

Q: Frank Salomon 3:01 PM

Did Buber, who popularized a romantic notion about Hasidism, actually know any Haredi people?

A: Buber was born in Vienna but raised by his grandparents in Lvov/Lemberg from the age of three. His grandfather was a scholar of Madrash and kept a traditional religious home. Buber is thought of as an assimilated German Jew but in fact he was himself the product of the meeting of East and West.

Q: richardschumaker 3:01 PM

I know that this is a broad question, but let me ask about female writers in Berlin—both indigenous and migrants. Could you give us a few insights on how to understand Weimar Berlin as a place for women writers?

A: One interesting example is Gertrud Kolmar, who was born in Berlin and lived her entire life there until her deportation to Auschwitz. I dedicate an entire chapter to her in my book; she is, in my view, often mischaracterized as a Zionist writer. Her writing deals explicitly with themes of female identity, sexuality, etc.

The Hebrew writer Leah Goldberg spent a few years studying Semitic languages in both Bonn and Berlin. She wrote a fascinating novel, *Avedot* (losses) inspired by the time she spent in Berlin immediately before the rise of the Third Reich.

I can't think of any Yiddish women writers for whom Berlin played an important role, but I recommend looking into Allison Schachter's work; she has written about Berlin in her book *Diasporic Modernisms*, and her latest book is titled *Women Writing Jewish Modernity, 1919-1939*.

Q: Bernice Heilbrunn 3:02 PM

Was Agnon a part of this community? Or did he write in Hebrew? Was Schocken as publisher an important figure?

A: I write about Agnon in the first chapter of my book. Berlin played an important role in his life. He actually launched his career in Berlin before becoming famous in Palestine, thanks in part to the patronage of Schocken and to Gershom Scholem's German translations of stories like "The Tale of the Torah Scribe." Agnon initially immigrated to Palestine from Buczacz (in Austrian Galicia) in 1909, but after three years left for Germany, where he moved between Berlin, Leipzig, Munich, Wiesbaden, and Bad Homburg. He returned to Palestine when a fire in his Bad Homburg home destroyed his library and manuscripts. In my opinion, one of the most interesting literary examples of the meeting of Ostjuden and Westjuden in Berlin is Agnon's *To This Day* (*Ad Hena* in Hebrew).

Q: Anonymous Attendee 3:03 PM

It would be interesting to contrast with Vienna which was also the landing point of other escaping Jews from eastern Europe pogroms and civil war?

A: Yes, absolutely, it's a worthy comparison, and I would ask tomorrow presenters more about that.

Q: Jeremiah Riemer 3:05 PM

Since Pension Struck was not in the Scheunenviertel but on Uhlandstrasse in very upper middle-class Charlottenburg (as your mention of Kudamm indicated) - and the Romanisches Café was also not far away in Western Berlin, near the Zoo - I'm wondering how much the literary figures involved in this east-west symbiosis were actually hanging out with their poorer & more pious "Ostjuden" portrayed in the illustrations of A. Zweig's book. - Jeremiah Riemer

A: Yes, this is an important point. Many Yiddish and Hebrew writers lived in and around Charlottenburg, Zehlendorf, and Friedenau. Michah Yosef Berdichevsky apparently even referred to Friedenau with a direct Hebrew translation, *Neveh-Shalom*. It's unlikely that they had much contact with the residents of the Scheunenviertel to the east.

Q: Julia Bard 3:07 PM

Were the ideas of the Bund, specifically the concept of doikayt/"here-ness", present in this mix of cultures? I'm prompted to ask this question because of the definition of Jews as "an exilic people", which Bundism recast as diasporism – a *positive* assertion of Jewish minority status among and in solidarity with other minorities.

A: That's an interesting connection. Certainly these ideas were circulating in Berlin from the end of the 19th century onward. Even Chaim Zhitlovsky spent a significant amount of time in Berlin, where he studied Marxism. An interesting person (though not a Berliner) to look into would be Nathan Birnbaum, who is credited with coining the term "Zionism" but later decried the movement and promoted Yiddishism and diaspora nationalist values.