

**Citizenship, Equality and Civil Society -
The 200th Anniversary of the Prussian
Emancipation Edict for the Jews 1812**

Veranstalter: Institute for the History of German Jews, Hamburg; University of Hamburg; Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, Israel; Leo Baeck Institute Jerusalem; Minerva Humanities Center, Tel Aviv University; Franz Rosenzweig Minerva Research Center, Hebrew University of Jerusalem; Richard Koebner Minerva Center for German History, Hebrew University of Jerusalem; Centre for German Jewish Studies, University of Sussex

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Bericht von: Jan Kühne, Center for German Studies, Rosenzweig Minerva Research Center, Hebrew University, Leo Baeck Institute, Jerusalem

“There is, however, no Then, which – at the same time – would not be a Now,” wrote German-Jewish literary scholar Hans Mayer about the annulation of Jewish-German passports in 1938, which had, once and for all, turned him and all German Jews into „Germans Until Further Notice“, so Mayer in 1984. His observation in hindsight pointedly sums up the intention underlying this major international conference marking the occasion of the 200th anniversary of the “Prussian Emancipation Edict for the Jews - 1812“. In his opening remarks at the Leo Baeck Institute, SHMUEL FEINER (Ramat Gan) outlined the task of the conference, i.e. to connect the *Prussian Emancipation Edict for the Jews* from 1812, via the *Nuremberg Laws* from 1935, with the year 2013. The Edict and its history might serve as a test case for contemporary problems of citizenship and equality in civil society and could help inspire their solutions. The keynote lecture by REINHARD RÜRUP (Berlin) presented a historical survey of the circumstances and consequences of the 1812 Edict, balancing both the „underplayed and overestimated“ importance usually attributed to it. Although the Edict was not put into practice consistently, and its political nature was ambivalent, Rürup claims the Edict was a success, for until 1933, no other country but Germany had such positive significance for Jews. DORON AVRAHAM (Ra-

mat Gan) agreed as to the ground-breaking nature of the edict, but argued that it aimed at the creation of political and constitutional uniformity of the Prussian state in the spirit of enlightened and rational political conduct.

The second panel presented retrospective evaluations of Jewish emancipation by Jewish intellectuals in the interim between both World Wars, so for example by one of the first German female historians, Selma Stern. Her study *„Der Preussische Staat und die Juden“* was analyzed in the context of the *Akademie für die Wissenschaft des Judentums* by IRENE AUE-BEN-DAVID (Jerusalem), who examined its motives and showed how Stern’s perspective on Jewish emancipation was rooted in its time, thus depicting it as “an uncompleted historiography of an uncompleted emancipation.“ GUY MIRON (Jerusalem) analyzed re-evaluations of the emancipation process in the German-Jewish press between 1933 and 1938, and anniversary celebrations of the Edict, as in 1912, which brought Jewish liberals closer to the Zionist discourse through a reassessment of fundamental common values.

YFAAT WEISS (Jerusalem) opened the second day of the conference at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem on Mt. Scopus. After a formal introduction, Weiss, pointing towards the neighboring Palestinian village Issawiya, emphasized the urgency of dealing with the concepts of citizenship, equality, and civil society today. With the transition from a minority in other countries to a constitutive majority in their own state, so Weiss, Jews cannot avoid facing similar challenges in relation to other minorities. For MIRIAM RÜRUP (Hamburg) the legal and metaphorical aspects of statelessness are paradigmatic traits of Jewish identity and its discourse. Rürup showed how Jewish statelessness became an asset in the creation of the state of Israel – the first real measure and course of action taken by the UN after 1945, which opened a chapter of changing concepts in international politics. DIETER GOSEWINKEL (Berlin) described Jewish attitudes towards the concept of citizenship and traced a development from the 1812 Edict to the *Nuremberg Laws* of 1935 in Germany, oscillating between the principles of belonging and of descent, eventually reinforcing the

latter through nationalization of citizenship. Both Rürup and Gosewinkel exposed tensions between exclusion and inclusion inherent in German and Israeli notions of citizenship that threaten to undermine the meaning of citizenship itself.

For DORON AVRAHAM (Ramat Gan), responses to the 1812 Edict revealed Christian reservations – some of them of more secularized and rational nature – regarding emancipation and the Jews' ability to integrate into general society. In contrast to these reactions by elites, MICHAL SZULC (Potsdam) analyzed Jewish responses in the Prussian East „from below“ that usually did not read the Edict as emancipatory. Rather, most Jews perceived it as yet another penetrating edict, according to which citizenship was reduced merely to economic aspects. In the Jewish Orthodox Elite of Posen, the Edict even caused a crisis, as ELIEZER SARIEL (Haifa) showed. Orthodox Rabbis identified it with reform measures and fought vigorously against its influence in the orthodox community. However, this rejection was not caused by the Edict itself, but by a general fear of any changes in traditional society. The panel concluded by encouraging further research in correspondences, translations, public announcements, etc.

In a panel on Language and Education, GRIT SCHORCH (Bayreuth) analyzed interrelations between multi-lingualism and non-nationalist notions of equality and citizenship in the thought of Leopold Zunz, who displayed an equality, which advocated both German and Hebrew as legitimate languages and paradigms for different national concepts. However, by demanding the „eradication“ of Yiddish as a „corrupt language“, he exemplified the degree to which the Edict was adopted. ANDREAS BRÄMER (Hamburg) took a thorough look at the development of the Jewish elementary school system in Prussia. Traditional Jewish education proved to be persistent in absence of any concrete program in the Edict for restructuring Jewish education. A normative turning point was reached in 1824, when instructions designed to establish a Jewish elementary school system under state control came about. Their implementation also contributed to a strengthening

of Jewish identity, while governmental Jewish elementary schools soon disappeared as victims of their own success: assimilation.

In a panel dedicated to relationships between economy and citizenship, GIDEON REUVENI (Sussex) demonstrated how economic views inform concepts of citizenship, arguing that in his rejection of what eventually became a prevailing distinction in modern times between productive and non-economic expansion and civic freedom, what he calls “marketplace citizenship“, which dominated Jewish notions of citizenship until 1933. SHARON GORDON (Jerusalem) elaborated on the function of money in 19th century society, i.e. the strengthening of attachments between citizens and state, and its consolidation of economy. Tackling the politicization of money in modernity, Gordon depicts it as an antinomy to the civil state, illustrating the ambivalent role of Jewish key figures in emancipation, so easily mistaken for the extension of mere court privileges.

The second part of the conference took place in Hebrew and was dedicated to „Citizenship Then and Now: Germany 1812 - Israel Today“. It was opened by a public symposium. After special acknowledgements, MICHAEL MERTES (Jerusalem) and BENEDIKT HALLER (Tel-Aviv) emphasized lessons drawn from German history that resulted in an ambivalence towards the notion of the nation state. They pointed towards challenges shared by both Germany and Israel, e.g. questions concerning its ethnic and religious minorities. SHMUEL FEINER (Ramat Gan) emphasized in his introduction the price German Jews had to pay for their emancipation, i.e. the loss of identity and lives. YFAAT WEISS (Jerusalem) chaired the following panel discussion with MOSHE ZIMMERMANN (Jerusalem) and MORDECHAI KREMNITZER (Jerusalem). Regarding the concepts of allegiance and citizenship, Weiss inquired into the comparability of German notions of citizenship in the past with Israeli notions in the present. Accordingly, Zimmermann, Kremnitzer and Weiss discussed the premises upon which such comparisons would be possible, e.g. the relation of modern democracies to self-conscious minorities; the nationalization of religious conflict; the con-

cept of „belated nation“; the instability of territorial borders; the creation and promotion of bogeyman images in public consciousness; the concept of national community; the interdependence between military service and citizenship. However, in regard to Israel's need for self-defense, Israeli social activism, the lack of official expulsion policies for minorities, and differing concepts of citizenship, limits of the comparison between Germany and Israel were marked, and the need for flexibility in perspective was emphasized. A passionate plea by Kremnitzer for *Zivilcourage* concluded the discussion and marked the dramatic climax of the conference.

A historical survey by RIVKA FELDHAJ (Tel Aviv) describing the development of the concept of citizenship opened the seventh panel. RACHEL LIVNEH-FREUDENTHAL (Jerusalem) spoke about the role of Jewish intellectuals in the emancipation process. Highlighting the political engagement of the *Verein für Cultur und Wissenschaft der Juden*, this Jewish engagement was presented as a role model for the creation of equality in civil rights in Israel, too. RAIF ZREIK (Haifa) posed rhetorically the question: „After all, what's wrong with the Jewish state.“ In his answer, after a provocative analysis of Israeli self-perception and Zionist state-ideology, he claimed that the Jewish state lacks fundamental properties of a civil state and emphasized the need to address immanent suffering. YOSSI YONAH (Beer-Sheva) highlighted the role of civil society as opposition and displayed its activities in Israel, thereby advocating the ideal of separation between state and civil society.

AYA ELYADA (Jerusalem) contributed in the panel on Language and Society a historical analysis of attitudes towards Yiddish during the emancipation. She exemplified the intrinsic connection between linguistic dimensions of emancipation and equality, as well as civil and human rights. Stigmatization of both Hebrew and Yiddish went together with social and political discrimination and created obstacles for participating in the German cultural sphere. Is this status of Yiddish in German states during the 19th century comparable to that of Arabic in Israel? An answer gave RAIF ZREIK (Haifa) [lecture in place of

ABEER BAKER (Haifa)]. He emphasized the absence of any systematic Hebrewization of Arabs in Israel. However, while Israel legitimized Arab schools, no systematic development of a bi-lingual state exists, neither a will to emancipate minorities in Israel, nor any serious attempt to discuss the question of Arabic in Israel, for it falls, so Zreik, outside of Israeli grammar.

Addressing the relation between Religion and Citizenship, DIRK SADOWSKI (Braunschweig) presented the historical development from the 1782 edict of tolerance by Joseph II. to the 1812 Edict. The ambivalent natures of both edicts became apparent, i.e. their presentation of anti-Jewish measures as emancipatory measures for the purpose of „civilising“ Jews. However, as soon as Jews internalized these educational measures their love affair with German *Bildung* began. French *laïcité* was a starting point for AVNER BEN AMOS (Tel Aviv) to address structural and historical differences in comparison with the development of Israel as a nation and its ethnic-based citizenship. On the basis of case studies about child-adoptions and inter-religious marriages in Israel, MICHAEL KARAYANI (Jerusalem) presented an intriguing portrayal of majority-minority relations in Israel, thereby showing how the Israeli restrictions on inter-religious adoptions actually protect the Palestinian minority; and how both peoples perceive themselves as minority.

Relationships between Religion and the Public Sphere were the subject of the tenth panel. TOMER PERSICO (Tel Aviv) reviewed two examples of friction between religious law and language on the one hand, and civil/military law on the other. The reluctance to allow for religious language in the public sphere, he argued, originates in the legislative need of a shared logical view – the creation of a „common sense“. ELIEZER DON YEHIYA (Gan) showed the dialectic development of religious attitudes in Zionism, especially after the Six Days War, when first messianic tendencies appeared in the religious Zionist community. Recent decades, in turn, witness a retreat from radical messianism and political radicalism. SHLOMO TIKOCHINSKY (Jerusalem) researched the

Ultra-Orthodox society and its ambivalent ways of partaking in the Israeli civil and political sphere. Whereas an increasing „Israelization“ of these *Haredim* can be observed in recent years, this development is accompanied by further seclusion of other segments in their society.

The subject of the last panel was “The Tyranny of the Majority”. With 1812 as a pretext, MATAN ORAM (Tel Aviv) addressed the anomalies of Israel as a civil state, i.e. the absence of fixed borders, of a constitution, and of the separation between state and religion. He perceived a danger of apartheid in Israel, especially for Palestinians as victims of ethnic discrimination. TAMAR HOSTOVSKY BRANDES (Kiryat Ono) addressed the absence of collective rights for minorities in Israel and inquired into the meaning and function of the discourse on loyalty. She presented discordant moves of the legislative with regard to minorities and emphasized the necessity to draw historical comparisons, without the blurring of distinctions between levels of comparison (e.g. mythological and judicial).

The concluding remarks and acknowledgments by Zimmermann, Brämer and Reuveni once again highlighted the complexity and scale of the conference, while pointing towards the imperative need for attentive and critical devotion to the pursuance of civil values, such as equality. Therefore, one inclusion from this well-visited and -discussed international conference could be that the process of emancipation has not yet ended, even though the Jewish nation might appear to have emancipated itself from former host-countries. It has to deal with the fact that it has become a host-country itself.

Conference Overview:

Part 1: 19th Century Germany

Panel 1: Welcome and Introductory Remarks

Shmuel Feiner (Bar Ilan University / Leo Baeck Institute Jerusalem)

Opening Lecture

Reinhard Rürup (Technische Universität Berlin): The Prussian Law of 1812 and the Ambivalences of Jewish Emancipation in Germany

Commentator: Doron Avraham (Bar Ilan

University)

Panel 2: Jewish Emancipation Ex-Post

Irene Aue-Ben-David (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem): Selma Stern’s Study „Der Preussische Staat und die Juden“ in the Context of the Akademie für die Wissenschaft des Judentums

Guy Miron (Shechter Institute of Jewish Studies, Jerusalem): Post Factum: German Jews under Nazi Rule Reflect about their Foregone Emancipation

Chair: Anja Siegemund (Leo Baeck Institute Jerusalem)

Panel 3: On Citizenship and the Jews

Opening: Yfaat Weiss (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem)

Miriam Rürup (Institute for the History of German Jews, Hamburg University): The Citizen and its Other - Stateless Jews and the Concept of Citizenship

Dieter Gosewinkel (Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin für Sozialforschung): Citizenship in 19th and 20th Century Germany

Panel 4: The 1812 Edict - Responses

Doron Avraham (Bar Ilan University): The Nationalization of Judaism - Challenging the Edict’s Concept of Judaism and Emancipation

Michal Szulc (University of Potsdam): Jewish Responses in the Prussian East to the Emancipation Edict

Eliezer Sarel (Sha’anani College, Haifa / Oholei College of Katzerin): The Fear of Being Equal - The Sense of Crisis among Posen Jewish Orthodox Elite after the Edict

Chair: Andreas Brämer (Institute for the History of German Jews, Hamburg University)

Panel 5: Language and Education

Grit Schorch (University of Bayreuth): Leopold Zunz’s Minority Language Politics

Andreas Brämer (Institute for the History of German Jews, Hamburg University): Prussia’s Jewish Educational Policy after the Edict of 1812

Chair: Gideon Reuveni (University of Sussex,

Brighton)

Panel 6: Economy and Citizenship

Gideon Reuveni (University of Sussex, Brighton): Emancipation through Consumption - Moses Mendelssohn and the Idea of „Marketplace Citizenship“

Sharon Gordon (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem): Money, the „Jewish Question“ and the Antinomy of the Civil State in 19th Century German Thought

Chair: Stefan Litt (National Library of Israel, Jerusalem)

Public Symposium

Citizenship in Germany and Israel – A Comparative Retrospective

Greetings:

Benedikt Haller, German Ambassador to Israel, deputy
Michael Mertes, Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, Israel

Opening:

Prof. Shmuel Feiner, Bar Ilan University / Leo Baeck Institute Jerusalem

Speakers:

Prof. Moshe Zimmermann, Koebner Minerva Center, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem
Prof. Mordechai Kremnitzer, The Israel Democracy Institute, Jerusalem / The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

Moderator:

Prof. Yfaat Weiss, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

Panel 7: Civil Society and the State

Opening: Rivka Feldhay (Minerva Humanities Center, Tel Aviv University)

Rachel Livneh-Freudenthal (Leo Baeck Institute, Jerusalem): The Vision of Civil Society: Jewish Intellectuals in the first Half of the 19th Century on the Freedom of Judaism and the Jews

Raif Zreik (Carmel Academic Center, Haifa / Tel Aviv University): After all, What's Wrong with the Jewish State

Yossi Yonah (Ben Gurion University, Beer Sheva): The Scope and Limits of Civil Society

in Israel

Panel 8: Language and Society

Aya Elyada (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem): On Language and Equality: German-Jewish Emancipation and Language Shift

Raif Zreik (Carmel Academic Center, Haifa / Tel Aviv University)

Chair: Sharon Gordon (Hebrew University of Jerusalem)

Panel 9: Religion and Citizenship

Dirk Sadowski (Georg-Eckert-Institute, Braunschweig): „Bildung“ and Civil Rights: The State's Educative Approach towards Jews and its Religious and Political Implications (1781-1813)

Avner Ben Amos (Tel Aviv University): Religion, Nation and Civil Society: France, Nineteenth Century / Israel, Twentieth Century

Michail Karayani (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem): All in the Family: Majority-Minority Relations and the Adoption of Children in Israel

Chair: Aya Elyada (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem)

Panel 10: Religion and the Public Sphere

Tomer Persico (Tel Aviv University): From What May Be Said to What Can Be Said: Religious Language and the Bounds of Discourse in the Public Sphere

Eliezer Don Yehiya (Bar Ilan University): Attitudes toward Religious Tolerance in Religious Zionism

Shlomo Tikochinsky (The Open University / Van Leer Institute, Jerusalem): Protest, Pragmatism, Lobbying: the Limits of the Haredi Tolerance

Chair: Moria Ben Barak (Tel Aviv University)

Panel 11: „After Many to Wrest Judgement“? - The Tyranny of Majority

Matan Oram (The Academic College of Tel Aviv-Yaffo): Minorities in Ethnic Democracy

Tamar Hostovsky Brandes (Ono Academic College): Aristotelian Equality and „Sharing

the Burden“: the Loyalty Discourse and the
Legitimization of Discrimination

Chair: Moshe Zimmermann (The Hebrew
University of Jerusalem)

Concluding Remarks:

Moshe Zimmermann (Koebner Minerva Cen-
ter, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem)

Andreas Brämer (Institute for the History of
German Jews, Hamburg University)

Gideon Reuveni (Centre for German Jewish
Studies, University of Sussex)

Tagungsbericht *Citizenship, Equality and Ci-
vil Society - The 200th Anniversary of the
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