Bertha Pappenheim and Jewish Women from Eastern Europe

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There are two ways of writing about Bertha Pappenheim (1859-1936), and seldom is there any success in merging her two life histories into a single unified biography. First, there is discussion of her youth in Vienna, when she was a hysterical ‘indirect’ patient of Sigmund Freud, while under treatment by Dr. Josef Breuer, who kept his friend Freud abreast of her case, under the pseudonym of ‘Anna O’. Freud is said to have discovered psychoanalysis as a therapy through the reports on her illness and the therapeutic method she developed herself, the ‘talking cure’. The second Bertha Pappenheim emerges active as an adult, emancipated woman in Frankfurt am Main. More than anything else, she is remembered as the founder of the Jüdischer Frauenbund (League of Jewish Women, established 1904), which she headed for some 20 years as its president, and which inter alia also campaigned for the right of women to vote in the Jewish Communities (Gemeinde). This ‘later’ Bertha Pappenheim, the daughter of a well-to-do Jewish middle-class family, who had been brought up to marry well and then spend a leisurely life doing absolutely nothing, became a hardworking, highly engaged social worker. Her entry into social work began as a volunteer distributing soup in the kosher soup kitchens for the poor, then as an educator, later as the director of a children’s home, and finally as the founder of her own complex of ‘community homes.’ But she was to play a very unique role as an activist in providing assistance to Jewish prostitutes and their children.

Her biographers have unintentionally sculpted Bertha Pappenheim into a kind of split personality, where the rupture between her youth in Vienna and her social engagement in Frankfurt is supposedly illuminated by a hiatus of the ‘years kept secret.’ These were purportedly occupied with long stays as a patient in diverse clinics, where her mysterious ailments were treated. The publications on this period in her life are based not only on the most recent archival discoveries but also correspond more generally to the voyeuristic proclivity of our own time. However, there are two possibilities for splicing the split Bertha Pappenheim into a single person. On the one hand, her feminist engagement is stressed, her

1 The original German version of this article appeared in Scripta Judaica Cracoviensia 9 (2011), 69-87, and has been slightly revised. For an earlier Polish version, see ‘Przypadek Berty Pappenheim’, Tytuł 3 (1994), 243-253. I would like to acknowledge my gratitude to Bill Templer for his work on this text.
5 Jewish Community here refers to the special structure of the Gemeinde, in various parts of Germany also termed Synagogengemeinde, Israelitische Kultusgemeinde, which was a statutory body under public law to which members had to pay an annual communal tax. These autonomous bodies regulated many aspects of Jewish life in their village, town or city.
revolution against the patriarchal order, which doubtless was the red thread running through her entire life of social commitment. On the other, the far less known ‘Pappenheim faction,’ which partially consisted of her co-workers and often stemmed from the Orthodox Jewish milieu, tended to stress the powerful religious wellspring of their activity.\(^7\) Accordingly, Bertha Pappenheim, who came from an Orthodox family, addressed and grappled with Jewish Orthodoxy with differing degrees of intensity all of her life.

This split in Pappenheim is grounded in research in the different approaches to her activity and impact, approaches that sprang from two different milieus, which in our own time apparently only with difficulty can find a common ground. The two interpretative patterns can readily be fused into one basic attitude by claiming (a) Pappenheim was religious and (b) believed men had perverted religion. On the basis of this false, inflexible and patriarchal interpretation of Judaism, the role of the Jewish woman was crippled, because she was no longer granted any responsibility in civil society, and was reduced to an object of luxury and male sexual pleasure. Pappenheim felt personally affected, and regarded herself as strong and predestined to liberate this role of the woman from the spell of a misconceived interpretation. And since she was schooled in the Hebrew Bible, she had looked for support for her efforts in scripture. In this she remained faithful to the hierarchical thinking and cultural canon of her times: although she wanted in the ideal sense to redefine the role of the Jewish woman, she put forward one role for middle-class women, another for women of the Jewish proletariat; in practical terms, these were quite separate. Since the Jewish middle class was German, but the Jewish proletariat in Germany stemmed largely from Eastern Europe, Pappenheim’s programs reproduced the socio-cultural division of Jewry into Western and Eastern Jewry.\(^8\) Thus, Pappenheim also adopted the stereotypes of the Ostjuden common within her Western Jewish milieu, filling them only partially with her own distinctive content. Her special interest in prostitution sprang not just from her own personal character and outlook, but rather exemplified the genesis of a new social sensibility toward this problem, deriving from a mélange of middle-class morality, efforts to improve social hygiene, and a new form of antisemitism threatening the Jews.\(^9\)

In *Prostitution and Prejudice*, Edward J. Bristow describes conditions in Eastern Europe which were leading East European Jewish women astray into prostitution, and the environments in which this trade was practiced.\(^10\) Marion Kaplan, in *The Jewish Feminist Movement in Germany: The Campaigns of the Judischer Frauenbund, 1904-1938*, discusses the efforts of the Jewish feminists to combat prostitution and trafficking in women.\(^11\) Bristow examines the motivation of the Western Jewish reformers behind their interest in dealing with this problem, and describes the conditions which framed their

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\(^7\) For example, in 1936 Pappenheim wrote a Jewish prayer book for women. This is also supported by the fact that in her writings, she gave much space to moral values. See Dora Edinger (ed.), *Bertha Pappenheim. Leben und Schriften* (Frankfurt/Main, 1963).


\(^9\) Bristow, *Prostitution*, pp. 38, 41, 230 f. The writings in Polish and corresponding activities by individual and associations acting in this sense prove that a new sensibility was also perceivable at the time in the Polish areas, see ibid., pp. 21, 54, 63. Bristow pointedly formulates the nexus between anti-Semitism and trafficking of women when he states: ‘White slavery was the sexualisation of blood libel,’ ibid., p. 46.

\(^10\) See fn. 2.

\(^11\) See fn. 4.
actions. He also correctly points to the limits in mentality underlying these activities, which sprang from the cultural-religious split into East European and West European Jews. The views of Bertha Pappenheim, the leading activist in the struggle against prostitution and trafficking in women, and one of the most impressive female personalities of her era, are typical of this phenomenon. This essay explores Pappenheim’s views on the problem of prostitution among East European Jewish women, which constitute a specific contribution to the controversy around ‘caftan vs. necktie Jews.’ In this connection, the focus is on Pappenheim’s perception of the problem, and not the real circumstances on the ground, which are described in detail by Bristow. In this modest framework, I look at the question: did Bertha Pappenheim’s trips and personal encounters change and amend her original views?

Pappenheim never established her own family. She denied herself marriage, an institution that was even more respected among Jews than in the surrounding Christian society. She decided this on the basis of her negative experiences with the patriarchal world, which did not allow women a career outside the home, although it accorded them the possibility of education. Her personal experiences with psychoanalysis, at the hand of male doctors, and not concluded in a ‘proper’ manner, may have been a contributing factor here. What bothered her more than being a ‘spinster’ was the associated decision not to have children. It was a price she was willing to pay in her social engagement for the causes of women and children.

The role of the upper class
Pappenheim understood this social engagement as what today might be called a kind of foster motherhood, to which women, especially single, should commit themselves in helping social orphans. Married women whose children no longer required so much of their attention should also pursue this voluntary work. Both ideas were conceived as patterns for living for women from the middle class. These women were well educated and capable of imparting their knowledge to others. The sole necessity was for them to overcome the social canon of norms which did not permit them to engage in any practical tasks outside the home. In addition to para-familial tasks, middle-class women should, in this

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12 A poem written by Pappenheim (undated):

Mir ward die Liebe nicht-
Drum leb’ ich wie die Pflanze
Im Keller ohne Licht
Mir ward die Liebe nicht-
Drum tön ich wie die Geige,
Der man den Bogen bricht.
Mir ward die Liebe nicht-
Drum wühl ich mich in Arbeit
Mir ward die Liebe nicht-
Drum denk’ ich gern des Todes
Als freundliches Gesicht.

Love did not come to me--
That’s why I live like a plant
In the cellar, without light
Love did not come to me--
That’s why I sing like a violin
Whose bow’s been broken.
Love did not come to me--
So I bury myself in work
And rub myself sore with duty.
Love did not come to me--
So I think fondly of Death
As a friendly face’s breath.


13 See also Gilhooley, ‘Misrepresentation’, pp. 75-76 and passim. Hödl (p. 219) contends that Pappenheim ‘represents the classic example of a woman who fled from her passive, unfulfilled life situation into social charity work, in this way overcoming an existential crisis’; see Klaus Hödl, Als Bettler in die Leopoldstadt: Galizische Juden auf dem Weg nach Wien (Vienna, 1993).
perspective, embrace the power of female solidarity in assisting women from the proletariat, especially East European Jewish women, among them prostitutes. In order energetically and effectively to combat prostitution, it was necessary to create a new modern organization, since the traditional Jewish welfare organizations were not suitable for dealing with general poverty and mass prostitution. There was a general growing perception of the necessity to rethink the old principles of welfare, to modernize the traditional associations or even to replace them with new structures in view of the many ongoing changes in the conditions of everyday life. Thus, efforts by Pappenheim reflected the spirit of those times. How gigantic the project was which she had initiated is proven alone by the fact that this demanded a new definition of the role of the woman in the traditional Jewish Community, since this new woman had to move beyond the framework of women as homemaker and the constraints of the Jewish Gemeinde. In order to be able to cope with the new tasks, women had boldly to rethink their own identity. The woman was no longer the sole person responsible for home and hearth, since technical progress was making it easier to perform domestic tasks more quickly; moreover, the birth rate was declining, thus releasing female capacities and ingenuity for application in other spheres. This produced a situation where modern Jewish women were no longer overburdened, devoting themselves to meaningless activities, and thus falling prey to a kind of stunted moral growth or atrophy. In Pappenheim’s view, since these freed female capacities were simply something indispensable and necessary in public work, it was a real necessity for women from this background to engage themselves with tasks in the public arena. Bertha Pappenheim argued for this not only in terms of realpolitik, but also theologically, by turning her attention to women of the Bible and its Jewish interpretation. She sought to show that Jewish women in the past were quite active, even leading members of the Jewish Community, and evidently saw her own place within that tradition of female engagement. She thus felt well-justified in embarking on efforts to place the struggle against prostitution in a new organizational framework. She understood very well that this was not only due to individual depravity but was bound up with an entire complex of social phenomena. Her activities in dealing with prostitution were a part of other efforts aimed at assisting Jewish women in discovering a modern identity. She put together a group of co-workers from the German-Jewish middle class who embodied her ideal of women active in the public arena. With their help, she sought to create in Frankfurt/Main a possibility for new female Jewish immigrants to earn their livelihood in a decent and respectable manner. In addition, she tried to galvanize a process of re-socialization and retraining for the prostitutes, who wished to end their involvement in the ‘sex trade.’ She established a home for foundlings, orphans and children of prostitutes.

The struggle against prostitution

Her engagement in the fight against prostitution sprang from the matrix of the shock she experienced in encountering East European Jewry. Statistics prove just how serious this problem was at that time in this milieu in Germany. Since the 1880s, a high percentage of

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14 ‘[... ] the changing times [created the necessity] [moving from the often thoughtlessly applied commandment of the mitzvah], from the inflated, self-important and blind giving of charity, to create a meaningful, responsible activity.’ Pappenheim, Die jüdische Frau, cited in Edinger, Pappenheim, p. 110.

the traffickers in girls, prostitutes, pimps and procurers, and female brothel owners were Jews from Eastern Europe. This fact was ignored by male heads of the Jewish Communities in Germany, since they believed this was a matter of personal weakness of character and not a social phenomenon. To look the other way was in keeping with the moral canon of the era. The Jewish public also feared that dealing with this problem and publication of figures could be exploited by antisemitic propaganda as a characteristic that distinctively marked the ‘Jewish race’.\(^{16}\) Paradoxically, Pappenheim’s position was somewhere in between the antisemitic arguments and the official position of the heads of the Jewish Communities. In her view of East European prostitution, the problem of material poverty was fused with the problem of an internal, spiritual and intellectual poverty that had to be comprehended in social terms, not merely as something individual.

Both Pappenheim and the other Jewish representatives believed the reasons for migration among East European Jews were economic, namely the grinding poverty and economic desperation in their countries of origin. The majority of Ostjuden were working class, many came from the poorest social strata and the ranks of the so-called Luftmenschen, who had no regular income and survived on temporary jobs. The Jews from Eastern Europe lived in areas afflicted by war and social unrest. In Russia and Romania, pogroms and expulsions exacerbated their plight. Since no signs of improvement in their situation were on the horizon, emigration seemed the only way out.

The circumstances of this emigration, the status of the emigrants in the German-speaking countries and within German Jewry are focused on by Wertheimer in *Unwelcome Strangers. East European Jews in Imperial Germany.*\(^{17}\) The usual destination was overseas, in America, but the transit route there led through Western Europe, and Germany in particular, where a number of the emigrants wanted or found it necessary to settle, even though the German authorities did not grant them permanent residence. Entire quarters inhabited by East European Jews sprang up in the large cities. Pappenheim saw the objective reasons for the prevalence of prostitution among the immigrants as springing from the very dynamics of emigration, for example the fact that young people in particular emigrate in large groups. A second reason was the necessity for emigrants who wished to stay on in Germany even for a short while to earn their living somehow, a serious problem due to the scarcity of jobs. This was compounded by the gaps in culture and civilization separating the German milieu and the Ostjuden. In this struggle for survival, Pappenheim thought to discern and be able to diagnose a condition of spiritual poverty. This was reflected in the ease with which East European Jews, especially women, exposed themselves to bad influences and strayed from the straight and narrow.

In the light of this, Pappenheim wrote a brochure in 1900 on the situation of the Ostjuden. It appealed to the willingness to help of the Western Jews, who were educated and well situated: ‘each in his way has the duty to stand up for the hard-pressed Galician and Russian Jews.’\(^{18}\) She described there convincingly why the majority of the Jewish immigrants found it very difficult to find their way in Germany. They did not know the

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\(^{16}\) See Wertheimer, *Strangers*, p. 158. And in actual fact, stories about the ‘immorality of the Jews’ become an important aspect of this propaganda, see Aschheim, *Brothers*, p. 38. Hödl (*Bettler*, p. 68) cites a Jewish newspaper that reported in 1913, of 39 traffickers of women in Galicia, 38 were Jews. He adds that this was ‘certainly exaggerated and should rather be seen as an attempt to stress the urgency of measures of assistance.’

\(^{17}\) See fn. 8.

\(^{18}\) P. Berthold (Bertha Pappenheim), *Zur Judenfrage in Galizien* (Frankfurt/Main, 1900), p. 9. She explained this obligation on Jews vis-à-vis other Jews on the basis of general love for one’s fellow human being and efforts to advance civilization. Thus, Jewish women have a responsibility to help their less fortunate sisters.
language and were unfamiliar with the rituals of the modern world. She wrote that if the Jewish men had their difficulties in grappling with these difficulties of adjustment, it was almost impossible for the East European Jewish women. Simply because they were viewed in any case as an inferior group, they often had no general or vocational education. Pappenheim’s criticism of the negligence and laziness of the Jewish women from the East would have delighted the heart of any antisemite. She partially explained the failure of Baron Hirsch’s colonization plans in Argentina by pointing to these negative female characteristics. 19 Expressed as ‘help for self-help’ in the discourse of the day, she appealed for a form of girls’ education which would assist girls to become morally mature, and independent in the domestic and occupational spheres, so that they could become helpmates for their future husbands. In Pappenheim’s eyes, education for true partnership was a ‘civilizing’ mission; it was to be fulfilled by Western female missionaries and pioneers in ‘the wilds of Galicia’. 20 It was no accident that she looked in particular at the Jews from Galicia. Since about 1890, this Austrian crown land had been at the center of interest in German-Jewish efforts to promote reform and betterment, likewise because the governments in Russia and Rumania erected obstacles for Western Jewish aid and rescue operations. 21

The reformers often stressed the unfavorable legal status of the Jewish women from Eastern Europe in comparison with other female emigrants. 22 As one example, they and Pappenheim pointed to the ‘silent marriages’ recognized by Jewish law. These could be arranged in the presence of two witnesses, without a rabbi. Consequently, although these women were married according to Jewish law, their civil status had not changed officially. Such women married under religious law were totally dependent on their husbands, and at their disposal. The traffickers in women utilized this procedure in order to marry impoverished girls whom they wished later on to sell to houses of prostitution. In order to divorce, the wife had to obtain a so-called get from her husband, a bill of divorce according to Jewish halakhah, which often was impossible. The result was that in desperation, the woman descended into prostitution. This was compounded by the phenomenon of the abandoned married women or agunot. A Jewish woman can only be formally considered a widow or divorced woman if two witnesses can attest to the death of the husband or the handing over of a ritually correct get personally by the woman’s husband to her. Until that happens, they are still officially considered married women. Since at that time there were constant wars and social disturbances, and there was very heavy emigration, many men had left and not returned, and a large proportion of them were missing whereabouts unknown, or soldiers reported ‘missing in action.’ Thus, many women became agunot, literally women ‘chained to their marriage.’ They had no hope for a new marriage that might have provided them a chance and means of survival. The aguna remained alone for the rest of her life, and since she normally was bereft of any assets whatsoever, the only option left to her, according to Pappenheim, was prostitution.

20 Since she knew that it would be difficult to find German-Jewish women ready to missionize in this wilderness, she turned her attention toward Jewish women in Bohemia and Moravia, who seemed to her enough capable, industrious and clean in their ways, and also spoke a Slavic language. An important means of ‘uplift’ for the level of general civilization were the contests at the district level, where the ‘best-cared-for babies and best-mended socks’ socks would we awarded a prize and given broad attention. Berthold, Judenfrage, p. 22.
22 Bristow, Prostitution, pp. 104 f; Kaplan, Feminist Movement, pp.115f, 117; Edinger, Pappenheim, pp. 17 f.
Girls who originally had been recruited as nannies or domestic servants also fell victim to the sex trade. After they had left home and arrived at their destination, only then did it become clear what the work they had been hired for really entailed. Since their documents and money had been taken away from them, they were at the mercy of the agents and smugglers who had arranged the ‘job’. Sometimes the naive victims were hauled away at the train station when they arrived. In addition, along the Russian-German border, there were regular markets where the girls sometimes even could be purchased directly from their father. Most probably, he already had enough children at home and sacrificed the inferior child in order to support the rest. Naturally, there were also families which lived knowingly from the prostitution of the daughters.

Journeys Eastward
Although Pappenheim perceived the objective reasons behind the ‘depravity’ of the East European Jews, she was simply unable to cast off the idea of the special immoral susceptibility of the Jewish women from Eastern Europe. Soon she was offered an opportunity to examine the correctness of her negative judgment on the spot in Eastern Europe. Pappenheim had tried to get to the root of the evil and had declared war on the trafficking of girls. In order better to understand the prerequisites for this evil, she took the hardships of travel upon herself to venture to the East. The most dangerous of these journeys was in 1911 and took her to Palestine, where Pappenheim wanted to determine whether this country could offer an alternative for emigration for the Jews then flocking to the West. Her journey took her through Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, Greece and Turkey. She had innumerable letters of recommendation, visited red-light districts, the prostitutes themselves there, as well as schools and orphanages, in order to become generally familiar with the girls’ prospects for the future. She traveled several times to Galicia, the main reservoir for prostitution, in 1903, 1907, 1911/12, 1926 and 1935.

Pappenheim described two of these trips, in 1903 and 1911/12, in her publications. The tone of these brochures differs substantially one from the other, since their initial conditions were very different. The first was conceived as a report for the organizations that financed the six-week trip: for the Israelitischer Hilfsverein (Jewish Relief Association), and the Jüdisches Zweigkomitee zur Bekämpfung des Mädchenshandels in Hamburg (Jewish Branch Comm. For Combatting Girl Trafficking in Hamburg). The letters of recommendation from the Vienna Department of Education and the Israelitischer Hilfsverein were used to identify the participants. Bertha Pappenheim was accompanied by Dr. Sara Rabinowitz from Mohilev, a physician who wrote the second half of the report. They traveled by train and horse-drawn coach. The itinerary of the trip was determined by the information available to the Austrian Ministry of Education about the locations of the Jewish Baron Hirsch schools, since the ministry wanted Pappenheim to check out these

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23 This of course is very familiar from trafficking of women today from Eastern Europe. See Kate Transchel, ‘Behind the myth of the ‘happy hooker’’, globalpost, 7 Oct. 2010. <bit.ly/IQIS7y> (accessed April 26, 2012).
25 Kaplan, Feminist Movement, p. 43.
26 Bertha Pappenheim, Zur Lage der jüdischen Bevölkerung in Galizien. Reise-Eindrücke und Vorschläge zur Besserung der Verhältnisse (Frankfurt/Main, 1904), and idem, Sisyphus-Arbeit.
27 Maurice de Hirsch (1831-1896), a German financier and philanthropist. In 1888, he created a foundation which established modern Jewish schools in Galicia and the Bukovina. The year of Pappenheim’s trip, there were 50 schools with 230 teachers. Already in her earlier brochure, she compared the Hirsch schools with oases of education and knowledge in a desert. She commented ironically that they only educate boys. See Berthold, Judenfrage, p. 6.
institutions and their work. In addition, other places were visited that were important for Galician Jewry, such as the court of the Hasidic tsadik in Jezierna.\(^{28}\) This in turn was connected with Pappenheim’s principle of not being involved with any definite political persuasion, and the need to seek understanding and aid from all potential allies. The reports we have on the talks and negotiations shed light on Pappenheim’s great talents as a diplomat, her ability to empathize and to be able to listen carefully to the arguments of her interlocutor and to respond to them.

This first report was based on entries in her personal diary that she kept during the trip. Her aim was to convince the German Jews to engage in a broad relief operation for the benefit of the Jews in Eastern Europe.\(^{29}\)

Bertha went on the second trip alone in 1911/12, at her own expense. This allowed her complete freedom, which she herself greatly appreciated. She visited places she knew from earlier stays in order to see whether her advice and recommendations had been taken into any account. The brochure consists of letters Pappenheim wrote to her immediate coworkers at the ‘Female Social Aid’ in Frankfurt am Main. This epistolary form makes her report personal, and here we can become acquainted with Bertha Pappenheim as a more private person, such as in regard to her love for lace, which she tried to find everywhere, and collected with a singular passion.

While the first brochure had no references to personal names, the second is full of initials.\(^{30}\) Her comments in characterizing these individuals, who must have played a substantial role in local Jewish life, is in general very caustic and critical. The dark picture of life in Galicia that she sketches is the same in both brochures, and is depressing. The only thing that has shifted is the perspective of the author. In the first brochure, Pappenheim seemed quite shaken by the situation she encountered in Galicia. The sheer reality must have greatly outstripped what she expected to find. In her second trip, she already had some direct hands-on experience with Galicia and apparently could better differentiate. The letters are composed in a reserved and quite tone. She even discerned some signs of improvement, including gold teeth, taller buildings and better knowledge of Polish among the Jews.\(^{31}\)

In both brochures, she described the Ostjuden as profoundly degenerate and bereft of any basic moral attitude. Precisely for that reason, she perceived the situation of the Jews in Galicia as more threatening than that of the Jews in Palestine. The latter were poor, but

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Hirsch schools in Galicia, see Kazimierz Rędziński, *Fundacyjne szkolnictwo żydowskie w Galicji w latach 1881-1918* [Jewish Educational Foundations in Galicia, 1881-1918] (Częstochowa, 1997).

\(^{28}\) The trip went to Kraków (Cracow), Tarnów, Dąbrowa, Żabno, Rzeszów, Dukla, Lemberg (Lvov), Jariczów, Brody, Sassów, Złoczów, Tarnopol, Czortków, Stanisławów, Czerniejów, Kolońcyja, Słobóda Leśna, Obertyń, Zaleszczyki, Sadogóra, and Borysław.

\(^{29}\) ‘I hope that writing this down has brought me some peace of mind, and that from the internal commotion that often seized powerful hold of me in the face of so much misery, neglect and mire. Only enough warmth remains so as to be able to awaken the zeal to necessary, and as I sincerely believe, promising action, among those living in spiritual wealth and possessing inborn concepts of morality.’ Pappenheim, *Zur Lage*, p. 6.

\(^{30}\) Those individuals who were not involved in any way with the fight against prostitution and whom Pappenheim met ‘privately’ were mentioned with their full name, such as Maler [Leon] Pilichowski, whom Pappenheim met in Lwów (Lemberg) and who painted her portrait in the persona of Glückel of Hameln, wearing 17th century attire. Pappenheim was a descendant of Glückel, and translated her diaries into German. Pilichowski’s portrait is reproduced here: <bit.ly/Iv0vM1> (accessed 29 April 2012). See Pappenheim, *Sisyphus-Arbeit*, pp. 198f.. It is possible to see the portrait in a reproduction today in the Jewish Museum in Berlin.

\(^{31}\) Pappenheim, *Sisyphus-Arbeit*, p. 211.
had preserved their religion which helped them to cope with the dangers they faced.\textsuperscript{32} In Galicia she noted a general lack of personal religiosity. From her impressions, observance of ritual seemed external and superficial.\textsuperscript{33} She was angered by the lack of a link between religion preached and morality practiced: for example, an instance where a Jew who had forged bills of exchange was able to remain a valued member of the Community.\textsuperscript{34} In her view, the women in particular were in a negative situation, because simply by dint of their gender, they were deemed inferior in the eyes of the surrounding Jewish society, which is why no value was placed on their education and training.\textsuperscript{35} The only accepted and expected female activity was to dress attractively and try to attract a male.\textsuperscript{36} There had been no effort to teach the girls the most simple basic moral norms. They had only been instructed in ritual in a purely mechanical manner. Several times, Pappenheim criticized the external appearance of the Jewish women, their penchant for highly modern dress, their love of make-up, but lack of any conjunct observance of fundamental principles of hygiene.\textsuperscript{37} In addition, she disliked the snobbism of middle-class women, who had taken over key functions in the charitable organizations, in this case in the Protection League in Lwów,\textsuperscript{38} but who saw this in purely formal terms as a status symbol.\textsuperscript{39} Any new initiative was viewed as a matter of principle with mistrust and people tried to shift responsibility to the others. Pappenheim once again believed the reasons underlying this attitude lay in the low status and frightening ignorance of the women, as well as in the inefficiency of the traditional Jewish family. Rabinowitsch went even further in noting that family bonds generally were very weak, and that there was no sense of mutual attachment between family members in Galicia.\textsuperscript{40} These deficiencies in family education were being

\textsuperscript{32} Pappenheim was an exception here, since the large welfare organizations such as the Alliance Israélite Universelle were principally concerned with the welfare of Oriental Jews.

\textsuperscript{33} Pappenheim, \textit{Zur Lage}, p. 47.

\textsuperscript{34} Pappenheim, \textit{Sisyphus-Arbeit}, p. 212.

\textsuperscript{35} ‘Since for thousands of years among the Jews, women have been regarded solely as sexual beings, and no value was placed on mutual affection and intellectual interest in the life of the man, there was no honest sensual or mental-spiritual stimulus present for the devotion of the woman. As a result, a certain dulling of sensuality developed in the Jewish woman in respect to all matters sexual. This was compounded by the fact that as a result of the lack of education of the woman, their intellect and often vital sensations were cut off from any healthy nourishment, so that they were given no space beyond the physical self. Consequently, [their] imagination is literally forced into channels leading to corruptive soil.’ Pappenheim, \textit{Zur Lage}, pp. 47-48.

\textsuperscript{36} ‘The penchant for luxury among the girls can, if one takes into consideration the destitution of the general way of life in entire families, perhaps be viewed as a kind of misguided instinct for regeneration. To guide this instinct onto positive paths, to utilize and reshape it pedagogically, shall be part of the most noble-minded tasks challenging the future educators of the people.’ Ibid, p. 28.

\textsuperscript{37} Pappenheim, \textit{Sisyphus-Arbeit}, p. 200.

\textsuperscript{38} The Protection League’s aim was to hinder the spread of traffic with girls through measures of prevention and dissemination of information.

\textsuperscript{39} Pappenheim, \textit{Sisyphus-Arbeit}, pp. 200 ff.

\textsuperscript{40} ‘In addition, a well-managed household has a favorable impact on all of family life, and through this on the entire moral level of society. But only rarely have we encountered good housewives among the poor Galician women. This is mainly due to their ignorance. For example, female Jewish traders do not understand at all how to make good use of the hours when they sit in their shops waiting for customers. Ordinarily they sit there in idleness, while the children scamper about near them, dirty and in rags. The damage to the economy and public health caused by this absence of a sense of domesticity among the women is compounded by the main evil, whose root lies in the essence of idleness. It injects into the household and its management an element of inactivity and apathy; all vital contact and intercourse between the family members is excluded, and they are only kept together by habit. It is thus not surprising that in such families, young girls find no pleasure in the life together within the bosom of the family, do not enjoy domestic tasks, and for that reason, are exposed in their leisure hours to all the temptations of the street.’ Rabinowitsch in Pappenheim, \textit{Sisyphus-Arbeit}, p. 81.
exacerbated by further education in the Jewish schools, and in the case of the girls, in Christian schools. This education made the girls the only modern educated person in the family, which led to a situation where the parents were forfeiting some of their authority. In view of these basic offenses, the girls became easy and willing victims, quite apart from the level of their education. Pappenheim also noted the frequent female infidelities in the Jewish middle class, which were tolerated in silence. She termed this ‘hidden prostitution’, and believed she had discovered the reasons for this: they lay not in a lack of money but of morality. At the same time, the position of unwed mothers and their children was much worse than in the majority population. Through such an ‘accident,’ a girl lost any chance for marriage, and the children born out of wedlock had no rights in the Jewish Community. Thus, there should be no surprise about the large number of abortions, as well as the fact that these illegitimate children were sent to the provinces and here neglected so that they did not survive (‘to be made into angels’). Pappenheim was shocked by the pervasive ignorance regarding the possible consequences of licentious sex, such as venereal diseases.

On the one hand, she stressed the laziness, indolence and lack of local initiatives, which people always tried to explain to her as being the result of financial problems. For this reason, it was not possible to organize ‘self-help’, although there were potential interested parties whom she encountered on her first trip east. She also criticized the initiatives from the outside that were poorly adapted to local circumstances, and had only wasted money. On the other, she was pleasantly moved by the thirst for more knowledge and the interest in her initiatives. She found her allies in all milieus, from the hasidim to the assimilated circles of Jews. This encouraged her optimism about the future. The travel report of 1903 concluded with a list of the possible initiatives that the German Jews might launch to assist the Jews in Eastern Europe. These included setting up kindergartens, schools and hospitals, factories and other workshops. They were meant to become paradigmatic examples of their kind, since along with their daily tasks, their role was also to serve as path-breaking initiatives. They ought to take on a mission to bring more civilization to the East European Jewish population, so that they could then stimulate additional ventures. Pappenheim presented a concept for the organizing of the train station mission and a protection league, geared to assuming an active role in the fight against trafficking in girls and prostitution.

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41 ‘There are no reservations about attendance at Christian Polish schools by the girls. They are regarded in the customary conception in the country as inferior creatures which serve nothing but the propagation of our species.’ Pappenheim, Zur Lage, p. 14; ‘In a family where the father, mother and sons are all illiterate, a daughter who has “completed” four grades in elementary school, as the common expression goes, is considered a “very educated young lady,” and although she is so dangerously devoid of education, there is for her no place where she might seek energetic counsel and admonition.’ Ibid.

42 ‘However, one thing is quite clear in Galicia: neither the brothels nor the traffic in girls will be capable of exerting such a corrupting influence on the population as the secret prostitution, widespread as a result of all the misery and squalor infesting the country. For condemnation of this situation, it is of greatest importance that distress and seduction are not the only factors driving the girls to sell their bodies. I have been repeatedly told, and most especially by medical personnel, that an alarmingly large number of girls and women from “better” families, such that have no need for work or making extra money on the side, have access to clandestine and extra-marital sexual intercourse. And to be sure, these are not women and girls who in some way or other have been “infected” by modern or emancipated ideas. These are women and girls who adhere with the greatest trepidation to all the other ritual regulations, and nonetheless when it comes to morals, are absolutely reckless.’ Pappenheim, Zur Lage, p. 47.

43 Pappenheim, Sisyphus-Arbeit, p. 147.

44 Pappenheim, Zur Lage, p. 38.

45 Pappenheim, Sisyphus-Arbeit, p. 198.

46 Pappenheim, Sisyphus-Arbeit, p. 203.
The next trip proved a great disappointment for Pappenheim, since most of the plans had not been realized. But she also experienced pleasant surprises. For example, the organizing of an orphanage and hospital in Tarnopol had brought positive results. Although her allies in Galicia had encountered a total lack of understanding in their milieu, which had made their life and work there quite difficult, their engagement had nonetheless borne fruit. She was also enthused about a kindergarten in Tarnów and a model kindergarten in Kolomyja, directed by her pupil.

These modest successes stirred in Pappenheim a renewed zest for action and stimulated new ideas and proposals for improvement. She not only wished to help financially, but also was thinking of sending expert personnel to the East: teachers, nurses, housekeepers, nursery school and kindergarten teachers. She also wanted to train skilled professionals in Germany who would later work back in their native countries.

The second brochure described the impressions during the trip 1911/12, but was not published until after World War I in 1924. It is interesting that Pappenheim showed no signs of any special ‘fascination’ with East European Jewry, in contrast with the spread of such an interest during World War I among Zionists in Germany in particular, and in Orthodox and intellectual circles. This shift in thinking among many German-Jewish soldiers came when they were stationed on the Eastern front, there in contact with the poor but vibrant life of East European Jewry. Since the secularized and assimilated Jews in Germany believed their Judaism was on the verge of vanishing, this encounter led to some German Jews declaring that in their eyes, the Ostjuden were the ‘true’ and authentic Jews. This of course did not mean that the feeling of historical distance was lost. ‘Even among Orthodox Jews, the feeling of national and cultural superiority remained intact. And also those Jews who recognized their obligation vis-à-vis East European Jewry and intensified their engagement of their behalf, believed these Jews needed reform under the guiding hand of German Jews. The contemporary expression for this stressed German-Jewish superiority: “uplift”. This was probably also Pappenheim’s view.

It also should be emphasized that Pappenheim’s attitude toward the problems of Jews in Eastern Europe was more moderate than that of other Jewish activists, such as the sociologist and socialist reformer Henriette Fürth.

**Pappenheim and Sara Schenirer**

Pappenheim’s strong will could not by itself overcome all the hurdles, such as the lack of competent partners in the East. Pappenheim constantly stressed that the local circumstances had to be taken into account, and that efforts should be made to avoid trying to replant outside patterns in foreign soil without any change and adaptation.

Initially, it was possible to make use of those persons delegated from Germany, but it was imperative to find someone who knew the local terrain and shared Pappenheim’s views. She had to search long and hard, because in the East her unusual activities were

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47 Pappenheim, *Sisyphus-Arbeit*, pp. 204-205. ‘The ability of the East European Jews for advancement is admirable’; ibid., p. 213


50 Ibid., p. 28.

viewed with suspicion. It was easier to find an open ear among Christian women who were engaged in social activity and welfare work.\textsuperscript{52} The Jewish women who supported Pappenheim stemmed initially from the modernized circles within Polish Jewry, and for that reason alone, were only able to have a potential negative influence on reactions by the dominant Orthodox Jewry to Pappenheim’s ideas and proposals.\textsuperscript{53} The Baron Hirsch schools in Galicia were a source of support and information for her, but these disappeared during World War I, so that she had once more to seek out new partners.

In this connection, processes underway within Jewish Orthodoxy proved helpful. They led to a change in the 1920s, when Orthodoxy, alarmed over the demoralization and assimilation of Jewish women, changed their views about female religious education.\textsuperscript{54} This was manifested in the support given since 1919 by Agudas Yisroel, the organization of Central European Jewish Orthodoxy, to a chain of Orthodox girls’ schools, Beis Ya’akov. The link between these two phenomena, trafficking in girls and Orthodox female education, was later highlighted when the Bais Ya’akov central office took part in 1927 in the international conference on girls in London, where the problems of Bais Ya’akov schools were discussed and Bertha Pappenheim also gave a paper.\textsuperscript{55} The representatives of the League of Jewish Women (Jüdischer Frauenbund) learned about this initiative there for the first time, and immediately accepted it as a preventive measure against neglect of girls, and actively supported the Bais Ya’akov movement from that juncture on.\textsuperscript{56}

The spiritual inspirer of these schools was the Kraków educator Sara Schenirer (also spelled Szenirer or Schenierer). It appears somewhat absurd that precisely Schenirer, about whom hardly any of those ‘not involved’ could have heard anything, and not the other far better-known Jewish women, earned the fame of being one of the most energetic and venerable women of their time.\textsuperscript{57} Sara Schenirer (1883-1935) stemmed from Kraków and

\textsuperscript{52} Pappenheim (Sięsphus-Arbeit, p. 154) mentions the Roman Catholic Ochrona [sic!] Kobiet, Women’s Protection, in Warsaw. Probably she was referring to the Christian Society for the Protection of Women [Chrześcijańskie Towarzystwo Ochrony Kobiet], established in 1902 in Warsaw. See Elżbieta Mazur, Dobroczynność w Warszawie w XIX wieku [Welfare in Warsaw in the 19th Century] (Warsaw, 1999), p. 77.

\textsuperscript{53} Bristow, Prostitution, pp. 70, 104. The Jewish women involved were Dr. Rabinowitsch from Mohilev and Dr. Ada Reichenstein from Lemberg (Lvov), ibid., p. 260. Pappenheim warned about opposition from the powerful Polish Orthodoxy. In conservative Kraków in 1903, the feminist-socialist periodical Nowe Słowo, in which emancipated women from a Jewish background played a major role, announced a lecture by Bertha Pappenheim on the topic of traffic in girls. See Klaudia Zbiegień, ‘W kręgu feministek skupionych wokół ’Nowego Słowa’’ [In the Circle of Feminists Who Gathered Together around the ‘Nowe Słowo’], M.A. thesis (Institute of History, Jagiellonian Univ., 1995), pp. 101f. I am grateful to Prof. Mariusz Kuleczykowski at JU for graciously allowing me access to the master’s theses of his students.

\textsuperscript{54} This change in their stance came about in 1913, when the Talmudic objection forbidding education of women in Jewish disciplines was restricted by Rabbi Israel Meir Hacohen to apply only to the oral tradition. He explained that in any case, this objection was not applicable in times of mass migration. Western Orthodoxy established a central fund to increase learning of the Torah and strengthening of religion, named ‘Keren Hathora,’ which inter alia supported the schools of Bais Ya’akov. During the meeting of the Central Council of Agudas Yisroel in Kraków on 15 September 1924, ‘Karen Hathora’ took over the educational direction and expansion of the organization of Bais Ya’akov. In Leo Deutschländer, Das Erziehungswerk der gesetzestreuen Judenheit (Frankfurt/Main, 1929), pp. 19, 67 f. Dr. Leo (Samuel) Deutschländer (1888-1935) was an expert on Jewish education in the Ministry of Education in Lithuania (1919-22) and director of the KH fund. See Miriam Eisenstein, Jewish schools in Poland 1919-1939 (New York, 1959), pp. 82-88. Eisenstein presents the syllabus of the B.Y. schools.

\textsuperscript{55} Deutschländer, Erziehungswerk, p. 32. Bais Ya’akov ביאס יאakov also written Beit Ya’akov, Beth Jacob, Bais Yaakov or Beis Ya’akov. See also Bristow, Prostitution, pp. 300 and 305.

\textsuperscript{56} Kaplan, Feminist Movement, pp. 124f, 127.

worked there as a seamstress.\textsuperscript{58} She also came from a very religious hasidic background.\textsuperscript{59} During her stay in Vienna in 1914 at the time of war, she experienced a revelation under the influence of the teachings of Rabbi Flesch in the synagogue at Stumpergasse 42, and this revelation inspired her to establish a school for girls. On her own, she had acquired knowledge of the Bible and other writings, and she wished to pass this on in a girls’ vocational school of her own making. From the beginning of 1918, this school became very popular. In 1919 alone, the enrollment soared from 40 to 300.\textsuperscript{60} In this way, the movement ‘Bais Ya’akov’ schools came into being, and later received the backing of Agudas Yisroel. Over time ever more such schools were established, and there were mounting difficulties to staff them with suitable teachers.\textsuperscript{61} This dilemma was resolved provisionally by sending girls who had graduated from the first Bais Ya’akov school in Kraków to work as teachers in the provincial schools. In 1924, the Kraków school officially was changed into a teachers’ seminary to prepare staff for the Bais Ya’akov schools. Sara Schenirer became its director.

Sara Schenirer initially had her doubts about the possibility of cooperation between Western and East European Jewish educators.\textsuperscript{62} This was probably because she imagined this in the framework of contact with the German-Jewish liberal circles of ‘cultured’ Jews, who regarded themselves as superior to the East European Jews in all spheres. They viewed the traditional religiosity of the Ostjuden as an anachronism. But support from Agudas Yisroel automatically entailed cooperation with Western Jewish educators, and the East European Jewish stereotype of the West European Jew was fruitfully confronted with the living reality of German Orthodoxy. Seidman’s somewhat hagiographic work on Schenirer notes that this symbiosis flourished despite initial difficulties. Evidently the German-Jewish

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\textsuperscript{59} Her favorite books were Cenea w’Reena and Nachlah Cwi; in addition, she studied the Bible and various religious ethical works of musar, see Seidman, Renesans, pp. 8, 10. She was born to a devout Belzer Hasidic family; see Asaf Kaniel, ‘Sarah Schenirer’, in The YIVO Encyclopedia of Jews in Eastern Europe, 2010. <bit.ly/1Ir4sM> (accessed 29 April 2012).

\textsuperscript{60} For this, Schenirer was given the blessing of the Belzer Rebbe Issacher Dov of Belz (1854–1927); see Deborah Weissman, ‘Bais Ya’akov: a historical model for Jewish feminists.’ In Elisabeth Koltun (ed.), The Jewish Woman. New Perspectives. (pp. 139-148) (New York, 1976), p. 143; Benisch, Carry Me, p. 28; see also Deborah Weissman and Lauren B. Granite, ‘Bais Ya’akov schools’, in Jewish Women: A Comprehensive Historical Encyclopedia. Jewish Women’s Archive 2009. <bit.ly/IBRwXw> (accessed 29 April 2012), where they note that the Belzer Rebbe ‘added that daughters of Belzer Hasidim would be forbidden to attend’ the Bais Ya’akov schools. Nonetheless, the Gur Hasidim were later to become a strong power base of the Bais Ya’akov movement; see also Harry M. Rabinowicz, The Legacy of Polish Jewry: A History of Polish Jews in the Inter-War Years (New York, 1965), p. 208.

\textsuperscript{61} In 1937, there were 250 schools and three seminaries for teachers in Kraków, Łódź and Vienna. On Leo Deutschländer’s initiative mobilizing the support of Keren Hathora, see also Benisch, Carry Me, pp. 57ff., 75-77. The movement had its own press, the Bais Ya’akov Journal in Polish and Yiddish, later on only in Yiddish. According to Schenirer, Leo Deutschländer headed the movement, and then after him Yehuda Leib Orlean (1900-1943), director of Agudas Yisroel in Poland; see Weissman, ‘Bais’, p. 143; on Orlean, see Benisch, Carry Me, pp. 229ff. Weissman & Granite, ‘Bais’, note: ‘In 2005, the seventieth anniversary of Sarah Schenirer’s death, the Central Bais Ya’akov of Jerusalem (known as ‘the Mercaz’) established an archival repository of documentation from the early years of the Bais Ya’akov movement.’ Today there are many Bais Ya’akov schools in the U.S. and Israel.

\textsuperscript{62} ‘Frau Schenirer long had her doubts about whether the teachers from Western Europe could develop similar fruitful educational activities here’; see Almanach szkolnictwa żydowskiego w Polsce [Almanac of Jewish Education in Poland], (1938), p. 321; see also Seidman, Renesans, p. 19
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teachers, who brought in a reservoir of modern knowledge, were able to accept the distinctive religious characteristics of their colleagues and pupils.

It is not known precisely when Schenirer and Pappenheim met personally. In any event, Pappenheim had a high opinion of the experiment in Kraków, since although seriously ill at the time, she undertook a trip to Galicia in 1935, and spent a week at the school. In one of her last writings, she spoke favorably of the ‘willingness and strength […], exercised as a living reality by Frau Schenirer in her simplicity, who was so deeply shaken by what she had learned about the moral deterioration among Jewish girls in Poland, that her [Schenirer’s] soul was wondrously lifted.’ There were several common features between Schenirer and Pappenheim. First, they belonged to the same generation, and the way they took action could probably be explained on the basis of a specific understanding of a generation, since they often highlighted the differences between young and old in their writings. They were both Orthodox and guided by a deep feeling of religiosity. Precisely this core religious orientation allowed them to go beyond the conventions of their time without having to experience any rupture in identity. They had made similar personal decisions in their lives: both remained single (Schenirer was married but lived alone), and they were engaged on behalf of others virtually without any limit. Their fellow workers and pupils felt they were their own ideal family. They sought to educate youth both religiously, in terms of Orthodoxy, and also along modern lines. They were deeply shocked by the decline in morality in their direct vicinity; in their view, this decline could be found wherever religion had been reduced to a body of external rituals.

But the similarities end there. Pappenheim saw the causes of the evil in the perversion of the role of the Jewish woman as a result of depriving her of responsibility, and thus condemning her gender to inactivity. By contrast, Schenirer believed the core of evil lay in assimilation and the influence of the non-Jewish environment, and its impact on all Jews, both male and female. Pappenheim differed, regarding the increasing knowledge of Polish among the Jews as a sign of improvement. Schenirer found in Jewish Orthodox tradition the elements which allowed her to combine the struggle against ‘de-Judaization’, with the struggle against the lowering of standards of morality among Jewish women. Women were specifically assigned by God himself to oppose secularization and assimilation, because according to a commentary by Rashi, they were the first to have received the Torah from the Creator, even before their men. For that reason, they ought to become educated, active defenders of Jewish tradition, and they should carry out this

64 Colin, ‘Metamorphosen’, p. 205. For Pappenheim, mitzvah meant a social deed, and this was more than charity, it was a confession of faith in the Jewish religion.
65 Seidman, Renessans, p. 14; thus, their non-Jewish elementary schools were deemed a great obstacle for the Bais Ya’akov schools, and an effort was launched to ensure that Bais Ya’akov schools could also teach classes in non-religious subjects. Deutschländer, Erziehungswerk, p. 83. In a similar vein, Hödl (Bettler, p. 64 ) stresses that in Orthodox circles, ‘it was now generally recognized that the education of girls in public schools, coupled with a simultaneous exclusion of boys from secular knowledge, was generating explosive tensions within Judaism that threatened to consume it.’
66 Gershon Bacon, ‘Agudath Israel in Poland, 1916-39. An Orthodox Jewish Response to the Challenge of Modernity’. PhD diss. (University of Michigan, 1979), p. 243. Cf. Rashi’s commentary on Ex 19:3, where ‘house of Jacob’ was interpreted to mean a metaphor for the ‘women of Israel’; see also Weissman, Schenirer. See likewise Seidman, who in his hagiographic brochure put the work of Sara Schenirer on a equal footing with that of Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch in Germany, and thought that their activity was contributing to a revolution by generating a renaissance in female religiosity, and closing the gap between the generations, old and young; Seidman, Renessans, pp. 32-34.
function in close conjunction and agreement with their husbands. Schenirer had expected a greater sense of responsibility on the part of Jewish women within and outside the Community. Since she gained the support of Jewish Orthodoxy for her mission, she was able to achieve what Pappenheim had aspired to herself, but which proved extremely difficult in her bourgeois middle class milieu. The gulf between the two is expressed by the word ‘simplicity,’ a term Pappenheim used to characterize Sara Schenirer. Among other things, she was referring to Schenirer’s relative ignorance of European culture (both German and Polish), of civilization, and her rejection of women’s liberation in the modern Western sense, including modern sexual ethics, and methods of birth control. She criticized the supposed ‘distance from the real world’ at the teachers’ seminary of the Bais Ya’akov schools in Kraków, which only trained girls for the profession of teaching. That is reminiscent of discussions about ‘productivizing’ the Jews from Eastern Europe, perceived as beggars. She denounced the deficiencies in managing the budget and in the administration of the Bais Ya’akov schools, called for frugality and accountability, which is reminiscent of her original views on Jewish women from Eastern Europe. Thus, although she praised Schenirer’s achievements, the tone of her report suggests that she identified far more with the Zionist institution for further education and vocational schooling of Ms. Kleften in Lwów. Pappenheim certainly found people similar to her thinking among the Jews she had met in Poland, as reflected in her remarks about the Lwów painter Leon Pilichowski. However, in her struggle for a new identity for the Jewish woman, she felt she had been left alone to fight for the cause. One gains the impression that she was only interested in Sara Schenirer because her initiative had proved successful, but basically Sara remained alien to her down to the end. In a more pointed way, one can even assert that Pappenheim and Schenirer personified as women the controversy between the necktie and caftan Jews: one was middle class, even belonging to the Jewish aristocracy, assimilated as a German Jew, and Orthodox-liberal in her faith. The other was from the working class, a Jew from Eastern Europe and ‘simple,’ i.e. Torah-true in the traditional sense, from a Belz hasidic family.

Conclusions
The situation of the Jews in Eastern Europe was indeed dramatic during and after World War I, and knowledge about this was widespread. In view of this, Bristow even raises the provocative question: was it really better for Jewish women in Eastern Europe to remain in deprivation in their home localities, without any prospects for the future, instead of emigrating and perhaps becoming sex workers? In Pappenheim’s view of Jewish women in Eastern Europe, right from the start, economic hardship and misery were closely intertwined with moral deterioration. She was a born leader and understood her commitment to the cause of the Ostjüden as a mission that aimed to help them, and direct the attention of Jews everywhere to the life and very distinctive forms of existence of the Jews in Poland. Did her trips to the East and encounters contribute to changing and amending her view of Jewish women there?

Until her death, Bertha Pappenheim was convinced that Western Jews were superior to Jews in the East. As a result, she evaluated Jews in Europe’s West and East in different ways. She spoke with admiration of the symbiosis of German culture and civilization

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68 Jacobson, ‘Leitgedanken’, p. 3; see also Wertheimer, Strangers, p. 160.
69 Pappenheim, ‘Kleine Reise’, p. 196
70 Bristow, Prostitution, p. 204, in reference to destruction, ibid., p. 231
(including the emancipation of the woman) with Judaism among the ranks of German-Jewish women, and postulated the sole need there for a more deep and solid religious education.\textsuperscript{71} When it came to Jewish women in Eastern Europe, she believed that a comprehensive program for total re-education had to be introduced. On her trips eastward, she recognized that it was senseless to train East European Jewish women as housekeepers to assist Jewish women in the West, an earlier proposal of hers around 1900, since in the East European Jewish milieu, employment as a maid had a very low social status.\textsuperscript{72} For that reason, she concentrated her interest on the social professions, such as nursing, kindergarten teaching and the like. Her challenge in convincing people of the value of this perspective was much more difficult, since although the profession of the female teacher had certain traditions in Eastern Europe, female social professions, such as that of the nurse, were forbidden among the Hasidim.

Pappenheim’s first informants came from among the ranks of Jews eager to enter the modern world, and were recruited particularly from the milieu of the Baron Hirsch schools. For that reason alone, it could not be expected that these Jews would have much good to say about Orthodox Judaism. These reports may have sharpened and focused Pappenheim’s West European view of the problems in the East. Most probably, the importance accorded various phenomena as drivers in the development of prostitution depended on the individual awareness of her informants. For example, the phenomenon of the agunot played a relatively small role in the sphere of prostitution, although Pappenheim had assumed it had greater importance.\textsuperscript{73} Did this phenomenon perhaps provide an especially visible reason for criticizing traditional Orthodox Jewish marital law, which was strongly patriarchal and oriented to the dominance of the male partner? Despite her new acquaintanceships and sources of information, Pappenheim overlooked various developments that also might have been relevant for new educational initiatives. For example, she never made any mention of the workers’ Bund (Algemeyner Yidishe Arbeter Bund), even in 1935, when this movement emerged as a powerful force in Poland. She did not mention also a women’s group fighting the trafficking of Jewish women (Society for the Protection of Women) in Łódź, a group with which the League of Jewish Women in Germany, an organization she had founded and directed, was in contact.\textsuperscript{74} Pappenheim made mention solely of Agudists, Hasidim, Liberalists (probably assimilated Liberals?) and Zionists. Was the conscious and foregrounded emphasis of the Bundists on Yiddishkeit the reason for this disregard on her part?

It is striking how little Pappenheim looked at the non-Jewish environment of the Jews in Galicia, which also was suffering heavily under the prevailing economic conditions there. In this way, her efforts took on an isolating character, which was probably characteristic of all initiatives oriented to a religious community. As a result of this disregard of the broader situation, she closed her eyes to any possibility of seeing and comprehending various phenomena in their greater complexity. In Kraków, for example, not only the Jews were especially conservative and Orthodox – the Christians there were

\textsuperscript{71} Ibid. See also Bertha Pappenheim, ‘Die jüdische Frau’ (1934). In: Edinger, \textit{Pappenheim}, pp. 105-117, here 106 f.
\textsuperscript{72} Work in the household as a maid or domestic was regarded by West European Jews, both female and male, as an ideal occupation for Jewish women from Eastern Europe; see Wertheimer, \textit{Strangers}, p. 101.
\textsuperscript{73} The problem of the agunot was described in 1929 by Dr. Ada Reichenstein from Lvov at the World Congress of Jewish Women as an ‘East European Jewish catastrophe’; see Bristow, \textit{Prostitution}, p. 104. I am grateful to Paula Hyman and Chaeran Freese for information that the problem of the agunot was exaggerated for purposes of propaganda, since prostitution was primarily engaged in by single young girls.
\textsuperscript{74} Kaplan, \textit{Feminist Movement}, p. 124; Bristow, \textit{Prostitution}, pp. 274, 305.
also a bastion of conservatism in their Roman Catholic faith. Reformers in both religious communities had to take this orientation into account if their plans were to bear fruit. New in her thinking, and enriched by what she had learned on her journeys, was that although she had no special high regard for the Jewish women in Eastern Europe, and considered them as subject and inferior to their husbands, she declared them to be an important link between Jews and Christians by dint of their knowledge of the national language.\textsuperscript{75} The peaceful symbiosis of the Jewish and Christian communities was one of her aims, and here she went further than her East European counterpart Schenirer. Pappenheim was an opponent of emigration and advocate of creative work in the local context, and consistently, was also a staunch opponent of the emigration of German Jews, and most especially of the so-called Kinderverschickung (children’s evacuation, even after 1933!). Near the end of her life in 1935, she stated: the ‘East European Jews are a reservoir of Judaism, from which for generations to come vibrant Jewish life will flow forth.’ She noted that ‘in terms of blood,’ they formed ‘a reservoir of unceasing Jewish existence,’ which probably was an affirmation of their emigration to the West.\textsuperscript{76} However, the West European Jews always retained special primacy in her eyes.

Ultimately, other factors prevent the realization of Pappenheim’s plans. In 1935, Sara Schenirer died,\textsuperscript{77} and the following year Bertha Pappenheim passed away. World War II largely eradicated East European Jewry and its institutions across Polish-speaking Europe. The invented story about demise of the teachers’ seminary Bais Ya’akov in Warsaw (actually there was no Bais Ya’akov seminary there) is told in a manner that is similar to a Christian martyr’s legend. When in 1943 news came that the Nazis were thinking of converting the building to a brothel, and that the pupils would have to work there, all 93 girls living there are said to have decided to commit suicide.\textsuperscript{78} As Harry Rabinowicz writes in his apologia on Schenirer, the female pupils remained true to the spirit of their mentor and their Jewish Orthodox tradition. Although suicide is forbidden in Judaism, sacrifice of one’s own life (kidush haShem), the holy death of the martyr, is recommended if one is forced to worship idols, engage in forbidden intercourse or murder (Sanh 74a). Significantly, there is no quasi-mythical legend about the pupils of Pappenheim.\textsuperscript{79}

\textsuperscript{75} She meant Polish in Poland, but likewise Yiddish as a basis for rapid acquisition of standard German. Pappenheim, ‘Kleine Reise’, p. 195.
\textsuperscript{76} Pappenheim, ‘Kleine Reise’, p. 194
\textsuperscript{77} Schenirer had passed on direction of the movement to L. Deutschländer, but she had continued to be its intellectual and symbolic head, the hero of a romantic agenda. The pupils addressed her as ‘mother,’ and mutually used among themselves the term ‘sister.’ It is emphasized that Schenirer never doubted the superior position of male authority; see Weissman, ‘Bais’, pp. 143, 145. Pearl Benisch notes: ‘If Dr. Deutschlander was the spine and substance of Beth Jacob, Frau Schenirer was its emblem and soul,’ idem, To Vanquish the Dragon (Jerusalem, 1991), p. 9. Benisch (Carry Me, pp. 316-320) provides a vivid eyewitness description of Schenirer’s funeral.
\textsuperscript{78} ‘She (Sara Szenirer) died on the 7th of Heshvan, 1935, but her spirit inspired the 93 Bet Jacob girls in the Warsaw Ghetto who committed suicide rather than fall into Nazi hands.’ In: Rabinowicz, Legacy, p. 209; see Judith Tydor Baumel, Double Jeopardy. Gender and the Holocaust (London/Portland, 1998), pp. 117-138. A first-hand account of Bais Ya’akov girls fighting against the Holocaust is Benisch, Vanquish. Benisch (p. 81) notes that she was unable to find Sarah Schenirer’s grave after the war. In 2005, ‘a dedicated cadre of women set out to achieve another goal: the restoration of Schenirer’s tombstone. They traveled to Poland and replaced the tombstone at Sarah Schenirer’s grave in Kraków’s Jewish cemetery, which had been razed when the Plaszow concentration camp was built. A large contingent of Bais Ya’akov students and teachers from the United States and Israel attended the rededication ceremony’; see Weissman, Schenirer.
\textsuperscript{79} The final story of the Pappenheimian home for endangered girls in Isenburg told by Marion Kaplan sounds very sober: ‘On Crystal Night, November 10, 19238, the home was attacked by Nazi who forced the terrified residents to watch as two of the houses were burned down. The next day the children were brought to an orphanage in Frankfurt
Bertha Pappenheim herself and her ‘dubious’ activities will continue to perplex her spiritual offspring in our secularized era. Her own commitment proves that her thesis ‘the Jewish feminists stemmed from families which identified with liberal Judaism and sought to assimilate’ was not correct. If the places of activity of Jewish feminists are identified as the centers of Jewish Enlightenment, it is perhaps forgotten that these very same localities were also the bastions of German Jewish Orthodoxy. It is evident that in order to fight for women’s rights and against prostitution, Jewish women did not necessarily have to be liberal in outlook and assimilated. On the other hand, the work of Sara Schenirer shows that East European Jews were not only passive objects of Western Jewish or Reformed Jewish social welfare.

Translated from the German by Bill Templer

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and the older girls and employees moved into one house. The house was closed permanently in March 1942. Its inhabitants were sent to the concentration camp at Theresienstadt. The houses, one intended by Jewish feminists to protect young women, were turned over to the Hitler youth”, in Kaplan, Feminist Movement, p. 136.

Irmgard M. Fassmann, ‘Jüdinnen in der deutschen Frauenbewegung 1865-1919’. In Julius Carlebach (ed.), Zur Geschichte der jüdischen Frau in Deutschland (pp.147-165) (Berlin, 1993), p. 148. However, this statement can be accurate on one condition: it must be restricted solely to refer to Jewish feminists in the German women’s movement.


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