 1942, Statsarkivet i Hamar. NSB Hamar distrikt J.nr 05852 7/12 1942. For Generaldirektøren K. Dahlum to Distriktsjefen i Hamar distrikt, 'Forsinkelse Av Tog 705 27/11-1942', Telegram, 4 December 1942, Statsarkivet i Hamar. NSB Hamar distrikt J.nr 05852 5/12 1942.

Figure 2: Rails, taxis and lorries in front of D/S Donau at Oslo harbor November 26. 1942. Source: NTB, Photograph: Georg W. Fossum.

ORDNUNG MUSS SEIN

The railway staff at Trondheim station all realized that the train never would arrive in time due to the route for the train.[68] Whether the Police president in Trondheim was aware of this when he ordered the route, is impossible to say. The correspondence afterwards reveals the diligence of the Norwegian Railway Company administration in Oslo and Trondheim to find out where to send the bill for the transport.[69] The cost, 3 045 NOK, a ticket price of 35 NOK, including the return tickets for the eight soldiers, was paid in January 1943 by the Nazi leader of the Security Police in the Police department after an intense correspondence between the Nazi State Police in Trondheim and the NSB's administrations in Oslo and Hamar.[70]

[68] NSB Hamar distrikt, *Tillegg Nr. 6 Til Rutebok for Jernbanens Tjenestemenn: Gjelder Fra Og Med 15. Desember 1940.*
[69] Bj. Øyhus, 'Fangetransport Trondheim - Oslo i Tog 702/402 Den 25 - 26/11.42', Telegram, 8 January 1943.
[70] Telegram from Trondheim politikammer to Norges Statsbaner, Transportkontoret, Trondheim.

In the correspondence between the leader of the Trondheim railway district and the president of the Nazi police in Trondheim earlier in January 1943, where the railway district leader once again asks for the payment for the transport, he adds: "Regarding future similar transports, the receiver of the bill must be clarified in advance due to the railway rules for transporting prisoners and their guardians".[71] For the railway company, this was business as usual.

After D/S Donau had left Oslo harbor, similar transports were necessary for the Jews left behind at Bredtveit prison. This transport was administered by the Norwegian National Railway Company's Oslo district that also had administered the transport from Berg prison camp to Oslo harbor early on November 26. This secret order also tells us where to send the bill: to the Nazi State police.[72] At the Bredtveit prison the Jews were asked to be informers and spies for the German secret police in Sweden instead of being send to Auschwitz. Some accepted and were released.

529 Jews were deported on November 26, totally 773 in two transports. Only 38 of them survived.[73]

SECRECY AND THE FOLLOWING SILENCE

The Norwegian National Railway Company was owned by the Norwegian state. The administration's managers kept their positions and shared their competence in collaboration with the occupants throughout the war. They described the collaboration as a forced situation. After the war they hid or destroyed most of the files and documents regarding the collaboration with the occupants. None of the managers was prosecuted for the collaboration and contribution to the deportation of the Norwegian Jews. The secrecy may indicate that they knew it wasn't right to co-operate with the Nazi State police.

There has been a silence regarding the Norwegian National Railway Company's management and their contribution to the efficient and invisible mass deportation. They were obedient bureaucrats, contributors with a well lubricated logistic system that made it easy to remove undesirable persons. During the Nazi occupation resisting the regime was a crime, and we don't know what the destroyed archives

[71] 'A-6436 Norges Statsbaner (NSB) - Trondheim Distrikt, 002 - Andre Avlevering - NSB Trondheim Distrikt 1864-2000, Dd - Saksarkiv Etter Ny Arkivordning Fra 1952, L0100', (Statsarkivet i Trondheim, n.d.).

[72] Telegram from Generaldirektør./Holtmon to D., Kc. Bech, K.K., Hvk., Ti. Haraldsen Oslo V., Tpk. O lo., Skm. Oslo Ø., [25 November 1942], B-kopibøker nov. 1942 - des. 1942, BC 0128, NSB, Riksarkivet (RA).

[73] Bjarte Bruland, 'Forsøket på å tilintetgjøre de norske jødene' (Masteroppgave i historie, Bergen, Universitetet i Bergen, 1995).

included. My finding so far indicates that no employees officially protested the deportation. No correspondence about a delay at Hamar station on the evening of November 26. is found in the files of the NSB's Hamar District at the State Archives at Hamar. The correspondence I have found regarding the delay at Lillehammer station on November 27, caused by a defect dynamo, shows the diligence for searching for possible sabotages.

The director of the transport service, Olav Holtmon, stayed in the position after the war and was made a to Knight of first class of the Saint Olav's order in 1951.[74] The claim for this appointment demands a significant achievement for country and humanity. This is the highest regard for Norwegian civilians. He also received the King's medal of merit in gold.

Deutsche Wehrmacht left behind 74 steam locomotives and 1900 wagons which were sold to the railway company for a symbolic price in addition to several kilometers of completed railway made by Soviet prisoners of war.[75] These spoils of war made it unnecessary to order new locomotives for more than ten years. The contrast to the liquidation of the Jewish fortunes confiscated by the Norwegian state is overwhelming and most shameful.

THE NORWEGIAN NATIONAL RAILWAY COMPANY'S ASSESSMENT OF THEIR COLLABORATION

Immediately after the war, the general director of the Norwegian National Railway Company together with department directors and the head of the company's office published several articles telling the war's influence on harmless parts of the railway service such as lousy construction work at the Nordland line and worn-out rolling stock. Published in a minor Nordic railway magazine directed towards railway management employees', the focus was to make a new start rather than the more unpleasant past.[76]

This information was later on broadcasted by the national radio, and complaints about worn out railway materials and need for rebuilding the organization and the railway system were in focus. The deportation of the Jews, transport and exploitation of Soviet prisoners of war and forced labors, but also Norwegian civil

[74] Arvid Østby, 'Østbyarkivet' (Hamar), Norsk jernbanemuseum, biblioteket.

[75] Thor Bjerke & Trond B. Hansen & Erik W. Johansson & Svein E. Sando, *Damplokomotiver i Norge* (Oslo 1987) <https://urn.nb.no/URN:NBN:no-nb_digibok_2016070648099>.

[76] Løken, Kristian, '"Våre Jernbaner i Krig Og Fred". Foredrag i Norsk Rikskringkasting Den 20/6 1945', *Nordisk Järnbanetidsskrift* 1945, no. 7 (1945): 175–83.

prisoners to prisons and concentration camps, and all the transport of German military equipment were not mentioned. The duty of confidentiality that was imposed for all railway staff from December 1940, where information about economical, technical or railway service information were forbidden, reduced the knowledge of the railway impressive contribution.[77]

The previous research on the war history of the Norwegian Railway Company have been surrounded by a silence. The forced cooperation wasn't considered a collaboration[78], and the extent of this collaboration has been a missing perspective among investigators as well as historians.[79] Only recently, the research on the Norwegian Railway Company's war history has shifted with Bjørn Westlie's [80]and Marianne Neerland Soleim's focus[81] on the exploitation of the Soviet prisoners of war.

Earlier evaluation of the company's assessments and actions were regarded as a pragmatic and an administrational collaboration and is why the collaboration was never investigated. The Norwegian National Railway Company was the country's most successful war profiteer.[82] The railway company was never regarded as nazified due to the fact that no member of the administrative management was member of the Norwegian Nazi political party, *Nasjonal samling*, led by Vidkun Quisling.

The headquarter for the administrative management and *Transport-kommandantur* in Oslo was sabotaged by the Norwegian Resistance Movement in March 14, 1945, and in this sabotage most of the archives was lost.[83] To be sabotaged by the heroic resistance movement was a deep disgrace. The National Railway Company hardly mentioned this sabotage nor their collaboration afterwards.

[77] Hovedstyret for Statsbanene, 'Opplysninger Om Militær- Og Ekstratog.', 30/12 1940, vol. 1940, Takst- Og Trafikksirkulære 322 ([Oslo], n.d.).
[78] Sven Arntzen, 'De Økonomiske Landssviksaker. Foredrag Holdt i Den Norske Dommerforening 5. September 1946', *Riksadvokatens Meddelelsesblad* 2. årgang, no. 23 (September 1946).
[79] Bjørn Westlie, *NSB, Krigsfangene Og Andre Verdenskrig* ([Oslo]: Universitetet i Oslo, Det humanistiske fakultet, 2018). Terje Valen, *De Tjente På Krigen : Hjemmefronten Og Kapitalen*, 2. oppl. (Oslo: Oktober, 1978).
[80] Bjørn Westlie, *Fangene Som Forsvant : NSB Og Slavearbeiderne På Nordlandsbanen* (Oslo: Spartacus, 2015).
[81] Marianne Neerland Soleim, *Sovjetiske Krigsfanger i Norge 1941–1945: Antall, Organisering Og Repatriering* (Oslo: Spartacus, 2009).
[82] Hovedstyret for statsbanene, Norges Jernbaner 1941/42 - 1944/45 Statestique Des Chemin Des Fer Norvégiens Pour l'exercice 1941/42 - 1944/45 (Oslo: Aschehoug & Co., 1947).
[83] *NSB, Centralkontorets virksomhet under krigen* [1940–45] (Oslo 1962), p. 45 bl. <http://hdl.handle.net/11250/154770>.

Beyond Flight and Rescue: Contextualizing the Holocaust through Survivors' Ongoing Survival

Victoria Van Orden Martínez[84]

INTRODUCTION

The theme of this conference is Contextualizing the Holocaust in the Nordic Countries. As such, it takes as its starting point the deportation of the Norwegian Jews in 1942 and the flight of Danish Jews in 1943. From there, we move to the arrival of approximately 30,000 survivors of Nazi persecution who were brought to Sweden in the spring and summer of 1945. Scholars' ongoing investigations of these events do much to contextualize the Holocaust in the Nordic countries by analyzing the role of governments, societies, survivors, and perpetrators in deportations, mass murder, flight, and rescue.[85]

But it is to the aftermath of these events that I turn to contextualize the Holocaust in the Nordic countries. My research focuses on what I call the 'afterlives' of a relative handful of survivors who came to Sweden as refugees in the spring and summer of 1945. I examine their entangled subject positions as survivors, witnesses, refugees, and so forth, in terms of their involvement in social and political processes in and beyond Sweden.[86] In this paper, I aim to go beyond flight and rescue and demonstrate how the Holocaust can be contextualized in the Nordic countries through survivors' ongoing survival in Sweden during the early postwar period.

By 'ongoing survival' I mean how those who fled and survived Nazi persecution had to continue to survive in the aftermath. In both English and Swedish, the word

[84] Victoria Van Orden Martínez is a Ph.D. at Linköping University.

[85] E.g., Klas Åmark, 'Sweden and the Refugees: 1933–45', Mikael Byström and Pär Frohnert (eds.), *Reaching a State of Hope: Refugees, Immigrants and the Swedish Welfare State, 1930–2000* (Lund, Sweden: Nordic Academic Press, 2013), p. 39–53, Sofie Lene Bak, *Nothing to Speak Of: Wartime Experiences of the Danish Jews 1943-1945* (first edn.; Copenhagen: Danish Jewish Museum, 2011), Mikael Byström and Pär Frohnert (eds.), *Reaching a State of Hope: Refugees, Immigrants and the Swedish Welfare State, 1930-2000* (Lund: Nordic Academic Press, 2013), Karin Kvist Geverts, *Ett Främmande Element i Nationen: Svensk Flyktingpolitik och de Judiska Flyktingarna 1938–1944 [A Foreign Element within the Nation: Swedish Refugee Policy and the Jewish Refugees 1938–1944],* Doctoral thesis (Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis (AUU), 2008), Pontus Rudberg, *The Swedish Jews and the Victims of Nazi Terror, 1933–1945,* (Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis, 2015).

[86] Victoria Van Orden Martínez, *Afterlives: Jewish and Non-Jewish Polish Survivors of Nazi Persecution in Sweden Documenting Nazi Atrocities, 1945–1946,* (Linköping University, 2023.

"survivor" has two meanings, although in Swedish the meanings each have their own word. The first meaning – *överlevande* in Swedish – describes one who lives through a traumatic event. The second meaning – *överlevare* – describes one who continues to live despite difficulties. As I see it, those who fled and survived Nazi persecution were survivors in both respects. Ongoing survival is thus continuing to live each day with the traumas they survived under the Nazis and the new challenges they faced in the aftermath.[87]

Survivors of Nazi persecution are often thought of as vessels of memory: witnesses to history, providers of testimony, and moral witnesses.[88] While these are important roles, survivors' ongoing survival during and after the Holocaust provides insight into, among other things, agency, resistance, and histories of the circulation of knowledge and forced migration, all of which transverse geographical and historical borders and build transnational bridges across them.[89]

In this paper, I demonstrate this through the history of Holocaust survivor Luba Melchior (1912–2000). As is true with many survivors who came to Sweden as refugees, information about Luba Melchior is scarce. Some basic information can be found in the documentation collected about her when she arrived in Sweden, which is available in Swedish archives. For instance, her Swedish case file indicates that she was born in Radom, Poland on May 5, 1912, her profession was 'clerk,' she was Jewish, and she survived the Radom Ghetto and its liquidation, various forced labor camps, as well as Auschwitz-Birkenau and Ravensbrück concentration camps.[90]

Melchior arrived in Malmö on April 28, 1945, via one of the Red Cross White Buses. During her questioning by the local police, she stated that her husband's location was unknown. No mention is made of her only child, indicating she likely already knew of his tragic fate. The police report provides other insight as well, including what may be understood as a limited understanding and/or sensitivity among some officials in Sweden about what survivors like Luba Melchior had experienced in

[87] See also Victoria Van Orden Martínez, "Shaping Ongoing Survival in a Swedish Refugee Camp: A Refugee-Centered History of Jewish and Non-Jewish Survivors of Nazi Persecution in Sweden", *Nordisk judaistik/Scandinavian Jewish Studies*, 33/1 (2022a), p. 19–36.

[88] See, e.g., Malin Thor Tureby and Kristin Wagrell, *Vittnesmål från Förintelsens och de Överlevande Berättelser: Definitioner, Insamlingar och Användningar, 1939–2020*, (Stockholm: Forum för levande historia, 2020), Kristin Wagrell, *Chorus of the Saved. Constructing the Holocaust Survivor in Swedish Public Discourse, 1943–1966*, Doctoral thesis (Linköping University Press, 2020).

[89] E.g., Kata Bohus, Atina Grossmann, Werner Hanak-Lettner, and Mirjam Wenzel (eds.), *Our Courage: Jews in Europe 1945-48* (Berlin: De Gruyter Oldenbourg, 2020), Emma Kuby, *Political Survivors: The Resistance, the Cold War, and the Fight against Concentration Camps after 1945* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2019), Jochen Lingelbach, *On the Edges of Whiteness: Polish Refugees in British Colonial Africa During and after the Second World War* (New York: Berghahn, 2020), Atina Grossmann, "Entangled Histories and Lost Memories: Jewish Survivors in Occupied Germany, 1945-49", *"We Are Here": New Approaches to Jewish Displaced Persons in Postwar Germany* Avinoam J. Patt and Michael Berkowitz (eds.) (Detroit, Michigan: Wayne State University Press, 2010), p. 14–30, Simone Lässig & Swen Steinberg, "Knowledge on the Move: New Approaches toward a History of Migrant Knowledge", *Geschichte und Gesellschaft*, 43/3 (2017), p. 313–46.

[90] Statens utlänningskommission Kanslibyrån (SUK), Riksarkivet, Stockholm, F 1 AC:1417 Melchior, Luba.

concentration camps. For instance, the police report records her imprisonment almost as an extension of her education and employment record, noting at one point that she had been "without work for five months" while imprisoned in Auschwitz.[91]

As scholars such as Swedish historian Lars Olsson have demonstrated, Swedish officials were indeed concerned with the ability of refugees from Nazi occupation and persecution to work while in the country. Although work was ostensibly voluntary for the 'repatriates' of 1945, the reality was that they were often under immense pressure to find work, either from government representatives or to escape difficult conditions in the refugee camps.[92] In certain extreme cases, Swedish ethnologist Britta Geschwind has shown, repatriates who were "unwilling to work" could be placed in specialized detention centers.[93] However, the work options presented to the former prisoners of 1945 were limited to mainly agricultural labor and factory work, which in many cases was either unsuitable or unsatisfactory. Even worse, this work was very similar to the forced labor required of them when they were prisoners of the Nazis.

This was just one aspect of Luba Melchior's and other survivors' ongoing survival in Sweden in the aftermath, along with dealing with emotional, psychological, and physical trauma, searching for lost relatives, and coping with the realities of their finds, while also trying to deal with the pressures of 'moving on' toward a so-called 'normal life.' As other primary sources indicate, part of Melchior's ongoing survival involved coping with her mental and physical traumas, the murder of her mother in the liquidation of the Radom Ghetto, the murders of her father, son, and brother, and the discovery that her husband was also murdered in Auschwitz.[94]

Yet, before she even left quarantine and faced the prospect of working in a field or factory, she dealt with these challenges by volunteering to gather evidence of the Nazis' crimes for justice and history. This document (Figure 1) is a list of Polish survivors – all women – who either were or were considered to become a part of what were called documentation commissions in Swedish 'assembly points' that received newly arrived former concentration camp prisoners in the spring of 1945.[95]

---

[91] SUK, "Statspolisen [Swedish state police] Nr. 765." (translated from Swedish by author.)

[92] Lars Olsson, *On the Threshold of the People's Home of Sweden. A Labor Perspective of Baltic Refugees and Relieved Polish Concentration Camp Prisoners in Sweden at the End of World War II* (New York: Center for Migration Studies (CMS), 1997), p. 101–24.

[93] Britta Z. Geschwind, 'From Nazi Concentration Camp to Detention in Sweden 1945: Female Survivors, Sexuality, and Respectability', *Ethnologia Scandinavica*, 52 (2022), p. 90–114.

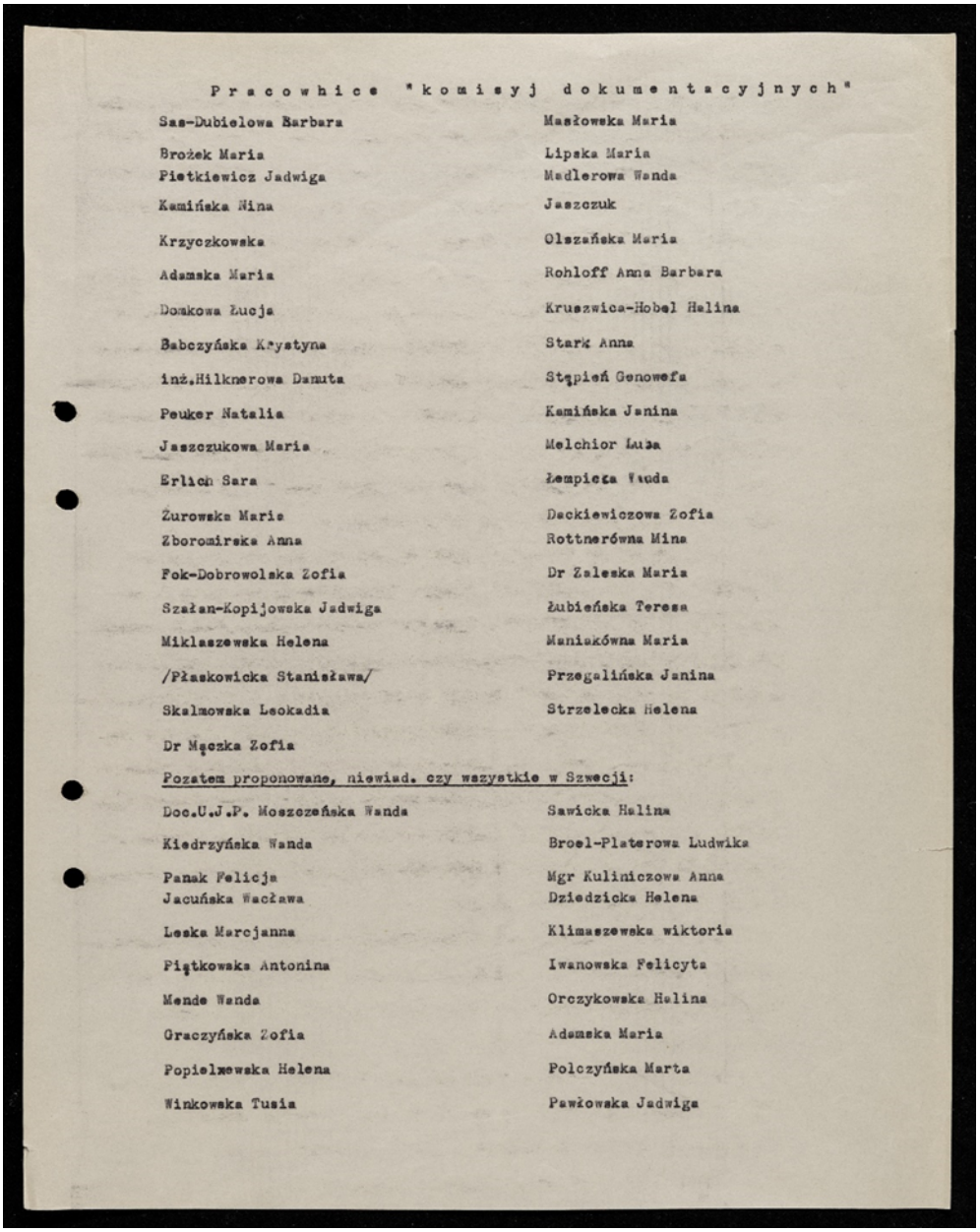
[94] Luba Melchior submitted testimonies on five family members to Yad Vashem in 1992 and are available in the digital collection The Central Database of Shoah Victims' Names, https://yvng.yadvashem.org/index.html?language=en, last accessed 17 October 2023.

[95] The Polish Research Institute in Lund (PIZ) Archive, Lund University Library, 44:1f, "Pracownice 'komisyj dokumentacyjnych'" (Female workers of 'documentation commissions').

These commissions were initiated by Dr. Zygmunt Łakociński, a Polish émigré academic who had come to Sweden in the 1930s and in 1940 co-founded what is known today as the Polish Research Institute (PIZ) in Lund, Sweden, to document the Nazi occupation of Poland. When the approximately 13,000 Polish survivors of Nazi persecution began to arrive in and around Lund in the spring of 1945, Łakociński and his wife, Carola von Gegerfelt, visited the assembly points to serve as interpreters for the liberated Polish prisoners. During these visits, they recognized that the survivors had brought valuable evidence of the Nazis' crimes that should be preserved for history and justice.[96]

The survivors themselves were, of course, ideally placed to collect this material. The names on this list were survivors who volunteered to do this work. The top part names survivors who were part of the documentation commissions in nine quarantine and refugee camps in southern Sweden, while the second part consists of survivors who were considering or were being considered to do this work. They did this work even as they were in precarious circumstances as temporary guests of the Swedish state expected to leave within six months or as soon as they were able.

[96] Previous research on PIZ includes Izabela A. Dahl, "Witnessing the Holocaust: Jewish Experiences and the Collection of the Polish Source Institute in Lund", *Early Holocaust Memory in Sweden: Archives, Testimonies and Reflections,* Johannes Heuman and Pontus Rudberg (eds.), (Basingstoke & New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2021), p. 67–91, Paul Rudny, "Zygmunt Lakocinski och Polska Källinstitutets Arkiv i Lund 1939–87", *Skandinavien och Polen. Möten, relationer och ömsesidig påverkan,* Barbara Törnquist-Plewa (ed.), (Lund: Lund University, 2007), Eugeniusz Stanisław Kruszewski, *Polski Instytut Źródłowy w Lund (1939-1972): Zarys Historii i Dorobek* (Londyn; Kopenhaga: Polski Uniwersytet na Obczyźnie; Instytut Polsko-Skandynawski, 2001).



Pracowhice "komisyj dokumentacyjnych"

Sas-Dubielowa Barbara
Brożek Maria
Pietkiewicz Jadwiga
Kamińska Nina
Krzyczkowska
Adamska Maria
Domkowa Łucja
Babczyńska Krystyna
inż.Hilknerowa Danuta
Peuker Natalia
Jaszczukowa Maria
Erlich Sara
Żurowska Maria
Zboromirska Anna
Fok-Dobrowolska Zofia
Szałan-Kopijowska Jadwiga
Miklaszewska Helena
/Płaskowicka Stanisława/
Skalmowska Leokadia
Dr Męczka Zofia

Masłowska Maria
Lipska Maria
Madlerowa Wanda
Jaszczuk
Olszańska Maria
Rohloff Anna Barbara
Kruszwica-Hobel Halina
Stark Anna
Stępień Genowefa
Kamińska Janina
Melchior Luba
Łempicka Wanda
Dackiewiczowa Zofia
Rottnerówna Mina
Dr Zaleska Maria
Łubieńska Teresa
Maniakówna Maria
Przegalińska Janina
Strzelecka Helena

Pozatem proponowane, niewiad. czy wszystkie w Szwecji:

Doc.U.J.P. Moszczeńska Wanda
Kiedrzyńska Wanda
Panak Felicja
Jacuńska Wacława
Leska Marcjanna
Piątkowska Antonina
Mende Wanda
Graczyńska Zofia
Popielewska Helena
Winkowska Tusia

Sawicka Halina
Broel-Platerowa Ludwika
Mgr Kuliniczowa Anna
Dziedzicka Helena
Klimaszewska wiktoria
Iwanowska Felicyta
Orczykowska Halina
Adamska Maria
Polczyńska Marta
Pawłowska Jadwiga

Figure 1. "Female Workers of Documentation Commissions" (PIZ 44:1 f). Reprinted courtesy of Lund University Library.

One of the names on this list is Luba Melchior. Significantly, as best as I can figure at this time, she may have been the only Jewish survivor on the list. I want to emphasize that, due to the time limit, for this paper, I am taking Luba Melchior as just one example of ongoing survival in Sweden in the aftermath. This list shows the names of many survivors who were dealing with their trauma and acting on their

terms while in quarantine and refugee camps in Sweden. For Melchior and others, this action may have been one way of coping with the devastation and loss.

The documentation work was eventually expanded and formalized into a working group of nine Polish survivors – seven women and two men – who were employed beginning in October 1945 under a Swedish government program to provide educated foreigners employment as so-called archive workers. As I demonstrate in my dissertation, women were integral to the formation of this working group, deploying new and existing networks of support and resistance to transform PIZ from a non-survivor initiative to a survivor historical commission and documentation center. Some of the women who had been part of the earlier ad-hoc documentation commissions contributed to establishing the workgroup and eventually became PIZ employees, including Luba Melchior. In the later stages of its development, male survivors also contributed to the establishment of the workgroup and, as I have indicated, two men became PIZ employees.[97] The PIZ workgroup collected nearly 600 witness testimonies from Jewish and non-Jewish Polish survivors, a collection that today comprises 512 witness testimonies designated 'complete' and 76 that are designated 'incomplete.'[98]

[97] Martínez, *Afterlives*.

[98] All of the 'complete' witness testimonies have been digitized and most have been transcribed and translated to English. These can be found through Lund University Library's Witnessing Genocide portal, https://www.ub.lu.se/hitta/digitala-samlingar/witnessing-genocide, last accessed 17 October 2023.

Figure 2. Group photo taken by Maria Helena Kurowska, 1946. According to the caption associated with the image: Back row (left to right) Bożysław Kurowski, Ludwika Broel-Plater, Carola von Gegerfelt (Zygmunt Łakociński's wife), Józef Nowaczyk, unidentified in the original caption but almost certainly Krystyna Karier, Zygmunt Łakociński. Front row (left to right): Helena Dziedzicka, Luba Melchior, Halina Strzelecka. Image courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

In this group photo (Figure 2), you see Luba Melchior (front row, center) along with Zygmunt Łakociński, Carola von Gegerfelt, and some of the other Polish survivors who were part of PIZ. As part of the PIZ workgroup, Melchior was in charge of the so-called "Jewish section" of the primarily non-Jewish endeavor. In this role, she represented PIZ by traveling to Stockholm to meet with Nella Rost of the World Jewish Congress's Jewish Historical Commission in Stockholm and to Brussels to coordinate with her cousin Abusz Werber, who was involved with the Council of Jewish Associations of Belgium. In addition, she recorded 61 complete witness testimonies, including at least one while she was in Belgium.[99]

[99] Victoria Van Orden Martínez, "Documenting the Documenter: Piecing Together the History of Polish Holocaust Survivor-Historian Luba Melchior", *EHRI Document Blog*, Wolfgang Schellenbacher (ed.) (2022b).

Melchior's work with PIZ is compelling for several reasons. First, whereas Lakociński had emphasized that the survivors doing the documentation and collection work should be "intellectuals" – which he defined as doctors, lawyers, academics, etc. – Luba Melchior was by her definition a "business manager."[100] Second, although she was placed in charge of what was described as "Jewish matters" for PIZ, she interviewed both Jewish and non-Jewish survivors of Nazi persecution for their witness testimonies. This is one of what I think is the most unique aspects of PIZ: that there was what I have called "crossover" in the taking of the witness testimonies. Luba Melchior and several of the non-Jewish PIZ survivor employees interviewed both Jewish and non-Jewish witnesses.[101]

A third way I find Luba Melchior compelling is that although her work with PIZ and the fact that she was the only Jewish PIZ workgroup member are well-known, no examination has been made of her background, her work, position, and influence at the primarily non-Jewish PIZ historical commission, her cooperation with other survivor historical commissions, and so forth. A major challenge is that she did not leave her witness testimony, either with PIZ or, at least to my knowledge, anywhere else, and evidence of her life after Sweden is fragmented. To begin to rectify this, I published a blog contribution on the EHRI Document Blog that I hope will help lead to more awareness of and interest in Luba Melchior, as well as, perhaps, to uncover additional sources that could help me continue to piece together her history.[102]

As I see it, Luba Melchior is not unlike Rachel Auerbach, Miriam Novitch, Eva Reichmann, and Nella Rost, whose contributions to documenting the history of the Holocaust have received scant scholarly attention until relatively recently. Investigations into these women's actions in the aftermath, which were part of their ongoing survival, are beginning to contextualize the Holocaust in previously unrecognized ways. For instance, by examining women's crucial role in documenting the Holocaust and by shifting the analysis of such efforts from the top-down to the bottom-up.[103] I believe that analyzing the actions refugees and survivors in Sweden

[100] PIZ 46.3 a, "Statens arbetsmarknadskommission: Deklaration för arkivarbete [Luba Melchior]."

[101] Victoria Van Orden Martínez, "Witnessing against a Divide? An Analysis of Early Holocaust Testimonies Constructed in Interviews between Jewish and Non-Jewish Poles", *Holocaust Studies*, 28/4 (2022c), p. 483–505.

[102] Martínez, 'Documenting the Documenter.'

[103] E.g., Boaz Cohen, "Rachel Auerbach, Yad Vashem, and Israeli Holocaust Memory'", *Polin: Studies in Polish Jewry Volume 20: Making Holocaust Memory*, Gabriel N. Finder, Natalia Aleksiun, and Antony Polonsky (eds.) (20; Liverpool: Liverpool University Press), p. 197–221; Sharon Geva, '"To Collect the Tears of the Jewish People": The Story of Miriam Novitch', *Holocaust Studies*, 21/1-2 (2015), p. 73–92; Johannes Heuman, "In Search of Documentation: Nella Rost and the Jewish Historical Commission", *Early Holocaust Memory in Sweden: Archives, Testimonies and Reflections*, Johannes

took as part of their ongoing survival can contextualize the Holocaust in the Nordic countries and beyond by enhancing our understanding of transnational social and political processes taking place in the aftermath.

Heuman & Pontus Rudberg (eds.), (The Holocaust and Its Contexts: Palgrave MacMillan), p. 33–65; Christine Schmidt, '"We Are All Witnesses": Eva Reichmann and the Wiener Library's Eyewitness Accounts Collection', *Agency and the Holocaust: Essays in Honor of Debórah Dwork,* Thomas Kühne and Mary Jane Rein (eds.) (Springer International Publishing), p. 123–140.

Stefan Szende: *Den siste Juden från Polen*. A Book and its Aftermath

Bjarte Bruland[104]

INTRODUCTION

Stefan Szende's book *Den siste juden från Polen* was published in Swedish by Bonniers in March 1944, and translated into German and English in 1945.[105] In this paper, I will only speak on the Swedish version of the book as the German and English language versions were published a year later, and the impact of the translations are of a different character. Also, I am only able to give you a very short summary of the book's content.

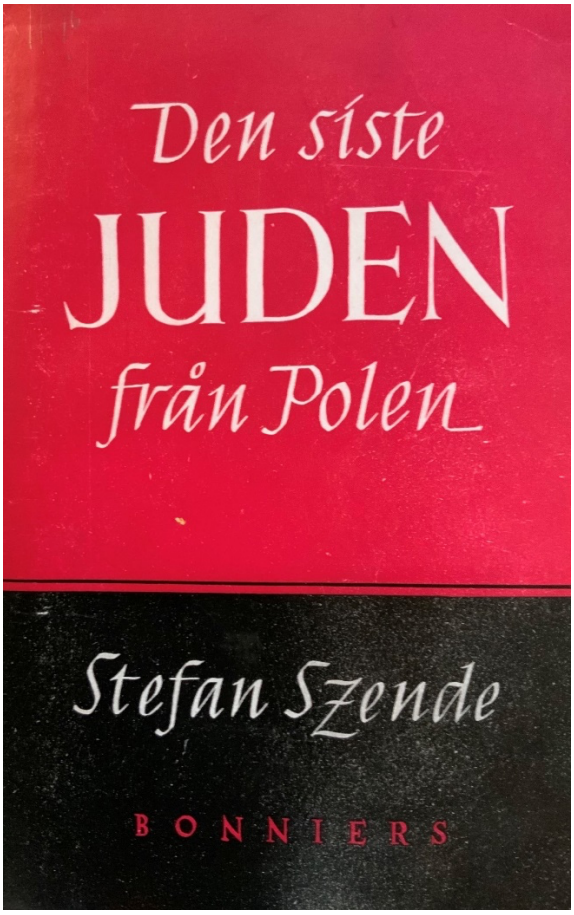
The book is about the experiences of Adolf Folkman, an inhabitant of the (then) Polish city of Lwów,[106] who experienced the time of the German invasion of Poland in 1939, the Soviet occupation of the city, and later the German invasion and occupation from June 1941 and onwards. In July 1943 he escaped the ghetto in Lwów and went to Warzaw, where he obtained false papers under the name Adam Zawartek, and registered to work for the Organization Todt. Thus, he experienced the near total destruction of Lwów's Jewish population.

I will very briefly touch upon four aspects of the book. First, a short analysis of the book's somewhat challenging narrative style which may have "burdened" it since publishing. Second, the factual information concerning the destruction of Lwów' Jewish population. Third, Folkman's perilous escape from the ghetto, his painful journey to Norway and his eventual escape to Sweden. Last, the impact of the book amongst German exiles in Sweden.

[104] Bjarte Bruland is a senior historian.

[105] This short paper is a preliminary study for a more comprehensive analysis of Szende's book. Stefan Szende, *Den siste juden från Polen*. (Bonniers: Stocholm, 1944). Curiously, in the preamble, Szende signs "Stockholm, March 1943". Stefan Szende, *The Promise Hitler Kept* (Victor Gollancz: London, 1945). Stefan Szende, *Der letzte Jude aus Polen* (Europa Verlag: Zürich – New York, 1945).

[106] I will use the Polish spelling of the city here – Lwów – rather than the Russian spelling (Lvov) or the modern Ukrainian spelling (Lviv). The city was also called Lemberg, as it was a city and Galician center of the Austrian-Hungarian Empire until 1918.



Adolf Folkman

är den siste av alla judiska flyktingar från Polen, som uppnått friheten i ett västeuropeiskt land. Folkman levde tjuguen månader under sovjetstjärnan och såg de tyska truppernas inmarsch i Lwów (Lemberg). Han överlevde tusen pogromer. Han bodde i ghettot ända fram till den slutgiltiga "likvideringen". Folkman lämnade Lwów den 15 juli 1943 och Polen den 18 augusti 1943. Som polsk arbetare i Organisation Todt fördes han till Norge och flydde därifrån i slutet av oktober 1943 till Sverige.

Men fastän Folkman kommit i säkerhet, var han knappast villig att tala om sina erfarenheter, och någon författare var han inte. Men författaren dr Stefan Szende, som insåg vilket enastående material Folkman var i besittning av, formligen pressade det ur honom och lägger i denna bok fram den på många sätt fantastiska historien. Dr Szende spelar dock inte endast återberättarens roll. Han har verkställt en omfattande kontroll av alla uppgifter och kan på grundval av sin mångsidiga kunskap om Europa av i dag gå i god för framställningens vederhäftighet. Boken har alltså blivit den sanna och hittills enda berättelsen om 5 millioner judars förintande, lämnad av ett av de sökta offren, och den innehåller också den första omfångsrika skildringen av förhållandena i Östpolen under den ryska regimen 1939—1941. I sin helhet är den ett dokument som den som vill lära känna dagens Europa och bidra till dess upprensning inte får gå förbi.

ALBERT BONNIERS FÖRLAG

Pris 10:—

Left: Cover of Stefan Szende's book. Right: Back of Szende's book with a photo of Adolf Folkman's identification papers. Photo: Bjarte Bruland.

THE NARRATIVE STYLE

In many ways the book resembles other books in the category 'witness accounts', but there are some important differences that should be stressed:

Stefan Szende was the author, but as has been observed in literary analysis, the voice of the author and the subject of the history – Folkman – is often difficult to discern.[107] Szende furthermore inserted pieces of information into the story that seemed logical to him at the time of publication in 1944, but which in some minor ways and one major way was outdated after the war ended.

[107] See Peter Davies, *Witness between languages. The Translation of Holocaust Testimonies in Context* (Camden House: New York, 2018), p. 27–28 ("Szende informs the reader that the text is Folkman's account of his experiences, given in an extended series of interviews, described here as "cross-examination"; this does not give the impression of sympathetic listening that allows the witness to develop his testimony, but Szende is keen to stress the confirmed factual accuracy of the material, meaning that verifiable accuracy is more important than the individual voice. Szende is presented as the text's author, with Folkman's name not given on the title page.").

I suggest that rather than viewing the book as a 'witness account', it should be read as an 'informed warning'. Szende, who was Hungarian by birth, warned of the future destruction of the Hungarian Jews, which incidentally was to start a mere month after publication. In my view, Szende aimed to inform in a factual manner of what had transpired and what was about to transpire.

FACTUAL LAYERS IN THE NARRATION OF ADOLF FOLKMAN'S STORY

As mentioned, the narration of Folkman's story can be challenging for a modern reader. In some passages it is difficult to say who is speaking: is it the author (Szende) or the subject of the story (Folkman)? Szende's insertion of information beyond Folkman's story was meant to explain important historical, political events in such a way that the contemporary reader (that is: in 1944) could understand the context of Folkman's experiences. Szende mainly inserted such information from open sources, – reports from the Polish Government in Exile and other news reports from international news agencies.

Bełżec has a prominent place in the book, not so much in the number of pages, but much more because of the sensational description of the brutal destruction of human life that is given. This account of Bełżec's function as a killing centre was taken by Szende from news reports from the Polish Government in Exile in London. It originated from Polish railway workers who already in April 1942, only weeks after gassing began in earnest at Bełżec, reported the function of the camp to Polish intelligence, including a rumour as to how the victims were killed.[108] According to these reports, electrocution was used on a massive and industrial scale to kill victims. Szende's rendition of Bełżec's function was completely logical if the time of publication is taken into account.

Szende's book furthermore gives a good account of what transpired in Lwów after the German occupation. The destruction of the city's vibrant Jewish community is a tragic reminder of what Nazi intentions, mass violence and ethnic strife could do in a short time span.

[108] Michael Tregenza. "Belzec Death Camp," *The Nazi Holocaust, Part 6: The Victims of the Holocaust, Vol. 2.* Michael Robert Marrus (ed.), (De Gruyter Saur: Berlin, Boston, 1989), pp. 1097–1098: "It was not long before rumours began to circulate locally about what went on behind the fences at Belzec, most of them greatly exaggerated and inaccurate. The first documented story, dated 8 April 1942, only three weeks after the camp opened, originated from railway workers at Szczebrzeszyn station— about 50 km. north-west of Belzec. It tells of the victims being killed by an electric current. The rumor reached London some months later in an elaborated form which described the victims being herded into a hut with a metal plate for a floor. Through this an electric current was passed, killing the Jews packed in the hut. With the spread of these stories throughout the Lublin region, the victims knew that Belzec was synonymous with death, and many attempted to escape from the trains taking them to the camp."

For example, the book gives one of the first impressions of the hybrid Janowska Camp, located in Lwów. Janowska was initially set up as a slave labour camp, but was also a killing centre, a rotation centre for perpetrators that served in the ghettos and camps in the Galician heartlands, and finally a transit camp for deportations to Bełżec. How many people that was actually murdered in the camp seems to have been difficult to ascertain.[109]

Szende's book has been sourced in important works concerning the destruction of Lwów's approximately 150,000 Jews after the German occupation began in July 1941,[110] but not in such recent work as the US Holocaust Memorial Museum's *Encyclopedia of Camps and Ghettos*.[111]

FOLKMAN'S PAINFUL SURVIVAL

One could argue that Folkman's painful experiences has little to do with our Nordic Holocaust history. Nevertheless, his survival was closely linked to the German occupation of Eastern as well as Western Europe, and the continuous flow of forced labour and prisoners of war to German construction sites. Norway became the destination for many such transports.

As mentioned, Folkman survived the escape from the ghetto in Lwów and obtained false identification papers in Warsaw under the name Adam Zawartek. He registered with the Organization Todt, and from Warzaw he travelled to Berlin and 'work training' in a camp in Schwarzensee. From there he was sent to Stettin, where he and other workers boarded the 'Donau', incidentally the same ship that was used to deport Jews from Oslo to Stettin. Folkman's journey can probably be traced in many sources not mentioned here, but from the regular monthly overview of transports to and from Norway produced by the *Transportoffizier* in Oslo show that Folkman along with 350 other OT-workers were transported to Norway 19 September 1943.[112]

Furthermore, Folkman's own description of his escape from the OT-camp in Mo i Rana can be found in Swedish sources, such as *Flyktnings-kommissionen*, which contains the report of the interrogation of Zawartek after he arrived in Tärnafors. On their way to Sweden, Folkman and his comrades met s smaller group of Poles

[109] Waitman Wade Beorn, "Last Stop in Lwów: Janowska as a Hybrid Camp," *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 32, no. 3 (Winter 2018).

[110] For example, Dieter Pohl, *Nationalsozialistische Judenverfolgung in Ostgalizien 1941–1944* (R. Oldenbourg Verlag: München, 1997) and Kai Struve, *Deutsche Herrschaft, ukrainischer Nationalismus, antijudische Gewalt* (De Gruyter: Berlin, Boston, 2015).

[111] Martin Dean (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Camps and Ghettos, 1933–1945*, Vol. II Part A, (Indiana University Press: Bloomington and Indianapolis, 2012) p. 805.

[112] Bundesarchiv Freiburg, Wehrmachtsbefehlshaber in Norwegen, RW 39/93 Tätigkeitsbericht mit Anlagen Juli–Oktober 1943. Tätigkeitsbericht 15.10.1943 signed by Major Theodor Steltzer (Transportoffizier Norwegen). Schifftransporte September 1943.

that was on their way to Sweden led by a Norwegian border pilot. This probably saved their lives.

THE BOOK AS AN 'EYE OPENER'

The last aspect of Szende's book I will touch upon is the importance of the book for German exiles in Sweden. Szende was a trusted and highly regarded journalist and intellectual, and part of the non-aligned German socialist workers party 'SAP'.[113] Among other people in this milieu of exiles was later *Bundeskanzler* Willy Brandt.

Brandt explained the importance of Szende's book in his autobiography *Links und Frei*.[114] He expanded on this in a TV-interview from 1988, when he was asked when he understood that a genocide was taking part.

> *Horst Schättle*: Wie hat man in jenen Tagen in Exil diesen Informationen, wie Massenhinrichtungen, Millionen fache morde, wie hat man darüber diskutiert. War man überhaupt seriös informiert über diese Tatbestände?
>
> *Willy Brandt*: Ja und Nein. Ja... Ich nehme mal die... die Vernichtung der europäischen Juden... Man wusste mehr oder weniger – gut – das Deportationen stattfinden. Man wusste zunächst kaum etwas von dem was in Polen vor sich gehen. Aber ich kann mich erinnern an einen Tag – es muss wohl schon 42 gewesen sein, – oder relativ früh 43, als ein Polnischer Freund, der den Verträter der polnischen Exilregierung in Schweden war, uns ein Bericht zeigte über Vergasungen, noch nicht Vergasungsöfen, sondern Vergasungen in dafür hergerichtete Lastwagen. Und... Ich muss ihn sagen ob das einleuchtet oder nicht, wir haben uns... eh... schwer getan dieses zu glauben. Und ein Mann, ein älterer Freund, ein frühere Reichstagsabgeordneter, ein konservativer Sozialdemokrat, ein vor mir sehr geachtete Mann, sagte: "Den tun Deutsche den doch nicht". Aber ihre Frage war: "Hat man draußen dann von gewußt?" Ja, bei weitem nicht genug. Aber doch... doch ziemlich viel. Also, bevor der Krieg zu Ende ging schrieb einen Mann, ein Freund – Ungarischer Herkunft –, aber in der deutschen Bewegung einer Buch bei den Titel "Der letzte Jude aus Polen", das heißt er hat einer der in Schweden

[113] SAP stands for *Sozialistische Arbeiterpartei Deutschlands*.

[114] Willy Brandt, Links und Frei (e-book), "Stefan Szende veröffentlichte 1944 den Erfahrungsbericht eines Mannes ("Der letzte Jude aus Polen"), der von Polen nach Norwegen und von dort nach Schweden entkommen war. Ein Zeithistoriker meinte vor einigen Jahren, bei der Lektüre dieser dokumentarischen Schilderung könne man nicht verstehen, "warum ihr Erscheinen seinerzeit keinen größeren Entsetzensschrei in der sogenannten zivilisierten Welt ausgelöst hat ..."." (Hoffman & Campe: Hamburg 2012). Originally published in 1982.

> gefluchten können beschreiben lassen, was es in Auschwitz abspielte – so was hast es schon an, Teil – umfassendes Teilinformationen gegeben.[115]

There are important lessons to be learned from Brandt's explanations here. To understand information given in real time during 'the fog of war' is difficult and overwhelmingly confusing.

Szende's book offered the reader insight into processes that was ongoing and continuing. It was an account of a community's downfall, of extreme violence and subversion. This made the book very important in the understanding of what was later to be known as the Holocaust, nevertheless it could hardly change events.

There are important lessons to be learned from Szende's book. Emerging genocides can – at least in theory – be predicted. But understanding mass violence end exterminatory measures remains very difficult. As Jürgen Mättheus wrote in 2019:

> Breaking the silence and blowing the whistle on mass violence and impending genocide may make many, including persons in positions of power, listen; yet swift and effective reaction remains rare.[116]

For the historian, it is important to note that Szende's offers a tempting historical exercise which rather than increase the understanding of the past, may result in less understanding of the historical context. This can be summed up in the words of Richard Breitman in a book re-published as recently as 2022:

> A work of history must recognize constraints imposed by reality before it can consider what else might have happened and what lessons apply today. A historian cannot start with a determination that the world ought to have been different and select only those events and evidence that suggest how. The unparalleled nature of the Holocaust and its devastating effects tempt us long after the fact to uncover ways in which the world

[115] Interview with Willy Brandt by Horst Schättle, ZDF Witness to History (Zeugen des Jahrhunderts) December 1988. Transcription by Bruland. There is no reference to Auschwitz in Szende's rendition of Folkman's story, but rather of Bełżec, an understandable error considering the time span.

[116] Jürgen Matthäus, *Predicting the Holocaust: Jewish Organizations Report from Geneva on the Emergence of the "Final Solution," 1939–1942* (Rowman & Littlefield (Lanham, 2019) p. 65.

> might have averted catastrophe. We may also blame those who, at the time, did not identify or pursue escape routes from the sequence of increasing Nazi persecution.[117]

To end with Szende's quotation from Adolf Folkman himself:

> Even though many Jews disappeared – a tragedy that befell many families – we still believed that this was singular occurrences that could be avoided through careful planning. [...] We could not believe the idea that the Nazis' real intention was to destroy us, – to exterminate all Jews.[118]

[117] Richard Breitman, *Official Secrets: What the Nazis Planned. What the British and American knew* (Hill & Wang: New York, 2022). E-book, quote from the Introduction.
[118] Szende 1944, p. 228–229 (Translated by Bruland).

Herman D. Koppel – musician, refugee and Holocaust-interpreter in a Swedish-Danish context

Henrik Rosengren[119]

INTRODUCTION

The Danish composer Herman D. Koppel came as a refugee across the Öresund to Sweden on 4 October 1943 in connection with the Nazis' deportation of the Danish Jews. His life and activities can give us a hint of the Danish-Jewish refugees' contribution to Swedish musical and cultural life, but also their role in Danish national cohesion and aesthetic resistance to the Nazi occupation. In addition, Koppel is one of those composers who, based on their own experiences and impressions of the Holocaust and its consequences, tried to convey these into musical expressions. As a musical Holocaust-interpreter he had an active role in creating a memory of the Holocaust.

THE YEARS BEFORE THE SWEDISH EXILE

Herman David Koppel (1908–1989) was born in Copenhagen to Jewish-Orthodox parents who were immigrants from Poland. He started playing the piano as a young child and in 1925 he was accepted as a student at the music conservatory in Copenhagen. As a composer, Koppel was initially strongly influenced by the well-known Danish composer, Carl Nielsen, and often performed Nielsen's piano music. During the 1930s, Koppel moved towards an increasingly culturally radical environment with composers such as Igor Stravinsky, Béla Bartók and Sergei Prokofiev as important inspirations. This period in his life also meant a clearer break with the Jewish upbringing when he, against the will of the family, married a non-

[119] Henrik Rosengren is an Associate Professor in history and the Director of North European Center for Research on Antisemitism and the Holocaust at Lund University (NORAH at LU).

Jewish woman, Vibeke.[120] Koppel's relationship to Jewish culture and religion was, in his own words, "relaxed". His children were baptized and confirmed and the continued contact with Judaism took place on a cultural and artistic level, and in these cases always on the initiative of someone other than himself.[121] As will become apparent later, the experiences of the escape to Sweden and the Holocaust became a turning point in the latter respect.

Koppel established himself as one foremost pianists in Denmark. The growing antisemitism and the Nazi occupation of Denmark increased his interest in Jewish music.

THE SWEDISH EXILE AND MUSICAL LIFE

When it became obvious that the Danish Jews would be deported Koppel and his family escaped Denmark via the small Danish harbour of Gilleleje to the Swedish village Höganäs on the West coast of southern Sweden. After a short stay in Malmö, Koppel established himself in Örebro and the area around Stockholm.[122] He began working as a pianist and composer shortly after his arrival, and some of his works were also performed in Sweden.

Koppel likely had Swedish contacts before he arrived in Sweden and he was known in the Swedish music environment both as a pianist and a composer. For example, he attended a student evening in Lund in 1935 in connection with modern Danish music being performed, and his music was played on Swedish stages at least from 1938 and in 1939 a concert was broadcasted on the radio where Koppel was a soloist with the Stockholm Radio Orchestra performing Mozart's Concerto No. 20 in D minor for orchestra and piano.[123]

When studying Koppel's performances in Sweden with fellow Danish musicians, it is obvious that the Danish-Jewish refugees made an important contribution to Swedish musical life during the war years. Most of them were, like Koppel, highly experienced and well-educated, some also internationally known, and all of this contributed to the fact that they could quickly become part of musical life in

[120] "Koppel", https://komponistbasen.dk/node/3383#1, 2022-04-20. For a lenghtier biography or memoar see Flemming Behrendt, *Fra et hjem med klaver. Herman D. Koppels liv og erindringer* (Hans Reitzels Forlag: Copenhagen, 1988).

[121] Behrendt 1988, p 72.

[122] https://safe-haven.dk/fileadmin/user_upload/Uppgift_Koppel__Heiman_David.pdf. In the official document, Koppels first name is misspelled, Heiman instead of Hermann.

[123] "Modern dansk musik på Studentafton i Lund", *Svenska Dagbladet* (SvD) November 14, 1935; K. R-n (Kajsa Rootzén), "Maxim Schur", SvD March 4, 1938 and radio advertisement in SvD January 23, 1939.

Sweden. With Koppel as a prism, I will capture some of this exile musical contribution in this paper.

It is also relevant to highlight the Swedish concert organizers and other individual's eagerness to involve the Danish refugees. Here the so-called Nordic brotherhood and the Nordic thought shine through, ideas which the Swedish historian Mikael Byström rightly believes captures the period 1942–47 and which are characterized by a willingness to take responsibility for this particular exile group.[124]

The musicians who spent their exile in Sweden worked in different genres. Of importance is also how their activities captured the role of music as a force of resistance, a "sonic resistance", and of national identification, and Koppel was involved in such contexts at an early stage in his exile.

MUSIC, SONIC RESISTANCE AND NATIONAL IDENTITY

On Sunday, October 17, 1943, just a week after his escape to Sweden, Koppel participated in an event for the benefit of a Save the Children International [*Rädda Barnen*] collection for Danish refugee children. The organizer was the Swedish journalist and translator of Russian literature, Ellen Rydelius. She achieved great success as a writer of travel literature and was given the epithet "The Baedecker of Sweden" after the author of the famous travel literature publisher, Karl Baedecker.[125] The title of the program was congenial with Rydell's request: "A fantasy journey through Europe with color pictures and film". Among the other participating musicians were the Danish opera singer Ebba Hertz and Charles Senderowitz on violin.[126] Ebba Hertz (1905-?) came as a refugee to Helsingborg harbor on 5 October 1943.[127] She performed at the Stockholm Concert Hall [*Konserthuset*] a week later in connection with a manifestation for Danish and Norwegian refugees and shared the stage with Koppel on several additional occasions.[128]

Charles Senderowitz (1916–1996) was raised in Denmark by Russian-Jewish parents and he escaped deportation crossing the Öresund in 1943 just like Koppel. Senderowitz was formerly concertmaster for the Royal Chapel [*Det Kongelige kapel*] at the Royal Theater [*Den Kongelige Teater*], the orchestra for the Danish national Opera stage in Copenhagen. During his exile, Senderowitz worked mainly as a

[124] Mikael Byström, *En broder, gäst och parasit. Uppfattningar och föreställningar om utlänningar, flyktingar och flyktingpolitik i svensk offentlig debatt 1942–1947* (Stockholm: Acta Universitatis Stockholmiensis, 2006), p. 241

[125] *Svenskt Biografiskt Lexikon*, https://sok.riksarkivet.se/Sbl/Presentation.aspx?id=6275, August 29 2023.

[126] Advertisement in SvD October 15, 1943.

[127] "Ebba Hertz", safe-haven.dk. September 1, 2023.

[128] "Flyktingfest i Konserthuset", *SvD*, 11 October 11, 1943.

musician and conductor in southern Sweden and after a few years in post-war Denmark he returned to Sweden in 1950. Senderowitz became concertmaster of the Malmö Symphony Orchestra and made a significant contribution especially to the music scene in Scania [*Skåne*], where he performed mostly with chamber music. He made his first appearance in Sweden in the Salomon Smith chamber music association in Malmö on December 6, 1944, but apparently, he had previously performed on several occasions in Stockholm.[129]

Another example where the aim was to gather around a Danish national identity was an event that took place on 7 November 1943 at the Concert Hall in Stockholm. The event was arranged for the benefit of Danish artists in exile and, according to the newspaper notice, several "prominent Danish artists" participated, among them the "famous composer and pianist Herman D Koppel" was mentioned. Two of these additional Danish refugee musicians were the baritone Franz Rabinowitz (1918–1948) who arrived in Sweden on 3 October but returned to Denmark in 1944 to join the Danish brigade[130] and the actor Jacob Seligmann Texiére (1878–1944) who came to Sweden on 6 October.[131] Herman's brother, Julius Koppel, also participated on violin.[132] Julius played pieces by Carl Nielsen and the Austrian-American-Jewish violinist Fritz Kreisler. Other participants were Swedish opera singers Brita Hertzberg and Sven-Olof Sandberg and Hungarian-Jewish pianist Annie Fischer, who lived in Swedish exile, and Danish-Finnish France Ellegaard who recently had moved to Sweden from Denmark.[133] As a Dane, Ellegard had to perform in Nazi-Germany during the occupation and she became ostracized in Denmark after the War.[134]

On November 6, the Swedish daily *Svenska Dagbladet* wrote that Rabinowitz performed the prologue from Leoncavallo's opera *Pajazzo*, an aria from Verdi's opera *Macbeth* and the "Song of the Golden Calf" from Gounod's opera *Faust*. Herman Koppel played "Russian dance" from Stravinsky's ballet *Petrusjka* and a Hungarian dance by the Hungarian composer and pianist Ernst von Dohnányi.[135] von Dohnányi

[129] "Charles Senderowitz", Wikipedia, September 1, 2023. see also "Salomon Smith kammarmusikförening", archive at Malmö town archive.

[130] https://safe-haven.dk/fileadmin/user_upload/Ansoekan_om_visering_Rabinowitz__Franz_Josef.pdf, August 30, 2023; https://www.gravsted.dk/person.php?navn=frantzrabinowitz, August 30, 2023.

[131] https://safe-haven.dk/fileadmin/user_upload/Ansoekan_om_visering_Texiere__Jacob_Seligmann.pdf, August 30, 2023.

[132] Like his brother, Julius Koppel arrived to Höganäs from Gilleleje in October 1943 with his nine-year-old daughter Susann. He, too, was well-qualified. He was educated at the Conservatory of Music in Copenhagen and had worked there as Royal Concert Master.

[133] Notis, "Soaré för danska flyktingar", Svd, November 3, 1943 and advertisement in SvD November 7, 1943. https://safe-haven.dk/en/result/?tx_jewssearch_jewmussearchresults%5Baction%5D=search&tx_jewssearch_jewmussearchresults%5Bcontroller%5D=Search, October 31, 2022 and https://safe-haven.dk/fileadmin/user_upload/Uppgift_Koppel__Julius_Jehoda.pdf, October 31, 2022; Inge Bruland, "Else Marie Bruun", *Dansk Kvindebiografisk Leksikon*, https://kvindebiografiskleksikon.lex.dk/Else_Marie_Bruun, September 28, 2023.

[134] Inge Bruland, "Ellegaard, France", *Dansk Kvindebiografisk Leksikon*, https://kvindebiografiskleksikon.lex.dk/France_Ellegaard, September 28, 2023.

[135] "För danska konstnärer", *SvD,* November 6, 1943.

was an explicit opponent of Nazism and after protesting against the persecution of the Jews he resigned from the Hungarian Academy of Music in 1941. In 1944 he settled in Austria.[136] Dohnányi's protests might have been relevant to Koppel when he chose to play his piano music. Fischer and Ellegaard played Mozart, Liszt, Paganini and Debussy. With the possible exception of the "Song of the Golden Calf" based on an Old Testament text, there is nothing in the repertoire that alludes to World War II, the Holocaust, or Jewish history.[137]

On November 6, 1943, the concert organizer Helmer Enwall was interviewed in the newspapers, and he emphasized the precarious financial situation the Danish exiles were in, and especially the artists. They have, according to Enwall, more difficulties getting work and assignments than other occupational categories. Enwall spoke in his capacity as the concert's organizers and mentioned that he considered it "particularly heartwarming" to try to do something for this vulnerable group. However, nothing is mentioned about the fact that they were exiles because of the Nazi persecution of the Jews. Enwall also mentions a number of other Danish musicians who fled because of the deportation of the Danish Jews: the conductor Mogens Wöldike, former leader of the concerts in the Palace Chapel in Copenhagen [*Slotskirken*], the singer Else-Marie Bruun (wife of Julius Koppel), the concertmasters Berl Butzinsky and Paul Allin Erichsen in the State Radio Symphony Orchestra, conductor Erik Tuxen and concert-master in Tivoli's orchestra Winther.[138] The German-born Tuxen (1902–1957), whom Koppel had known well since his time in Copenhagen, was not only a conductor but also active as a music arranger and composer, and he spent the years 1943–44 in Swedish exile. He was not Jewish but married to a Jewish woman and was thus regarded as anti-German. Tuxen fled with his wife from Gilleleje and arrived in Höganäs on 3 October 1943, that is, the same date and route as Herman Koppel, but almost a day later. In a handwritten note, in the material from the Swedish police who registered the refugees, when asked about the reason for the arrival in Sweden, the Swedish official stated about Tuxen: "because he is 1/4 Jewish".[139]

The signature Jadwiga reported the day after the "Danish night" at the Concert Hall about a "real feast", and the audience in the sold out concert hall

[136] Ernst von Dohnányi : a song of life.
[137] "För danska konstnärer", *SvD,* November 6, 1943.
[138] About Else Marie Bruun, see Inge Bruland i *Dansk Kvindebiografisk Leksikon* https://kvindebiografiskleksikon.lex.dk/Else_Marie_Bruun 2023-09-28.
[139] NS, "Tuxen, Erik", Sohlmans musiklexikon, Sohlmans: Stockholm 1977, bd 5, p. 688; https://safe-haven.dk/fileadmin/user_upload/Lund-rapport_Tuxen__Erik_Oluf.jpg, August 30, 2023. Koppel arrived 4 pm and Tuxen at 9 am.

behaved "Danish" in their enthusiasm. The program was "highly classical" and "brilliant" and Koppel played "with great elegance".[140] Conference speaker Lulu Ziegler was a congenial choice according to Jadwiga. Ziegler, whose real name was Karen Margrete Maria Ziegler-Andersen (1903–1973), was raised in a high-class Danish-Jewish environment and became an active anti-Nazi. She was arrested but after her release escaped to Sweden in 1942, where she made a career mainly as a singer and cabaret performer.[141]

During the evening, the actor Texiére read texts by the author H C Andersen, among others the short story "Flipperne" and recited an Andersen poem that the priest's daughter Agnes Gads quoted in her diary from 1864 and which ends "Denmark will win and the flowers will grow", [Danmark skal sejre, og blossomen gro]. Gad's diary was written with reference to the Battle of Dybböl 1864 and forms, together with Andersen's poem, part of a canonized corpus of texts central to Danish national identity.[142]

The setting of the event was thus strongly Danish-national, but no explicit connection was made to the participants escaping deportation and the Holocaust, neither in the repertoire selection nor in the comments from "Jadwiga". Rather, it was Danish national resistance that was the theme and the participants in this context became Danish refugees rather than Danish-Jews.

Koppel continued collaboration with Lulu Ziegler in Sweden, even then in a Danish-national context. On November 20, 1943, they performed at the Concert hall in Stockholm together with the actor Anders Henriksson.[143] Kajsa Rootzén wrote an enthusiastic review of the well-attended concert, but mentioned that Koppel did not come into his own in his solo performances as the podium was covered in velvet which dampened the sound. It is not clear what solo pieces Koppel played, but Ziegler mostly sang Danish songs.[144]

On November 25, 1943, Ziegler appeared again with Koppel.[145] On the same day, November 25, Koppel gave another concert together with Danish colleagues in an arrangement by Save the Children International with the motto "Danish artists in Stockholm homes". In a series of musical dramatic performances in some Stockholm homes, Koppel, Lulu Ziegler, Raboniwitz and the previously mentioned Ebba Hertz

[140] Sign. Jadwiga "Dansk festkväll", *SvD*, November 8, 1943.
[141] Kalle Lind, "Ziegler, Lulu", *Svenskt kvinnobiografiskt lexikon*, https://skbl.se/sv/artikel/KarenMargreteMariaLuluZiegler, November 1, 2022.
[142] https://danmarkshistorien.dk/vis/materiale/agnes-gads-dagbog-1864-dybboels-fald, September 14, 2023.
[143] Advertisements in *SvD* November 9 and 14, 1943.
[144] Kajsa Rootzén, "Lulu Ziegler", *SvD* November 21, 1943.
[145] Advertisement in *SvD*, November 21, 1943..

as well as the actress Illona (in the article Luna) Wieselmann appeared for the benefit of the manifestation for Danish refugee children. The article further refers to a concert at the Bonnier family, in the house "Lower Manilla" with Lisen Bonnier as hostess.[146] Lisen Bonnier was married to Karl-Otto Bonnier, the heir of the largest publishing house in Sweden, Bonniers. The Bonnier family was constantly attacked by antisemitism in the Swedish Nazi press.[147]

The concert at Nedre Manilla was the third arrangement of Save the Children International to support Danish artists in exile. Here, Koppel appeared as an accompanist playing his own music. Hertz, Ziegler and Rabonowitz also performed during the evening. The concert received a warm reception from *Svenska Dagbladet's* reviewer who wrote that "the event was a brilliant success".[148]

As can be seen from the overview, many of the concert arrangements in which Koppel and other Danish musicians participated were aimed at Danish-national gathering and can be seen as implicit protests against the Nazi occupation. It was mostly Danish musicians who had fled deportation who performed, and the repertoire contained most of the time of Danish songs and Danish classical compositions. The national content of the concerts was framed by headlines such as "Danish concert" and "Danish feast night" and texts identified with the Danish national struggle were quoted.

KAJ MUNCK'S PLAY NIELS EBBESEN

An important cultural expression with, judging by the press coverage and the sold-out performances, great impact, and which was directly connected to a historical event where the resistance narrative could be actualized, were the Swedish productions of the Danish poet, churchman, and writer Kaj Munck (1898–1944) *Niels Ebbesen*. The character Niels Ebbesen is a medieval, mythical rebel and Danish national hero who came to symbolize the Danish resistance during the occupation. Munck's play *Niels Ebbesen* was published in book form in 1942 and is a depiction of the Nazi occupation of Denmark in a historical context. According to *Svenska Dagbladet*, it was published in 16,000 copies, but was immediately confiscated by the Nazi's. Munck was arrested in 1942 and murdered sometime later by the Nazis.[149] The play was staged in September 1943 and January 1944 in Stockholm at the school

[146] "Danska konserter i Stockholmshem", *SvD* November 22, 1943.
[147] See for example *Den Svenske Folksocialisten* and the special issue on "the Jews" 1939.
[148] "Lyckad dansk soaré", *SvD* November 30, 1943.
[149] "Arresteringar i Danmark", *SvD*, 1 September 1943.

Borgarskolan by the independent theatre group "Dramatikerstudion", directed by the Swedish later world acclaimed director Ingemar Bergman. "Dramatikerstudion" focused on previously unperformed drama from Swedish and Nordic writers.[150] A radio adaptation by the Swedish director Olof Molander was also made in the same year, and in February 1944, a month after Munck was murdered, it was staged by the National Theatre [*Riksteatern*] in Stockholm with the director Sam Besekow, who also fled Denmark in 1943 due to his Jewish background.[151]

In the above case, it is not clear who had composed the music. When the play was staged at Gothenburg's city theater [*Stadsteatern*] in February 1944, however, it was Koppel who wrote the music. He received the assignment from the director Torsten Hammarén shortly after he arrived in Sweden. Koppel himself described the play's music in a somewhat distant way as "simplified in style" and based on the Danish folk song tradition.[152] In addition to Koppel's music, the play also contained the overture from the Danish author Johan Ludwig Heiberg's romantic masterpiece *Elverhøj*, composed by the German-Danish composer Friedrich Kuhlau.[153] *Elverhøj* has developed into a Danish national drama and in Munck's play the overture is an explicit part of the national narrative. Koppel's folk song-sounding music had the same function.

In the daily press, in one case, the premiere performance was perceived by the signature "Eveo" as too strong a Danish-Swedish national manifestation, which overshadowed the play's artistic qualities. The director is said to have overworked the goal of making "the show a grand patriotic party" and sometimes the set resembles "patriotic tableau theatre". The audience is said to have stood up during the performance on several occasions to demonstrate their support for the Danish freedom struggle and after the performance, director Hammarén initiated a sing-along of both the Danish and the Swedish national anthems "Der er et yndigt land" and "Du gamla, du fria".[154] The Swedish art historian Axel L. Romdahl gave a more positive characterization 1944 in his compilation of the theatre season at Gothenburg's city theatre:

> February 4 was one of the Stadsteaterns big parade days. It was the occassion for Kaj Munck's "Nils Ebbesen", a gala performance with Prince Eugen and Prince Wilhelm as

[150] Advertisement, "Dramatikerstudion", *SvD*, September 17, 1943.
[151] Radioadvertisement, *SvD* October 8, 1943; https://safe-haven.dk/fileadmin/user_upload/Uppgift_Besekow_Samuel.pdf, September 6, 2023.
[152] Behrendt 1988, p. 92.
[153] Axel L. Romdahl, "Göteborgs stadsteater. En återblick på säsongen 1943–44", *Ord och bild. Illustrerad månadsskrift*, Stockholm 1944, p. 335.
[154] Sign. Eveo (Erik Wilhelm Olson), "Niels Ebbesen fick vacker inramning i Göteborg", *SvD* February 5, 1944.

> guests of honor, the Elverhøjoverture, a prologue by Prince Wilhelm and the Danish national anthem as the finale. It's all a celebration in memory of the poet-priest and martyr from Vedersö [a Danish island] and a demonstration for the brave and faithful Denmark, marked by strong and genuine feeling. What about the piece and the performance? A folk play given as a folk play, beautiful Danish landscape scenes by Knut Ström and a large Danish patriotic final tableau.[155]

Even though Koppel participated in several musical contexts that wasn't framed in a pronounced Danish-national narrative, it is nevertheless clear how this theme is most frequent in his concert activity and partly also in his composition work during his Swedish exile, which Munck's play in the Gothenburg-setting illustrates. Additionally, Koppel worked as a film composer and also in that context his role as a composer can be seen as underlining a national narrative, albeit not as explicitly as in the concerts. This relates to the Swedish information film *Refugees find a harbour*.

THE FILM REFUGEES FIND A HARBOUR

An important project that Koppel was involved in was the music creation for the SF propaganda film *Refugees find a harbour [Flyktingar finner en hamn]*. The film was produced by the Swedish information board [*Statens Informationsstyrelse, SIS*], a subdivision of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs whose purpose was to control information in relation to the Swedish neutrality policy. Directed by Dane Bjarne Henning-Jensen, who was not Jewish but chose to leave Nazi-occupied Denmark for an exile in Sweden. He arrived on 28 October 1943.[156] The music recorded was conducted by Koppel's close colleague, previously mentioned, Erik Tuxen.[157] The music in *Refugees finds a harbor* is performed by a symphony orchestra and has the main function of portraying the mood in the film: tension, relief, loss, joy et cetera. It is melodious with associations to national romantic music. The music can't be said to contain tonal references that relates to Jewish predicaments and experiences, something that is obvious in Koppels piece *Three Psalms of David* which I will came back to.

SIF's ultimate aim with *Refugees find a harbor* was to propagate a positive image of the efforts made regarding the reception of refugees in Sweden and thereby

[155] Romdahl 1944, p. 335.
[156] https://safe-haven.dk/fileadmin/user_upload/Ansoekan_om_visering_Jensen__Bjarne_Henning.pdf, September 7, 2023.
[157] Behrendt 1988, p. 30; SvD January 20, 1945 and https://www.svenskfilmdatabas.se/sv/item/?type=film&itemid=13067, September 4, 2023. Koppel also composed for radio theater for example the comedy "Piraten", see Radioadvertisement in SvD January 21, 1945.

influence domestic opinion and create goodwill towards the outside world.[158] The film was unique in that it was mainly made by Danish-refugees, mostly of Jewish origin, and can thus be seen as a way to make use of the skills that the refugees brought with them, but also in relation to the film being perceived as more authentic and as "the refugees' story", although their influence on the production is unclear.

The film is interesting for several reasons, for instance since it gives a picture of Swedish refugee reception as the Swedish state wanted to convey it. It is said to illustrate refugee escaping to Sweden from various European countries, social classes and generations and it describes how refugees are received in Swedish society with care, work and other practical things. Everyday scenes are mixed with dramatic refugee scenes and a speaker describes scenes and various events. The audience follows a worker and an architect with his family. A scene with a boat filled with people of various ages decays to illustrate precisely the flight of the Danish Jews across the Sound and it is also this escape that is most frequently related to by the speaker's voice. The Danish refugee offices in Helsingborg, Lund and Malmö etc. are mentioned and the camera is occasionally directed towards the Danish coast, seen from the Swedish side. Norwegian refugee offices and their organization are also mentioned. Nothing is said about or shows that the majority are refugees because of the Jewish background, instead the speaker talks about "Norwegians", "Danes", "Czechs" and more.[159] Swedish researcher Kristin Wagrell states that there are no characters in the film who are not Scandinavian, but refugee groups from non-Scandinavian countries are mentioned by the speaker.[160] A corresponding lack of explicit comments about the fact that the refugees mostly escaped a racially antisemitic politic also applies to the films *Escape across the sound* [*Flykten över sundet*] from 1943 and *The Testimony [Vittnesbördet]* from 1945, both of which were also intended to depict Swedish refugee reception. It was the Swedish refugee operations that were at the center, rather than the refugees' experiences.[161]

[158] Aaron Seth Kahn, "Creating the safe harbour: Depictions of Swedish refuge assistance actions in wartime propaganda film", *Journal of Scandinavian Cinema*, vol 2, no 3, 2012, p. 218.

[159] Another aspect which deserves analysis but unfortunatley is out of scope for this article is the fact that at the end of the film, Swedish Sami people are given an important role in the search for a missing refugee. https://www.svenskfilmdatabas.se/sv/item/?type=film&itemid=13067, September 4, 2023.

[160] Kristin Wagrell, "Jews, Gender and the Scandinavian Subject: Understanding the Context and Content of the film *Vittnesbördet [The Testimony]*", *Early Holocaust memory in Sweden. Archives, testimonies and reflections*, Johannes Heuman and Pontus Rudberg (eds.), Palgrave Macmillan: London 2021, p. 196.

[161] Wagrell 2021, pp. 190–191, 195.

The exception regarding the non-occurrence of explicit comments that it was about Jewish refugees in *Refugees find a harbor* is a likely authentic sign that is swept past by the camera in an interior scene at a Swedish police registration office. If he or she is attentive, the viewer can see that it says "Christian Jews". The wording can almost be interpreted as an attempt to distinguish assimilated Jews from Orthodox. Whether the sign is displayed intentionally to show that it is de facto about Jewish refugees, or whether it happened to be included in a camera sweep over the environment of the police office is difficult to determine. It can be seen as an attempt to curb antisemitism by conveying the message that the Jews who came as refugees were not orthodox, conservative Jews who would pose integration problems but Western Christians, in a cultural and social sense. At the same time, it can be an expression of a race-based understanding of the Jewishness that is rooted in the Nazis' racial definition and thereby marks that they fled because they are, according to this definition, Jews. As the Swedish historian Karin Kvist Geverts stated, there was a split in the contemporary debate as to whether the refugees' Jewish background should be recognized or not. The Jewish affiliation was registered internally, which can be seen, for example, in the Swedish official's aforementioned comment that Erik Tuxen was a quarter Jewish, but it formally ceased to be a statistical category in 1944.[162]

THE EXPERIENCES OF WORLD WAR II AND THE PERSECUTION OF THE JEWS

In addition to the assignments Koppel received as a composer for films and theater plays, he was also able to find time to write music based on his own initiative. Several important works in his ouvre were composed in Sweden, especially the third symphony and the third string quartet. They were premiered in Denmark after the war. As the many concert arrangements show, Koppel came into closer contact with other Danish-Jewish musicians who fled Nazism, and his Jewish identity was strengthened in relation to the shared experiences of persecution. This also came to influence his compositional work after the war. The experiences opened Koppel's eyes to music as a tool that could express both pain and hope. However, he chose to withdraw from the Jewish community.

[162] Wagrell 2021, p. 198. Karin Kvist Geverts, *Ett främmande element i nationen. Svensk flyktingpolitik och de judiska flyktningarna 1938–1944* (Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis: Uppsala 2008), p. 221. See also Tora Byström, *Nordens frihet. Samfundet, tidningen och kretsen* (Sekel: Lund 2009), pp. 254–260.

Koppel returned to Denmark after the war and continued his career as a pianist, composer, and pedagogue. In 1949, he wrote the work that to the greatest extent explicitly takes its origin in the experiences of the Holocaust, *Three Psalms of David [Tre Davidssalmer].* But even his third symphony and the oratorio Moses from 1963, which are sometimes considered his most important work, relate to Jewish history and Jewish experience.[163] Here, however, only *The Three Psalms of David* will be treated and then based on the concept of cultural memory.

CULTURAL MEMORY AND THE HOLOCAUST

The literary scholar Astrid Erll distinguish between four rhetorical subcate-gories of cultural memory as they are expressed in the representation and medialization of a cultural memory, such as the memory of Holocaust: the self-experienced category (witness accounts such as Anne Frank's diary); the mythical category refers to temporally distant, mythical historical events (for example references to biblical stories in texts for musical works or on monuments). In the antagonistic category, a distinction is made between what is perceived as the true and the false historical narrative (perceptions of whether it is at all possible to portray the Holocaust in artistic form and if so how it should be done, for example the criticism that the Holocaust is portrayed in popular cultural contexts with risk for banalization and trivialization, or how certain groups or narratives are represented at the expense of others), in the reflexive category the procedural and contradictory aspects of memory culture are emphasized (the change of memory culture over time and the division into different memorial phases).[164]

As a composer of musical works that is based on experiences and impressions of the Holocaust and that is performed in public, it is reasonable to see Koppel as a co-creator of the memory of the Holocaust. In order to understand the complexity of memory-making, it is relevant not only to analyze the composer's intentions with his music, the music itself and the text. Also, other central aspects in connection with the performances and other circumstances are of interest, such as which other works were performed at the same time, how the music was described in public before the performance and how it was received afterwards by, for example, critics, are elements in which the cultural memory is created.

[163] "Koppel", https://komponistbasen.dk/node/3383#1, April 20, 2022.
[164] Astrid Erll, "Literature, Film and the Mediality of Cultural Memory", *Cultural Memory Studies: An International and Interdisciplinary handbook,* Astrid Erll and Ansgar Nünning (eds.), (De Gryuter: Berlin and New York), 2008 pp. 390–392.

THREE PSALMS OF DAVID

For a long time, Koppel composed in most art music and classical genres except vocal music. In connection with a tour in Denmark with Aksel Schiøtz, who during the post-war period became one of the leading European tenors, Schiøtz asked Koppel why he never wrote for the human voice. This conversation led Koppel to the Bible and the Old Testament as a textual basis, and in the next few years after his singer friend raised the question, Koppel wrote several vocal works, including *Three Psalms of David* (op. 48) for solo voice, mixed choir, boys' choir and orchestra.[165] In the year 1949 alone, in addition to the Psalms of David, he also wrote two vocal pieces with the Bible as the textual basis: *Five Biblical Songs [Fem bibliske sange]* (op. 46) and *Four Lovesongs [Fire kærlighedssange]* (op. 47).[166]

Initially, Jewish music as such did not play a large role in Koppel's earlier works and activities, but the interest in portraying Jewish experiences through music did, however, grew in relation to the experiences from the Second World War. As a young man he wrote some variations on a Jewish folk dance melody for violin and in the second half of the 1930s he was the conductor and artistic director of the *Sangforeningen Hasomir*, a choir formed by Polish-Russian Jews in 1912. In connection with the association's 50th anniversary in 1962, he wrote music to a poem by the Jewish, Russian-born Yiddish poet Abraham Reisen (1876–1953).[167] Koppel also wrote music for Stefan Zweig's *Jeremias* which referred to the barbarism of the First World War and was an appeal for culture and humanism. The aspiring Danish theatre director at the time, Sam Besekow, had approached Koppel about writing music for a dramatization of the text, which gained renewed relevance in connection with the Nazi takeover. However, the music was for unclear reasons omitted after the premiere performance![168]

A source for Koppel's reflections on *Three Psalms of David* is the Swedish musicologist Ingemar Bengtsson's anthology from 1957 in which he collected a number of Nordic composers who were commissioned to reflect on central works in their oeuvre. Among them were Koppel. The composers themselves chose which works they wanted to relate to, and in the introduction it is made clear that many composers felt uncomfortable describing their works in words: Is the musical expression not enough? Several also declined. But as the musicologist Erik Martens

[165] Flemming Behrendt, "Levande musik", *Weekendavisen. Berlingske Aften*, September 22, 1978.
[166] Behrendt 1988, p. 96.
[167] Behrendt September 22, 1978. About Reisen see M.S., "Reisen, Abraham", *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, Keter Publishing House: Jerusalem 1974, part 14, column 62–63.
[168] Behrendt 1988, p. 72.

notes, Koppel regarded *David's Psalms* as a programmatic work, that is, a work that wanted to express something more than just the purely musical.[169]

The Danish and Norwegian composers' reflections on their works are reproduced in the original language in Bengtsson's anthology. This thus contributes, in the editor's words, to the contributions taking on the character of self-portraits. This is also how Koppel's contribution can be characterized, and the fact that he chose this particular work is an expression of the importance it had for him. He makes a deeply personal background drawing to the circumstances surrounding the writing of *Psalms of David*, but also reflections on the war experiences and the concentration camps.

Koppel composed *Three Psalms of David* with direct reference to the Holocaust based on a newspaper article he had read which reproduced an eyewitness account of the atrocities. The depiction was the triggering factor for the theme of the composition, but at the bottom, of course, Koppel's own experiences as a survivor of the deportation of the Danish Jews also lay. As a rhetorical category according to Erll's categorization of cultural memories, one can therefore speak here of a self-perceived memory-cultural rhetorical category.

In the anthology, Koppel reproduced the content of the newspaper article:

> On a country road in Germany, two large covered trucks came driving. At some markings, where some labourers were working, the trucks stopped. An officer and some workers jumped out of the trucks and surrounded them. A number of Jews from one truck were let out and led over to the rear car. They went singing from one truck to another, surely knowing that they were walking towards death. They were inserted into the rear car which was carefully closed. A driver started the engine but the truck did not move. The exhaust fumes were piped in to the unfortunates, whose song slowly died down. With the task completed, the driver and soldiers jumped into the front car and both trucks drove off.[170]

Koppel imagined that the Jews could have sung the words of the 13th Psalm on their way to death: "I trust in your mercy, let my heart rejoice in your salvation." Koppel believes that he could not see a more solemn mission for music, to mediate the transition from life to death. In this there was the hideous and terrifying, but also a

[169] Martens, Erik, *Herman D. Koppel og jødedommen : en undersøgelse af de sociokulturelle faktorer fra jødisk musik, kultur og identitets indvirkning på Herman D. Koppels vokalmusik eksemplificeret med Tre Davidssalmer op. 48*, unpublished speciale (thesis), Musikvidenskabeligt Institut, Københavns Universitet 2000, p. 61.

[170] Herman Koppel in *Modern Nordisk musik. Fjorton tonsättare om egna verk*, Ingmar Bengtsson (ed.), (Natur och kultur: Stockholm 1957), p. 141.

reassurance of hope and the ability of a higher power to turn evil into good in the afterlife, he writes. He found the expression for this in David's psalms number 13, 23 and 150.[171]

He got some inspiration for the work from Stravinsky's *Symphony of Psalms* from 1930, in which Psalm 150 is also set to music. Stravinsky, however, started from a Latin text, different from Koppel's Danish.[172]

In addition to the explicit inspiration of an eyewitness account of the Holocaust and the use of the Old Testament texts, there are also direct musical connections to Jewish music and tradition in the Psalm nr. 150. The music follows the text's indication of which instruments are to praise the Lord and in the third stanza, where the text reads "Praise him with the sound of Horns", the horns in the orchestra make a tonal jump inspired by the horns that in the synagogue blow the Jewish New Year.[173]

DANISH PERFORMANCES AND RECEPTION

Three Psalms of David was first performed on 26 October 1950 in Copenhagen under the direction of Erik Tuxen and with the lyric tenor Einar Kristjansson (1910–1966) as soloist.

Kristjánsson is considered one of Iceland's leading tenors. He was born in Reykjavik and studied singing in Austria and Germany in the early 1930s. He made his debut at the opera in Dresden in 1933 and quickly made a career in German and Austrian musical life with performances and employments in Duisburg, Munich, Stuttgart, Vienna and at the opera in Hamburg. Kristjánsson was hired, among other things, to sing for Goebbels and Hitler in 1934. After the war, he was for a time at the Royal Theatre (*the Opera*) in Stockholm and then in 1948 moved to Copenhagen and the Danish Royal Theatre, where he was employed 1949–1962.[174] The second movement of *Three Psalms of David* was actually specially written for Koppel's friend Aksel Schiøtz, but his vocal stamina had changed due to illness and he gave up trying to sing the part in July 1950, a few months before the date of the first performance.[175] The lack of time may thus have been a factor in why Kristjánsson was offered the assignment instead. At the time of the premiere,

[171] Ibid.
[172] Behrendt 1988, p. 96.
[173] Koppel in Bengtsson 1957, s. 148.
[174] JT, "Kristjánsson, Einar", *Sohlmans musiklexikon*, (Sohlmans: Stockholm 1977), part 4, p. 190. https://glatkistan.com/2015/01/19/einar_kristjansson_1/ August 31, 2022.
[175] Behrendt 1988, p. 97.

Kristjánsson was employed at the opera in Copenhagen, and the agreements in his employment contract may also have been the reason why he was the one who performed the piece. Kristjánsson's career in Nazi Germany should have made him burdensome in this context, but the circumstances surrounding his participation are unclear and further conclusions cannot be drawn. But in relation to the creation of a Holocaust memorial culture, based on the fact that he sings the title part at the premiere of *Three Psalms of David*, he paradoxically becomes a co-creator in the memory construction.

In one of the largest Danish dailys, *Berlingske Tidende's*, review on October 27, 1950, signed J.J, no connection is made to the work's anchoring in the eyewitness account that Koppel later gave in the anthology from 1957 or to any other Jewish history. Instead, the report is more generally related to how composers deal with works with religious content where, according to the reviewer, the tendency is to strive for simplicity and austerity. The reviewer also finds such severity in Koppel's work, which through the three hymns expresses a rise from a dark heavy tone, to gentleness and finally jubilation. The dark was given an oppressive monotony but no culmination, as expected, ever came, according to the reviewer. J.J concludes that it is an important work but too stylized and severe.[176]

The concert in Copenhagen was broadcasted on the radio and commented on in a column in the small Danish daily *Lolland-Falster Folketidende* on 28 October 1950. Based on a similar opinion to the signature J.J in *Berlingske, Folketidende's* reviewer wrote that the work lacked drama, something that an oratorio must contain. The reviewer does not mention anything explicitly about the connection to the Holocaust but emphasizes the texts' references to human suffering. The work was appropriate for UN Day, the journalist writes, thereby giving it a universal character rather than a specific Jewish one.[177]

That the Holocaust is not mentioned in the reviews is an expression of what Astrid Erll calls the antagonistic category in relation to cultural memory. In the creation of a memory culture there are competing narratives, and in this case the of memory of the Holocaust it can be said to compete with a prevailing image of Koppel as a modern composer, where the programmatic is not the ideal. It is thus the modernist Koppel who appears in the reviews rather than Koppel as a mediator or interpreter of Holocaust experiences. An important expression of the former

[176] J. J, "Herm. D. Koppels 'Davidssalmer'", *Berlingske Tidende*, October 27, 1950.
[177] "Ved Skalaen", *Lolland-Falster Folketidende*, October 28, 1950.

image, based on the notion of absolute music, is the fact that *Three Psalms of David* was selected as the Danish contribution to the musical modernist association ISCM's (International Society for Contemporary Music) festival in Frankfurt am Main, which took place in June 1951.

However, Koppel and the conductor Tuxen who was in the United States at the time, hesitated to perform the piece in Germany. But ISCM's British chairman Edward Clark's words that the festival should be seen as a resumption of international cooperation with German musical life since the Nazi erasure of modern music convinced Koppel that it was a good thing to have the work performed in Frankfurt. The text was translated into Latin and the Danish musicologist Gunnar Heerup wrote a program text which was then translated into German. Koppel points out in his memoirs that the subject was sensitive, which according to his interpretation was reflected in the translation, where the Danish wording that the work was typical of many other works and that it tormented and deeply marked the composer was translated into the somewhat more laconic formulation that the work "is typical and has deeply marked the composer."[178]

If Koppel's characterization of the subject's sensitivity in Germany is correct, this can also be said to be an expression of an antagonism between a narrative that avoids touching on the topic of the Holocaust, versus a narrative that includes more clear connections to the genocide, albeit not entirely explicit. However, a more detailed analysis of the program texts must be done to further develop the reasoning. The complex picture of how Three Psalms of David should be understood in its function for the creation of a Holocaust memorial also includes the fact that the piece was ultimately conducted by the German Hans Müller Kray and that the tenor part was once again sung by Einar Kristjánsson.

The second time the work was performed in Denmark was in 1961 under the direction of the conductor Thomas Jensen, who had to step in at short notice when the regular conductor Rafael Kubelik had fallen ill. Alexander Young sang the tenor part and the performance was rebroadcast on Danish radio on several occasions. In Poul Nielsen's positive review, the work is called a "Danish masterpiece". He is explicit in connecting the work not only to man's general insane acts against his fellow men, but also explains the background to the Nazi abuse of the Jews. In addition, the work is related to the continuity of racial persecution. Nielsen believes

[178] Behrendt 1988, p. 99. In the Danish original text it reads: "er typisk for mange lignende, og har pint og praeget sig dybt i komponistens sind" and in the German translation: " sie ist typisch und hat sich dem Komponisten tief eingeprägt.".

that the topic is still relevant today (1961) and exemplifies with South Africa, the USA and Germany. Unlike the Danish Vagn Holmboe's fifth symphony, which was also written with the Second World War as its background and which had struggle as its theme, Koppel's work rests rather in suffering, faith and patience, writes Nielsen. He concludes that Koppel's work is typical of Danish music at the time of its completion,[179] which I interpret as related to the sonorous rather than the programmatic.

In Poul Nielsen's work characteristics, there are several themes: universalism, the memory of the Holocaust, and Danishness. Unlike the previously referenced 1949 reviews, the emphasis on the music's program-matic content is stronger in the 1961 reception. The absence of explicit mentioning of the work's connection to the Nazi genocide of Jews that can be said to characterize the reviews of the forties, that is, the culture of silence, does not apply to Nielsen's article. Instead, the memory of the Holocaust is manifested and inserted into contemporary, global abuses. With the designation "Danish masterpiece", the Holocaust Remembrance is also inscribed in a Danish culture of memory.

In 1978, the piece was performed for the third time and was also broadcasted on the radio on two occasions. Soloist was the Finnish-born Peter Lindroos and conductor John Frandsen. Other works that were performed at the time were Schuman's Fourth Symphony in D minor and Sibelius' Seventh Symphony, selections that can be linked more to the conductor's knowledge of the repertoire than to a specific musical or programmatic theme. The Danish musicologist Gunnar Heerup's description of the work from 1950 as being written based on the memory of people's suffering during the Second World War, and about the naked and defenseless man, at the mercy of violence and terror, is quoted in the Danish paper *Horsens Folkeblad* in connection with the performance in 1978. The Holocaust or the specific Jewish tragedy during World War II is not mentioned in the quote or in the article otherwise. It is once again rather a universal memory that is highlighted.[180]

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Herman D. Koppel was one of those well-established Danish-Jewish musicians in Denmark who fled to Sweden in October 1943. Against the background of Koppel's routine and experience, he came, together with his colleagues in exile, to influence

[179] Quoted in Behrendt 1988, p. 99.
[180] "I dag opføres Davidssalmer", *Horsens Folkeblad*, March 16, 1978.

Swedish musical life in a qualitative direction. Although most fugitive musicians engaged in a wide range of music-making, it is clear that the war years 1943–1945 were largely characterized by cultural events aimed at strengthening the Danish sense of nationality and exercising sonic and verbal resistance to the Nazi occupation of Denmark. The numerous arrangements, as well as statements from concert organizers such as Helmer Envall, indicate that the Danish-Jewish musicians received quite a lot of attention and support, even if they were forced to live under scarce and insecure conditions. But it was the Danish connotation, not the Jewish, that drew attention. There are no arrangements or advertisements in the daily press with a reference specifically to the Danish Jews as Jews, only as Danes.

For Koppel, his Swedish exile was intense with countless performances and commitment as a composer for stage, film, and theatre. The experiences as a refugee from the Holocaust and the contact with other Danish-Jewish musicians in exile in Sweden contributed to his severing ties with Judaism but strengthened his role as an interpreter of the predicament of the Jews as a persecuted group. As the composer of the oratorio *Three Psalms of David*, he became a voice for those who experienced the Holocaust and a co-creator of the memory of the Holocaust, a memory that contained sadness and loss but also hope for the future. The Danish reception at the three performances 1949–1978 can be related to Astrid Erll's rhetorical antagonistic category, where the interpretation of Koppel's music balances between the notion of absolute music, that is, only paying attention to the sonic aspects and Koppel's role as, for example, a modern composer, and the notion of programmatic music, where the music's background in the Holocaust is highlighted, either as a specific Jewish tragedy or as an expression of a universal human fate that can befall groups other than Jews and in other times. More empirical studies need to be done, but judging by the analyzed reviews, the connection to the Holocaust becomes a more prominent ingredient in the reception from the 1961 performance of *Three Psalms of David*.

About IHRS

The Institute for Holocaust Research in Sweden (IHRS) was established in 2021 by Ulrika and Joel Citron, children of Holocaust survivors, born and raised in Sweden. The main aim of IHRS is to conduct comprehensive and nuanced research on all aspects concerning the Holocaust, focused on material and topics relevant to Sweden. An additional aim is to spread knowledge about new research to a broader audience. The IHRS is led by Director Karin Kvist Geverts who is an Associate Professor in History. More information about the IHRS can we found on the website www.ihrs.se

IHRS The Institute for Holocaust Research in Sweden