

# German-Jewish migration to Sweden - Interdisciplinary Perspectives on History, Identity & Religion

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## English abstracts for papers given in German

Thursday, November 6

### Keynote II: Professor Dr. Helmut Müssener, UU:

*Schwedisch-deutsch-jüdische Beziehungen.  
Eine Desideratenarie*

Swedish-German-Jewish Relations. A Desideratum.

In my lecture, I incorporate the current state of research and compose a catalog of various questions that, as far as I know, are still awaiting an answer. I postulate that the formulation in the invitation to the conference, which speaks of *frequent connections between Swedish and German Jewry* (italics mine) is an understatement. Rather, we should be speaking about *very close and regular contacts*, which were the case for a large percentage of Swedish Jewry up until World War II. Moreover, the question will be raised as to how and by whom the object of research is to be defined. The first three sentences from the memoirs of Gunilla Palmstierna Weiss play an important role here: *I've often asked myself why Peder Herzog, my great-grandfather on my mother's side, is never mentioned in the research on the history of Jews in Sweden. Why did the established citizenry of Stockholm consider him a Jew, but not the Jews themselves, who, like him, began settling in Stockholm in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century? He was born in Niederwiesen/Oppenheim near Mainz in 1838.*

Then I will present a short bibliographic overview of Swedish secondary literature up to now and segue to open questions about the history of Jewish immigration from German-speaking Central Europe from its very beginnings, though I will first deal with the years after 1933. There is talk about the loss of sources, the neglect of classic positivistic research in Sweden, the overemphasis on theory and method and a pronounced Swedish flagellantism when speaking of refugee policy after 1933, whereas the lobbying of Parliament, the government, official offices and public opinion on behalf of the expelled and acts of solidarity with them have largely receded to the background. I also point to the importance of the *Judisk Tidskrift*, which from 1933-1948 shows the close connection between Swedish and German Jewry, as well as the significance of German culture for the paper's readership.

Afterward, the period between 1774 and 1933 will be discussed, at first concerning the uncertain data on the size of the early immigration. The insufficient mapping of the immigration routes, the lack of research on genealogy and family networks, as well as the fact that Swedish research has almost always dealt exclusively with conditions within Sweden all play a role here.

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Afterward I will tell the story of the Swedish epithet *die dummen Schweden* [the stupid Swedes] which leads to the problem of under what circumstances and according to whom does a “German Jew” become a “Swedish Jew” and how, up into the 20<sup>th</sup> century, “German” stood for “Jew”. The phrase was coined in 1864 by a Swedish journalist in a satire magazine, possibly taken after a Danish example, and was said to be uttered by a German merchant who was celebrating the victory of his fatherland with other German merchants in a fictional report. On closer analysis of the text, it becomes clear that he and his companions are all German Jews. This equivalency would remain valid until after 1920, as several quotes from the Swedish work of Lars M Andersson demonstrate: *When the epithet “die dummen Schweden” is used, it serves as a signal for “Jewish” and identifies the speaker as “Jewish” and the words “die dummen Schweden” is often put into “the Jew’s” mouth, to emphasize that he profits from the stupidity of the Swedes as well as the conclusive When you think about how “German” and “Jew” are often used synonymously in Swedish satire magazines.*

On the margins of my catalog of problems and questions, I also explore the question of if and to what extent the Jewish Austrian authors Franzos and Sacher-Masoch influenced the image of Eastern European Jews in Sweden in the years after 1875 with their successful books, and if it was even possible for Jews; for example the 1/16 Jew Sven Hedin, to ever become Swedish before 1933, or if they had to remain German forever.

The lecture concludes with the claim that Sweden and the Jews in Sweden could serve academic research as a laboratory for questions of assimilation and integration.

### **Session III: Refugees from Nazi Germany & Swedish Immigration Policy II**

Dr. Irene Nawrocka, ÖAW:

*Der deutschsprachige Bermann-Fischer Verlag (S. Fischer) in Stockholm und Gottfried Bermann Fischer in Stockholm und Gottfried Bermann Fischers Zusammenarbeit mit der Verlegerfamilie Bonnier, 1938 – 1948*

#### **The publisher Gottfried Bermann Fischer (S. Fischer) and his involvement with the Swedish Bonnier family of publishers in Stockholm (1938 – 1948)**

The S. Fischer Verlag publishing house was founded in 1886 by Samuel Fischer in Berlin. Fischer published authors such as Hugo von Hofmannsthal, Arthur Schnitzler, Felix Salten and Hermann Hesse and was considered to be *the* publisher of Naturalism. Many Scandinavian authors like Jan Peter Jacobsen, Arne Gaborg, Ellen Key, Gustav af Geijerstam, Henrik Ibsen and Hermann Bang could also be found on his program. For his contributions to Scandinavian literature, Samuel Fisher was named a “Royal Swedish Court Bookseller” by the Swedish King Oscar II.

In May 1933 after the Nazis took over power in Germany, there were public book burnings of works by “undesirable” authors and the “first official black list” of authors whose works were to be banned from the bookshelves. The 131 names on the black list included the S. Fischer authors Jakob Wassermann, Klaus Mann, Alexander

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Lernet-Holenia and Arthur Schnitzler. Numerous writers such as Alfred Döblin, Thomas Mann and Bertolt Brecht left Germany.

Already in the spring of 1933, the first publishing houses in exile appeared. These offered the “undesirable” authors the chance to publish their works in the original outside of Nazi Germany. Two of the most important of these publishers, Querido and Allert de Lange were founded in Amsterdam.

The Bermann-Fischer Verlag in Stockholm became the third significant publisher of German language exile literature. With the help of the Bonnier publishing family, they were able to continue working in Europe even after the Germans marched into Holland, Denmark and Norway in April/May 1940. They published books by Franz Werfel, Carl Zuckmayer, Stefan Zweig and even the Stockholm complete edition of the Austrian dramatist Hugo von Hofmannsthal and Thomas Mann.

The S. Fischer Verlag was able to continue publishing largely undisturbed in the first months after the Nazi takeover; however, it was expected that the publishing house would be shut down at any moment. Jewish publishers realized that working in Nazi Germany would not be possible for much longer. Joseph Goebbels, Propaganda Minister and President of the Reich Chamber of Culture, intended to remove Jews from cultural institutions, while at the same time maintaining financially profitable institutions via so-called “Aryan takeovers”, i.e. a takeover by a non-Jewish approved owner.

However, it was only after the death of Samuel Fischer in 1934 that his son-in-law Gottfried Bermann Fischer was able to enter into negotiations with the Reich Ministry concerning relocating the publishing business abroad. The house was split into two parts, with one part allowed to relocate. The partial transfer of the publishing house into non-Jewish ownership allowed the Propaganda Ministry to continue to present the well-known S. Fischer Verlag abroad as the leading address for German literature. The rights of the undesirable authors and the book warehouse would be transferred abroad. The remainder in Germany was to be taken over by Peter Suhrkamp.

Gottfried Bermann Fischer founded the Bermann-Fischer Verlag publishing house in Vienna, but was forced to flee Austria in March 1938. Due to the developments in Austria, many German language authors who had turned to Austrian publishers due to the Nazi cultural policies in Germany were left without a publisher.

Bermann Fischer had to act quickly not to lose the rights to his authors and contacted Karl Otto Bonnier. The Albert Bonnier publishing house in Stockholm could look back on a long tradition as a family business, like S. Fischer. The Bonnier family, who were of Jewish extraction themselves, was prepared to come to Gottfried Bermann Fischer's aid. They published such German language authors such as Hermann Hesse and Thomas Mann in Swedish translation. They decided to co-found a German language publishing house in Sweden. According to Swedish law, Gottfried Bermann Fischer, as a foreign citizen, was not allowed to be the majority shareholder of the company, so that the Bonnier family would receive 51% of the joint stock capital for legal reasons.

The employees, small in number, were mostly emigrants from Germany and Austria. The two most important were Justinian Frisch, Lise Meitner's brother-in-law, and Walter Singer. The new establishment of the publishers in Stockholm was viewed with suspicion in Nazi Germany as competition with their approved Reich German books was feared.

In April of 1940, Gottfried Bermann Fischer was arrested for anti-Nazi activities and subsequently deported. He emigrated to the U.S.A. and founded the English language

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L. B. Fischer Publishing Corporation in New York, for which the Bonnier family also provided financial backing.

In the absence of the publisher, the Bermann-Fischer publishing house continued working in Stockholm during the war with the financial support of the Bonnier family. Toward the end of the war, the production was expanded for the German language book market. However, the anticipated opening of the market did not occur and the books produced could not be imported by Germany or Austria. In April 1947, Bonnier sold his shares in the Bermann-Fischer Verlag and the company headquarters relocated to Amsterdam.

Through their involvement in the Bermann-Fischer Verlag in Stockholm, the Bonnier publishing family made a significant contribution to the creation of German language exile literature.

Dr. Izabela Dahl, GU:

*Die Station des Lebens.*

*Deutsche jüdische Alma Maters Töchter im schwedischen Exil*

The academic careers of women in Germany began with their general admission to study at the universities, which started in 1909 and with their right to Habilitation, which was introduced in 1921. On April 7<sup>th</sup> 1933 the Law for the Restoration of the Professional Civil Service was adopted in German Reich and the dismissals from the German research centers and universities enforced Jewish scientists of international reputation, professors of every discipline as well as a large number of younger men and women who were Privat-Dozents and assistants to search for continuation of life and work abroad. In my presentation I will argue that the changed political circumstances and the prelude to the Holocaust affected men and women in a different manner. An expression for the difference is the inauguration of the first monument for a female Jewish scientist in Germany, Lise Meitner, as late as in summer 2014.

The main focus of my presentation will deal with the question what the exile meant to this new group of scientists and intellectuals. Taking some examples in individual biographical sketches of intellectual women in Swedish exile, I will emphasize on three main topics in order to avoid a purely performance-related consideration of the exiled women lives: the organization of the everyday life, the challenge of language and exile as a new sphere for the continuation of the professional work.

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## Session IV: Kindertransporte

MA Merethe Aagaard Jensen, IJGÖ:

*Die Rettung jüdischer Kinder und Jugendlicher nach Schweden betrachtet aus einem skandinavischen Blickwinkel*

„The Rescue of Jewish Children and Youths to Sweden from a Scandinavian Perspective“.

The speaker is currently writing her dissertation at the University of Vienna on the topic of the refugee children's transports for the rescue of Jewish children and youths from Austria to Scandinavia from 1938 to 1940. Focussing on Sweden, she presents her preliminary research results of this trans-national and trans-organizational research project in this lecture.

In June 1938, the political and bureaucratic decision makers of the Scandinavian countries held a conference to coordinate their approach to refugee problems. Regarding the Jewish refugee children not accompanied by parents, they expressed their concern that it would not be possible to “get rid of them” again as their natural parents could not emigrate or their foster parents became too attached to the children. The residence of Jewish children and youths in Scandinavia therefore was only thought to be a temporary solution up to when their parents had managed to build a life for themselves in a third country and could take care of their children again. In case of the participants of the Youth Aliyah a speedy emigration to Palestine was expected.

About 330 Austrian Jewish children and youths were part of a larger group of approx. 1,000 Jewish refugee children from the German *Reich* in Scandinavia, who had escaped national-socialist persecution. By order of July 3, 1938, the German nationality was introduced to all Austrians, registering Austrian Jewish refugee children as Germans in the official records. However, this definition brought from the outside does not state how the persons concerned defined themselves or to what they felt associated to. Their positive memories, especially concerning Vienna, were always connected to a strong feeling of rage and grief considering the traumatic experiences they had to make after the so-called *Anschluss* of Austria to the German *Reich* in March 1938. Even in March 1938, the persecution of the Jews in Austria began with tremendous brutality from the gentile population and the new authorities. In Germany, by contrast, the persecution exacerbated for years. Thus, a distinct Austrian experience can be argued. Despite the traumatic experiences the sense of identification with Austria continued in the countries of emigration.

The rescue of Jewish children and youths to Scandinavia was accomplished by aid organizations which had to vouch for them and which had to provide for their subsistence as not to impose on the respective countries. The rescue of Jewish children and youths to Scandinavia started already with a transport of 20 children to Norway in the summer of 1938. After the November *pogrom*, 90 children and youths came to Sweden through the Jewish communities in Vienna and Stockholm and 40 through the Youth Aliyah. In addition, approx. 100 boys and girls, aged eighteen or younger, came to the country with the help of the “Swedish Israel Mission”. The “Nansen Help” brought four boys to Norway and 80 youths were brought to Denmark

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through the Youth Aliyah. In 1942 and 1943, Sweden became the second refuge country for the Jewish refugee children, who were previously rescued to Norway and Denmark, unless they had not travelled on or had been arrested and deported by the Germans.

The aid organizations had many meeting points and held contact with each other. This is why they can be considered as an aid network of sorts. Firstly, the individual aid organizations used the achievements concerning refugee problems of organizations in other Scandinavian countries to positively influence the decision makers in their own countries. Secondly, the organization of the refugee children's transports and the subsequent care for the children in the Scandinavian countries made numerous quick and effective solutions necessary, which required cooperation. Thirdly, frequently individuals were involved in more than one aid organization and were in contact with various other organizations. For Sweden, Eva Warburg can be named by way of example. She worked for the children's division of the Jewish community in Stockholm and at the same time was a representative of the Youth Aliyah in Sweden. Considering the care for Jewish children and juveniles in Scandinavian countries, the involvement of the members of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom is a common denominator. In Sweden, the members of the Women's League collected money for this support work. They were involved in the allocation of children and youths, who were entrusted to the Jewish community and the Swedish Israel Mission, to foster families. In addition, these women were also actively involved in the founding and operation of the refugee home for girls in Göteborg.

### **Session V: Biographies, Life's work, Impacts II**

Dr. Anna-Dorothea Ludewig, MMZ:

*„Hier oben in der Nähe des Polsternes ist die Einsamkeit zu Hause.“ Nelly Sachs (1891–1970) im schwedischen Exil*

“Loneliness is at home up here near the Polar Star”

Nelly Sachs (1891-1970) in Swedish exile

Nelly Sachs is both one of the most well-known and least-known poets of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Her significance as a poet is undisputed; her work received numerous prizes, in 1966 the Nobel Prize in Literature. A literature prize is named after her, as well as schools and streets and in this way she remains present in German history, in the everyday life of the country that, after the Shoah, she never wanted to set foot in again. This is one side, the public side of Nelly Sachs, yet there is also the person of Nelly Sachs, as inaccessible as her poetry. She was born Leonie Sachs in Berlin in 1891 to a secular Jewish family and died in Swedish exile in 1970. She had rarely ever left her birthplace and hometown and it was hard for her to become accustomed to her new surroundings when she had to flee the Nazi terror at the age of 48. “Exile is a disease”, according to Hilde Spiel, and this was the destiny that Nelly Sachs shared with many other refugees from Nazi Germany. Homesickness, (voluntary) isolation, refusal to acculturate, feelings of guilt and unresolved trauma are only some of the factors leading to sickness and death, often even to suicide. Her instable psychological and physical constitution, as well as her advanced age, made it more

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difficult for her to feel comfortable in Sweden. She remained largely passive and resigned herself to her fate. She continued to carry on only for the sake of others, particularly for her mother. Sweden was not to become her home, but she was able to find access through individual contacts and not least through Swedish poetry, which she got to know through her translations of it. In contrast to her passivity, which she herself always emphasized, there is her great and powerful poetic work, which was almost all written during her time in exile, and which brought her international acclaim; late, but still in her lifetime. This contradiction between her life and work remains indissoluble. What can be said is that Nelly Sachs, expelled from Germany with nothing more than a Swedish transmigration visa, did find a home: not in Berlin and not in Sweden, but in her work. She lives in words.

Ms. Anne Weberling, MMZ:

Isaak Feuerring – A Zionist Biography between Germany, Sweden and Palestine

In scientific research concerning Zionism in Germany and Sweden, Isaak Feuerring goes largely unnoticed or is merely mentioned in footnotes. This sort of neglect is deplorable, as Feuerring had important impacts on the development of Zionism in Germany, Sweden and Palestine.

Born in 1889 in Zboriv, Galicia, he came to Halberstadt in Germany at the age of ten following his grandfather R. Shlomo Cohen who was, at that time, rabbi of the Klaussynagogue. After graduating from school, he started an apprenticeship at the prestigious metal trading company Aron Hirsch & Sohn, where he soon assumed a leading position. On the company's behalf he was sent to Sweden, where he opened up a new branch of trade. In 1917 he founded the "Skandinaviska Malm Och Metallaktiebolaget" in Stockholm and later became a Swedish citizen due to his business. He transferred his office to Stockholm and settled temporarily in the Swedish capital from 1917 until 1922. Soon he associated with the Stockholm Zionists and took an active part in Scandinavian Zionist sets. Among other projects, he was involved in the rescue attempts of the short-lived Yiddish newspaper *Jidische Folkschtime*, got in contact with the Poale Zion in Stockholm and featured prominently in relief work in Sweden during World War I for the Jews in Northern Palestine and Constantinople. During his five years in Sweden, he served as an informant and mediator for the representatives of the World Zionist Organization and was a very successful fundraiser who enabled the realization of major projects. His Swedish company came to know a lot of economic success and was in existence even after Feuerring's death. Despite his success as a businessman, Feuerring depicted his profession as secondary in nature, as he was, above all, an ardent Zionist. His involvement in the Zionist cause started at an early age. In Halberstadt, he was one of the founders of the Herzl-Bund in 1912, an association with the objective of gathering young men working mainly in commercial occupations and promoting the Zionist idea among them. Starting in 1913 as the delegate of the local Zionist group in Halberstadt, Feuerring henceforth attended several Zionist Congresses, either as a Swedish or German delegate, and took an active part in the finance and budget committee. Upon his return from Stockholm in 1922, he married Gertrud Falck and

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settled in Berlin, where he directed another metal trade company. As a Zionist, he established his reputation as an expert for economic questions concerning Palestine. He was part of the executive and finance committee of the Zionist Federation for Germany (Zionistische Vereinigung für Deutschland) and member of the board of directors of the Palestine Land Development Company. Feuerring advocated a pragmatic Zionism. The strife for Palestine was not some theoretical ideal confined to the realm of thought, but immigration was an actual target to be worked for on a daily basis. To him, success in one's profession played a key role in it. Already in 1920 he purchased a building ground on the Carmel. In 1934, he eventually immigrated to Palestine with his wife and children and settled in Jerusalem, where he founded a bank. He still kept his businesses in Europe, most importantly the company Sweden, which would later be directed by his wife and son. On December 26th, 1937, at the early age of 48, Isaak Feuerring died in Jerusalem. He left his wife a legacy for a clearly defined Zionist purpose to be decided on by herself. In memory of her husband, Gertrud Feuerring thus founded the moshav Beit Yitzhak in 1939 for German Jews from the middle classes.

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