FELIX MENDELSSOHN—GUSTAV MAHLER

Two Borderline Cases of German-Jewish Assimilation

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For my revered old Friend
Dr. Robert Weltsch

I

No more appropriate motto for this essay could be imagined than the deeply felt understanding expressed in the unforgettable words of the poet Else Lasker-Schueler:

Hab mich so abgestroemt
Von meines Blutes Mostvergorenheit...
Und immer, immer noch der Widerhall in mir,
Wenn fern im Ost
Das morsche Felsgebein,
Mein Volk
Zu Gott schreit.

This essay intends to examine two individual cases of the German-Jewish symbiosis, two borderline cases of attempted assimilation, whose protagonists have given us universally acclaimed works of art. They are extreme—or borderline—cases, because both men attempted integration, through assimilation, with German culture, not the German nation, for Mendelssohn was Prussian and Saxon, Mahler was Austrian—and both came close to the realization of it. In the case of Mendelssohn, the attempt succeeded as far as the Germans would ever permit it to succeed; in Mahler's case it failed, despite good-will on both sides. In Mendelssohn's case we find typical as well as atypical elements. He belonged to a fairly homogeneous social elite of North-German bankers and their descendants; yet his own descent from Moses Mendelssohn—who had certainly never been considered an apostate—was rather a retarding circumstance. Mahler's background was that of a petite bourgeoisie, ethnically and religiously quite separate from a society that itself was many-faceted in its religious beliefs and its everyday language, in a country that, like all of old

Austria, was anything but homogeneous and that showed no particular desire for harmonious mutual understanding.

It would be wrong to consider assimilation as a single, clear-cut phenomenon that everywhere and at all times—especially in very differently organized social environments—would develop in the same, or even in a similar, way. To be sure, the essential problem of assimilation—abandoning the Jewish community and the obligations of a Jew, combined with the wish to subordinate oneself to a different culture—can be generally defined. Yet whole worlds of differences in social organization, motivation, basic purpose, personal ethics—not to mention different starting points and different results—divide Joseph in Egypt, Josephus Flavius, his older contemporary Paul, the renegade Pfefferkorn and, let's say, Heinrich Heine. And we must not fail to take into account the categorical difference between active assimilation (*assimilare sibi aliquid*) and passive assimilation (*assimilare sese*), as formulated by Hermann Cohen and elaborated on by B. Jacob. The thesis that "there is no passive assimilation that was not preceded by active assimilation" can be easily defended.

If despite the enormous social differences and the rather important difference in time—if nevertheless an attempt is made to compare these two cases, there is good reason for it: the two personalities and their worlds did have a great deal in common; and the typical elements—the same starting-points and the same measure of achievement, the same culture and very similar ethical concepts—provide a firm framework within which an otherwise heterogeneous movement took place.

Although half a century divides the births of Felix Mendelssohn and Gustav Mahler, Mendelssohn was part of a more radical phase of assimilation than the so much younger Mahler. Not only because he was baptized when he was ten years old: even the newly wed Abraham, his father, who had settled in Hamburg, because the laws governing Jews were more liberal there, had entertained the thought of abandoning Judaism unless there were a marked change in all laws concerning Jews in the "immediate" future. This change did occur in 1811, under pressure of French policies according to which all Jews became "eingemeindet" (incorporated), yet at just that time the Mendelssohns left Hamburg and returned to Berlin, probably because Napoleon's Continental System was ruinous for their business. Much of what happened in Hamburg has not been clarified to this day. How, for instance, despite legal prohibitions, did Abraham manage to acquire real estate? That piece of land was called "Martens Muehle"

("Marten's mill"), and father Abraham mentioned it proudly when he wrote to his wife about his son's early triumphs: it seems that Felix had been conceived there. Mahler was baptized when he was 36, mainly because as a Jew he could not have attained the desired (and promised) position of director of the Vienna Court Opera. Furthermore, the families of Mendelssohn's uncles and aunts—with the exception of his uncle Joseph and his aunt Recha—had severed their connections with Judaism, while Mahler had quite a number of Jewish relatives. His grandparents were orthodox; his parents, who belonged to the lower middle class of German-speaking Moravian Jews, could be compared to the American "Conservative" Jews. This class produced a number of great talents during the nineteenth century. Mahler, though long estranged from Judaism, admitted (in conversation with the critic and journalist B. Karpath), that the decision to convert to Christianity had been very difficult. He described this step as "necessary for self-preservation", but he was fully aware of the fact that he had no spiritual homeland—perhaps he did not feel that lack in all phases of his life, but certainly in moments of deep depression. Consequently, he made a number of contradictory statements, such as these:

(1) "My eighth symphony [against his wish dubbed the "symphony of a thousand"] is my gift to the German nation."
(2) "My homelessness is threefold: as a Bohemian among Austrians, as an Austrian among Germans, and as a Jew everywhere in the world."
(3) "It is hard to imagine a dirtier creature than such a Polish Jew (Letter from Lemberg).
(4) In connection with a questionnaire about nationalist leanings, he remarked that "if he were to participate in such an enquête, a hundred voices would cry out: 'What's that Jew doing there?'" (From the diary of Ida Dehmel, the widow of Richard Dehmel.)

Mendelssohn never had to struggle with such doubts. We cannot assume, therefore, that the two men held the same principles. Quite the contrary: their external circumstances as well as their intuitive insights into their Jewishness were very different. Despite all that they had in common (which will be discussed later on), we have to take into consideration the considerable social and regional differences that influenced them. Since around 1800, passive assimilation had been much more prevalent in northern Germany, especially in Hamburg and Berlin, than in the small, tradition-laden Moravian townships—Mahler's homeland—that were proudly conscious

of their old *yešîvôt*; that remained the vanguard of Zionism and the new orthodoxy well into the twentieth century. Yet the North-German symbiosis, at least as far as music is concerned, had its own peculiarities—peculiarities which today we can contemplate only with an ironical smile. H. Methfessel, a composer of many nationalist German hymns, was for many years the popular musical director of the Reform synagogue in Hamburg. So was Carl Loewe in Stettin. The non-Jewish arranger-composer Max Bruch wrote the famous version of the Kol Nidre for cello and orchestra after it had been sung to him by his friend A.J. Lichtenstein, cantor at the synagogue in Stettin. The musical directors of many Reform synagogues were Christians, and they published their songbooks, partly in German, partly in Hebrew, until the middle of the nineteenth century. Two less well-known yet most amazing examples of this friendly collaboration originated in the later on decidedly anti-Semitic Berlin Singakademie. Its founder, K.F. Christian Fasch, was a friend and admirer of Moses Mendelssohn, and he set to music several of Mendelssohn's translations of the Psalms under the title "Mendelssohniana". A pupil of David Friedlaender wrote a Hebrew text for one of these compositions, *han-nerôt hal-lalû* for Hanukah. The original (or an early copy) is in the famous Birnbaum collection of Jewish music at the Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati; it was recorded for the first time in 1944. It was performed with great success in 1975 in New York, at the one-hundredth anniversary celebration of the Hebrew Union College. The other example is Felix Mendelssohn's composition of Psalm 100 (in German) for the synagogue in Hamburg. Strangely enough, Mendelssohn did not set his grandfather's translation to music but used a modified version of the far weaker translation by Martin Luther. But to see the different tendencies of the North-German and the Viennese Reform in their proper perspectives, a vignette of religious history might be helpful.

When Isak Noah Mannheimer was called to Vienna as "preacher" in 1825, he was still an adherent of the North-German, pro-assimilation Reform movement, which was supported by the bourgeoisie, i.e., the Jewish plutocracy. It took the enormous power of persuasion and conviction of Salomon Sulzer, who, as cantor, was actually Mannheimer's subordinate, to lead him along the path of liberal traditionalism—of which his *Einheitsgebetbuch* (Unified Prayer Book), the much copied "Vienna Model," gives eloquent testimony. In old age Sulzer still remembered with pride and satisfaction his part in changing Mannheimer's political thinking:

"... among the most beautiful memories of my life I count the moment when truth conquered the great and noble soul of the late preacher (Mannheimer), who for a long time had pursued reform thoughts of a radical nature... and he admitted to me, out of his own free will, that the course I had entered upon was the only one that was right and would lead to the desired goal." (*Denkschrift,* 1876, p. 8.) The much slower and more cautious pace of the Viennese assimilation with its attachment to familiar traditions, can be clearly seen. While in Hamburg and Berlin many bankers and merchants were already close to baptism, the Viennese financiers, all of them descendants of so-called "Toleranzjuden" (tolerated Jews) — such as the families Gomperz, Wertheimer, Bettelheim, Wertheimstein, Hofmannsthal, etc. — kept their faith with Judaism well into the second half of the nineteenth century. Thus it was possible for Dr. Moritz Guedemann, the brave Chief Rabbi of Vienna at the turn of the century, to refuse a donation of one million offered by baptized descendants of the formerly prominent moneyed aristocracy, because in return they expected that "*minyan* men" would be provided to say Kaddish on the respective anniversaries of their forebears; he is said to have refused the donation with the words: "das taet' ihnen schmecken!" [Tr. Note: a literal translation would be: "wouldn't that taste good to them!" — but the implications are much broader. Perhaps: "that'll be the day!"]

Mendelssohn, scion of famous scholars and bankers proud of their patrician descent — R. Moses Isserles and the Katzenellenbogens of Padua were among their ancestors — and Mahler, son of a "Bestandjude" (a "tolerated" distiller and seller of brandywine in the ghetto), were separated in time by half a century and socially as different as an aristocrat is from a plebeian. And yet, their individual destinies were not so different. Both were composers and conductors of international fame, both were gifted, slightly autocratic administrators. Mendelssohn headed a famous institute of music, the Leipziger Gewandhaus. He was the founder and director of a conservatory, where he also taught — albeit unwillingly. Mahler grew up in straitened, Mendelssohn in affluent circumstances. Both received a good education, Mendelssohn a slightly higher one — he had, after all, sat at the feet of Hegel. Mahler had more practical experience as an opera and theater conductor and was far more worldly. He developed his strong philosophical and, in the beginning, also political interests through systematic reading. He had hardly any ties to living Judaism, and neither he nor Mendelssohn had any real knowledge of its doctrine and theology. Yet both maintained a

certain solidarity with the destiny of the Jewish people, Mendelssohn decidedly more so than Mahler. Mahler was afraid to engage Otto Klemperer as an assistant, he felt one Jewish assistant (Bruno Walter) was enough; to hire a second one would give justifiable grounds for attack. Mendelssohn, on the other hand, not only openly acclaimed the orthodox Jew Gusikow (a *klezmer*) and called him a "terrific fellow" and a "genius," he made Ferdinand David, a childhood friend of Jewish descent, concertmaster of the Gewandhaus orchestra. Later he made his old friend Moscheles vice-president of the conservatory (which he continued to manage after Mendelssohn's early death). He extolled the British laws that granted full emancipation to the British Jews in these words:

London, 23 July 1833

...This morning they emancipated the Jews, that makes me proud, all the more so as only a few days ago they derided your shabby Posen regulations, as was right and proper. The *Times* felt very noble and opined that it was, after all, better (for us) in England, and yesterday, after a lot of Jew haters, such as Mr. Finn, Mr. Pruce, and the *Rohsche* Inglis had spewed forth all kinds of drivel, Robert Grant, who had introduced the bill, concluded by asking them whether they were there to fulfill prophecies (which was the basis of their argument) and told them that he believed in the words "Glory to God, and good will to men." And after that the ayes had it with 187 votes against 52 nayes. That was generous and beautiful, and it made me give thanks to heaven....

Here it might be mentioned as a kind of footnote that it never occurred to Mahler to compose a Psalm for a synagogue.

Both had to come to terms with anti-Semitic attacks: Mendelssohn more toward the end of his short life, Mahler always. Both reacted to such attacks with proud silence. Both married Christian women. Mahler's wife Alma Maria was by far the more interesting, but also the more controversial personality than the truly Puritan, very beautiful and elegant Cecile Jeanrenaud, whose only interest, besides her husband, her family, and her large household, was the latest fashion. She survived Mendelssohn by only seven years. Before her death she destroyed all her husband's letters, testimonials, and documents that were meant only for her. This was in sharp contrast to Mahler's memory-prone widow, who profited from such reminiscences and who, incidentally, did not always refrain from making anti-Jewish remarks. This is the extent of the external parallels and similarities, with all their divergences—due to the differences in time and in social background.

II

The often fundamental difference between the points of view of Jews who are striving for assimilation and those Germans to whose circles they wanted to be assimilated, can only be appreciated if the spiritual attitudes of the assimilating Jews are taken into account. Wherever social equality—or at least the appearance of an equally shared social life—was achieved at the time of legal emancipation or even earlier, complete assimilation soon seemed to be a *fait accompli*; where it was not achieved, Jews who wanted to become assimilated looked for acceptance in socially lower circles, and the resulting mixed marriages led in the second or third generation to complete integration into German society. In most cases of social equality, however, we find Jews who became alienated from their religion and its observance, but not from their ethnic origins and pride of family. This antinomy produced a special category of "Jewish jokes." It may be illustrated by two examples:

(1) A baptized Einjaehrig-Freiwilliger (one-year volunteer): "Why shouldn't I be made an officer? After all, I'm a grandson of Rabbi X in Y!"

(2) A well-known Disraeli anecdote also belongs in this category. The baptized MP repulsed the anti-Semitic attacks of a political opponent with the remark that his, Disraeli's, ancestors had been high priests at a time when those of his esteemed opponent painted their bodies blue and worshipped false idols.

Even such an emotion-laden poet as Heine wavered all his life between the sorrow of having to be a Jew and the arrogance of an unappreciated aristocrat of noble birth. I knew a famous conductor who was baptized when he was eighteen and who, whenever he wanted to impress his friends—Jews and non-Jews alike—brandished a beautiful golden watch and other souvenirs from his grandfather, an eminent Jewish scholar of the nineteenth century who had received these gifts from Sir Moses Montefiore and Isaac Disraeli.

These and similar reactions can also be observed in the archetypical Mendelssohn family: the baptized Abraham discussed his ancestry with Felix. His widow Lea proudly related the fact that the Prussian Academy of Science had nominated Moses Mendelssohn for membership but that Frederick II did not approve it, whereupon Moses is supposed to have said he preferred it this way; rather than to have been nominated by the King and not accepted by the Academy. We find many such cases during the long

centuries of attempted, but hardly ever fully achieved, assimilation. Even an apostate motivated by religious belief, the Apostle Paul, could naively boast that he belonged to the tribe of Benjamin who at that time existed only in legendary genealogy.

When the wish for (limited) assimilation attempted to coexist with the old religion and its laws, the attempt alone led to grave conflicts in the family and in the community. This was especially true before 1848. Many such cases have been thoroughly examined. The most interesting one is the positively paradigmatic case of the sons of *Ḥaḳam* Bernays, who took diametrically opposed paths.

As previously mentioned, assimilation proceeded faster and more easily in rich families than in middle-class or poor families—not to mention *Landjuden*, whose position was exceptional in their strenuous resistance to any degree of assimilation. But there are certain exceptions even in the plutocracy, and they have become almost proverbial: Rothschild, Warburg, Seligmann, etc. Equally exceptional are the "divided" families: descendants of famous ancestors such as the Itzigs, Cassels, Bernays—they are characteristic of German-Jewish development in the nineteenth century.

Besides religious, ethnic, and social grounds for conflict, "racial" reasons began to appear around 1880. Propagated mainly by Count Gobineau and Richard Wagner, and later by the "Rembrandt-German" Julius Langbehn, they do have an earlier history, going back to Goethe's circles (his secretary F.W. Riemer, publisher of the Goethe-Zelter correspondence, stressed and preached racial reasons for hating the Jews). A misunderstood concept of the Darwinian theories provided racial anti-Semitism with a pseudo-scientific character. Racial anti-Semitism became especially popular in Austria and reached overwhelming importance. It was no longer a question of social position, of religious controversies, not even of the alleged Jewish control over finance and press. The watchword was coined by German-Nationalist students who refused the Jews armed satisfaction (they were not worthy of being challenged to a duel) and became popular in the form of this verse:

Die Religion ist uns einerlei
In der Rasse liegt die Schweinerei
(Religion does not matter a fig
it's his race that makes him a pig)

And yet, not long before the introduction of the so-called "Waidhofener Prinzip," which barred Jews from duelling, men like Victor Adler, the musicologist Guido Adler (who, like Mahler, came from Moravia), Gustav Mahler, Siegfried Lipiner and other intellectuals of Jewish descent, who considered themselves Germans, were socializing with supporters of Georg von Schoenerer, Austria's most rabid anti-Semite. Only when the "Arier-paragraph" was more strictly applied, did Jews and descendants of Jews begin to go their separate way. But, as an old lady once told me, in Vienna one "did not like to be a Jew."

There were many ways of escape: marriage with Christians, change of name, cosmetic surgery, emigration, anonymity, to name only the most popular ones. All of them gave rise to more or less malicious jokes and anecdotes. For our purposes, perhaps the most interesting phenomenon is the name change. Within the Mendelssohn family alone, we find two well-known cases: After his baptism, Jacob Levin Salomon, the brother of Lea Salomon-Mendelssohn, called himself Bartholdy—after a long-dead mayor of Neukoeln, whose former estate he had inherited from his grandfather Daniel Itzig. After him, Abraham Mendelssohn and his descendants added Bartholdy to their name. And here it must be said that Abraham Mendelssohn wanted to persuade his son Felix to drop the name Mendelssohn altogether and to call himself Felix M. Bartholdy. He even presented him with printed calling cards. Felix, although generally an obedient son, did not comply with this wish of his august father. Another case, equally well known, is that of Itzig-Hitzig, whom Heine ridiculed in a few satirical verses:

...Alsbald nahm ich
Eine Droschke und ich rollte
Zu dem Kriminalrat Hitzig
Welcher ehmals Itzig hiess—

Als er noch ein Itzig war,
Traeumte ihm, er saeh' geschrieben
An dem Himmel seinen Namen
Und davor den Buchstaben H.

"Was bedeutet dieses H?"
Frug er sich—etwa Herr Itzig
Oder Heil'ger Itzig? Heil'ger
Ist ein schoener Titel—aber

"In Berlin nicht passend"—Endlich
Gruebelnsmued' nannt' er sich Hitzig.
Und nur die Getreuen wussten
In dem Hitzig steckt ein Heil'ger.

Lea Mendelssohn, Felix's mother, shared these sentiments: "They want so terribly much to be Christian, that means anti-Jewish, and they are so horribly bourgeois domestic, these Hitzigs, so worldly vain and money-loving, and yet everything around Eduard is so old-testamentary, you can imagine... O God! The Hitzigs are so terribly virtuous, when I'm with them I keep examining myself whether I have not recently transgressed against some command." (Unpublished letter from Lea to Felix, April 1836.) Never having forgiven her sister-in-law Dorothea Schlegel either her adultery or her conversion to Catholicism, she quoted sarcastically: "Wohl dem, der seiner Vaeter gern gedenkt!"

How frighteningly close comedy and tragedy can be we have seen during the Nazi era. Quite a few people—I personally know at least two—tried to minimize the percentage of Jewish blood by claiming that a grandmother had committed adultery with an "Arian." Such attempts to escape the Jewish fate created a paradoxical situation. The tragedy of an unsuccessful assimilation appeared to German eyes like a comedy with almost farcical features. Consequently, even the mass murders of Auschwitz and Treblinka lost their sinister character and could be accepted, with a shrug of the shoulders, as a sorrowful ending to a merry comedy. These paradoxical attitudes have not yet disappeared. They exist today in the Islamic-Arabic culture, where the Jew is seen and depicted as either a cunning, comic coward, or an infamous, dastardly assassin. Traces of this anti-Semitic comicality can already be found in Romanticism. So for instance in Wilhelm Hauff's "Geschichte von Abner dem Juden, der nichts gesehen hat" ("the story of Abner the Jew who hasn't seen anything"). The most deplorable example from the Hitler period: In 1942, two grandsons of Gerson von Bleichroeder approached the Minister of the Interior with a petition to be declared Aryans, because they had been wounded several times during World War I, had then been members of the Freikorps and "activists" during the Kapp-Putsch. ("Heil Hitler!") The petition was refused, and the two brothers managed to escape to Switzerland....[1]

1. Cf. Golo Mann, "Bismarck und sein Bankier", *Neue Zuercher Zeitung* (2 September 1978): 61-62.

We can see that the psychological causes of assimilation can hardly be separated from the outward forms they take: feelings of shame, of inferiority, hypersensitivity, arrogance, fear, opportunism, self-hatred, all are manifestations of a feeling of "not belonging." They produce different and often dissimilar effects, and it is irrelevant whether or not assimilation succeeds or fails in the first generation—which is the generation we are mainly concerned with.

III

The Case of Abraham and Felix Mendelssohn

Rarely are opposing tendencies so equally divided as they were between Felix's parents. Abraham, the second son of Moses Mendelssohn, originally wanted to fight, as a Jew, for full legal emancipation. He was against conversion not because of religious conviction—he was what in modern terminology would be called a philosophic agnostic—but for reasons of personal dignity. His wife Lea, granddaughter of Daniel Itzig, considered his thinking unrealistic. In the few published letters she wrote as a young girl (for instance, in the largely "dressed up" book *Die Familie Mendelssohn* by Sebastian Hensel) and in many later unpublished but preserved letters to her aunt Baroness Arnstein and her cousin Baroness Pereira, she appears quite openly as a radical realist—not to say opportunist. Almost all her correspondence was with Jews, baptized Jews, descendants of Jews. In the few existing letters written to people outside the family she emerges as a grateful, humble, melancholy mother of an early famous son, by no means the matriarch she is in her letters to members of the family. Even Felix, the apple of her eye, suffered—especially as a youth—under the inconsiderate, ruthless opportunism of his mother, who did not like it when he tried his talents on a-capella "church music of little importance," pieces she considered "still-born babies." This evaluation and devaluation of earnest and idealistic efforts was quite after the heart of her brother Jacob (Bartholdy), who finally succeeded in persuading Abraham to be baptized—after the "Judensturm" of 1819. On that occasion, a royal prince spit in front of the ten-year-old Felix and called in sonorous tones: "hep, hep, Judenjung."[2] This seems to have been a traumatic experience that decided the hesitant Abraham to give up his dream of full emancipation of the Prussian Jews. As previously mentioned, the young parents were

2. Cf. Vernhagen von Ense, *Denkwuerdigkeiten*, vol. 19.

resolved to convert if a dependable legislation of the Jewish problems could not be expected. After the fiasco at the Congress of Vienna, conversion was more or less agreed upon; yet Abraham still had to overcome many understandable emotional inhibitions. He had secretly provided instruction in Christian religion for his children, and soon after that princely accolade he had them baptized. He and his wife did not follow in these steps until 1822, when he could be certain that his mother-in-law, Babette Salomon, née Itzig, would not disinherit him. The august father of Felix did not show many heroic traits! Prof. Felix Gilbert, a great-grandson of the maestro, assumes that Abraham had yet another motive for conversion, which had nothing to do with questions of Weltanschauung but was of a purely legalistic nature. Daniel Itzig's *Schutzbrief* granted protection and choice of domicile to his children and children's children, but not to a fourth generation. Moses Mendelssohn's privileges extended only to his children, not even his grandchildren. Since Abraham's children were not protected by the *Schutzbrief* of their ancestors, he took the decisive step of baptism. This was no longer unusual in his family. Abraham's sisters Dorothea and Henriette had preceded him; his youngest brother Nathan was to follow him. It was the beginning of a mass flight of well-to-do Jews, whose motto seems to have been "sauve qui peut!" However one may judge this feeling of panic and the resultant actions, it is evident that Abraham managed quite adroitly to camouflage his guilt feelings, as well as his true motives—mostly with pseudo-philosophical and sophistic-moralizing arguments. Some of these arguments are reproduced in Hensel's book on the Mendelssohn family, abbreviated and somewhat "dressed up;" others can be found in the family correspondence. The following document, quoted here in its entirety, shows that Abraham wanted to extend the flight from his past to the denial of his name. It is a letter he wrote to Felix in London, in 1829. Here is that little-known letter, prefaced by some penetrating remarks of Prof. Albrecht Mendelssohn Bartholdy. They appear here in my translation.[3]

> What Felix Mendelssohn's memory associated with his name was not merely the immortal sound of his fame, which he had made for himself. He has done more than that: he has saved his name for himself and for his children's children from a grave danger; this danger came from his father Abraham.... In midst of his new and splended fame, recognition and acclamation (in

3. Off-print of *Frankfurter Zeitung*, No. 31, 31 January 1909.

London), amongst the merry bustle of his friends, he must have sat down at his lonely desk, subdued and sad, in order to defend himself against his father's accusations, so that he would once do what he otherwise never was able to accomplish, even in his music: to outrightly oppose his devotedly loved father. For Abraham had written to him in London, on July 8, 1929:

Berlin, July 8, 1829

Dear Felix:—

Today's family sheet will run full without my contribution... I will therefore write you separately because I have to discuss with you a most serious matter.

The suspicion has come to me that you have suppressed or neglected or allowed others to suppress or neglect the name which I have taken as the name of our family, the name Bartholdy. In the concert programs you have sent me, likewise in newspaper articles, your name is given as Mendelssohn. I can account for this only on the supposition that you have been the cause.

Now, I am greatly dissatisfied about this. If you are to blame, you have committed a huge wrong.

After all, a name is only a name, neither more nor less. Still, so long as you are under your father's jurisdiction, you have the plain and indisputable duty to be called by your father's name. Moreover it is your ineffaceable, as well as reasonable, duty to take for granted that, whatever your father does, he does on valid grounds and with due deliberation.

On our journey to Paris after that neck-breaking night,* you aked me the reasons why our name was changed. I gave you those reasons at length. If you have forgotten them you could have asked me about them again. If my reasons seemed unconvincing, you should have countered with better reasons. I prefer to believe the former, because I am unable to think of any reasons countervailing. I will here repeat my arguments and my views.

My grandfather was named Mendel Dessau. When my father, his son, went forth into the world and began to win notice and when he undertook the project which can not be too highly praised, that noble project of lifting his brethren out of the vast degradation into which they had sunk, and to do this by disseminating among them a better education, my father felt that the name, Moses ben Mendel Dessau, would handicap him in gaining the needed access to those who had the better education at their disposal. Without any fear that his own father would take offense, my father assumed the name Mendelssohn.** The change, though a small one, was decisive. As Mendelssohn, he became irrevocably detached from an entire class, the best of whom he raised to his own

* Abraham's remark, referring to the trip in 1825.

** (translator's note:) Mendel is an abbreviation of Emanuel (Hebr. "God is with us"), a by-name of the Messiah.

level. By that name he identified himself with a different group. Through the influence which wisely and worthily he exerted by word and pen and deed—an influence which, ever growing, persists to this day—that name Mendelssohn acquired a Messianic import and a significance which defies extinction. This, considering that you were reared a Christian, you can hardly understand. A Christian Mendelssohn is an impossibility. A Christian Mendelssohn the world would never recognize. Nor should there be a Christian Mendelssohn, for my father himself did not want to be a Christian. "Mendelssohn" does and always will stand for a Judaism in transition, when Judaism, just because it is seeking to transmute itself spiritually, clings to its ancient form all the more stubbornly and tenaciously, by way of protest against the novel form that so arrogantly and tyrannically declared itself to be the one and only path to the good.

The viewpoint, to which my father and then my own generation committed me, imposes on me other duties toward you, my children, and puts other means of discharging them into my hands. I have learnt and will not, until my dying breath, forget that, while truth is one and eternal, its forms are many and transient. That is why, as long as it was permitted by the government under which we lived, I reared you without religion in any form. I wanted you to profess whatever your convictions might favor or, if you prefer, whatever expediency might dictate. But it was not so to be. I was obligated to do the choosing for you. Naturally, when you consider what scant value I placed on any form in particular, I felt no urge to choose the form known as Judaism, that most antiquated, distorted, and self-defeating form of all. Therefore I reared you as Christians, Christianity being the more purified form and the one most accepted by the majority of civilized people. Eventually, I myself adopted Christianity, because I felt it my duty to do for myself that which I recognized as best for you. Even as my father found it necessary to adjust his name to conditions, filial devotion, as well as discretion, impelled me to adjust similarly.

Here I must reproach myself for a weakness, even if a pardonable one. I should have done decisively and thoroughly that which I deemed right. I should have discarded the name Mendelssohn completely. I should have adhered to the new name exclusively. I owed that to my father. My reason for not doing so was my long established habit of sparing those near to me and of forestalling perverted and venomous judgements. I did wrong. My purpose was merely to prepare for you a path of transition, making it easier for you that have no one to spare and nothing to care about. In Paris, when you, Felix, were about to step into the world and make a name for yourself, I deliberately had your cards engraved: Felix M. Bartholdy. You did not accept my way of thinking. Weakly enough I failed to persist. Now I only wish, though I neither expect nor deserve it, that my present intervention may not have arrived too late.

You can not, you must not carry the name Mendelssohn. Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy is too long; it is unsuited for daily use. You must go by the name of Felix Bartholdy. A name is like a garment; it has to be appropriate for the time, the use, and the rank, if it is not to become a hindrance and a laughing-stock. Englishmen, otherwise a most formal lot, change their names frequently. Seldom is anyone renowned under the name conferred at baptism. And that is as it should be. I repeat: there can no more be a Christian Mendelssohn than there can be a Jewish Confucius. If Mendelssohn is your name, you are ipso facto a Jew. And this, if for no other reason than because it is contrary to fact, can be to you of no benefit.

Dear Felix, take this to heart and act accordingly.

Your Father and Friend

Albrecht Mendelssohn Bartholdy was convinced that Felix's answer was lost, since Felix would have been very careful not to defy his father's strict command openly. Yet this writer succeeded in tracking down at least part of the missing letter. The fragment of Felix's letter—or rather a copy of it—is in the Archives of the Leo Baeck Institute in New York. It is here published for the first time.

(The beginning is missing.)

London, 16 July 1829

...Dizi asked me why it should be Bartholdy; as he understood it, you had added that name only to avoid confusion with the many other Mendelssohns in Berlin, and to avoid misunderstandings, and they all said both names together were too long, and both were hard enough to pronounce. I suggested to leave out Felix (as was done), and perhaps to write it *Mendelson* because that would be the English translation. That made them very angry and they impressed upon me for God's sake not to change *that* name in any way; the English did know this name, they knew my grandfather, and they would look upon any change with disfavor; afterwards Latour took me aside and told me that if I wanted to avoid trouble, I should follow his advice and *not change anything*....

A brief explanation: the two men named were musicians, colleagues of Felix's older friend and mentor Moscheles. Dizi was a professional harpist, Latour a pianist and composer of drawing-room music.

IV

What does this curious document mean? First: Abraham tried to be realistic, but by giving reasons of Jewish identity for his intentions, he used a highly dubious argument. Second: He wanted to claim that Felix, as a

Christian, had no right to the name of Mendelssohn, whose messianic roots (ben Emanuel, or ben Menachem) he seems at least to have suspected. He even marshalled some of Moses Mendelssohn's own thoughts, albeit somewhat distorted. And finally, he threatened his son with paternal wrath if he would not submit to his father's wishes ("as long as you are under your father's jurisdiction"). Felix, however, showed that he was made of better stuff than his father. Although he did not refuse in so many words to comply with his father's wishes, his decision prevailed. All announcements for his London concerts were in the name of Mendelssohn, not even Mendelssohn Bartholdy. Once Abraham realized how determined his son was, he was willing to compromise on Mendelssohn Bartholdy.

It seems, however, that certain guilt feelings awoke in Abraham and they prompted him to behave in curious ways. To name but two instances: When Abraham returned from a trip to France and England, he brought Felix home with him. But to surprise his wife and children, he wrote that he would bring with him a well-behaved young man by the name of Lovy. Now what made him choose this name? At that time, M. Lovy, alias Moses Glogau, alias Moses Fuerth, alias Moses Metz, etc., was the leading cantor of the Jewish community in Paris, well-known among Central- and West-European Jews. What conscious or unconscious association led Abraham to pick that name? Wife and children shall be teased and surprised—by the Jewish sounding name Lovy, as well as the identification with the son and brother.

Strange is also what, according to Felix, was the cause of his death. Riemer, Goethe's secretary and teacher at a Gymnasium, had mixed some of his own thoughts into the Goethe-Zelter correspondence (which he edited), and also in his narrative of memorable occurances in Goethe's life. Among those were some rather juicy anti-Jewish remarks which for their coarseness and maliciousness could not have found their equal—at least not among his contemporaries. For instance:

> "The principle from which the whole nation (Jewry) stems and on which it has acted is indelible; do not think that you can paint a Moor white, not even with the aid of Christian baptism, just as in the middle ages they thought they could eradicate the foetor Judaicus (Jewish stench)..."
>
> "Moege indessen der gute Schwiegerpapa (Abraham) sich das, was Boerne und Heine ueber Goethe vor den Augen des ganzen Deutschlands ausgossen, zu seiner Satisfaktion mitgeraecht, oder, wie man auch sagt, mitgerochen haben."

(May the "Dear" father-in-law [Abraham] feel that he has been avenged or, as they say "mitgerochen" [pun] by the filth, which Boerne and Heine poured over Goethe before the eyes of all Germany.) Strangely enough, the vulgar, loutish utterances did not embitter Abraham as much as the partly justified criticism of the paintings and drawings of his son-in-law Wilhelm Hensel, one of the so-called "Nazarene" painters. The abuse of his son-in-law enraged Abraham to such an extent that, as Felix claims, he suffered a heart attack while drafting his reply to Riemer. Felix, on the other hand, was so confounded by the anti-Semitic passages in the book that he wanted to travel to Weimar to call Riemer to account then and there and, if need be, "to chastise" him. His brother and sisters dissuaded him only with great difficulty. His attitude was that of a free, unfettered spirit, that of his family the "bowing down" so typical for the assimilated Jews. Here we have to take into consideration a concept that today is decisive for our sensibility but that had no meaning for those Jews who wanted to be Christians and Germans at any price: the concept of dignity. Felix was proudly aware of his dignity, and that in itself made him exceptional. Only for very few of his relatives and descendants did this concept of true dignity have any meaning—especially in the context of their Jewish descent. Perhaps his uncle Joseph and some of his descendants had it, and perhaps some of Felix's own descendants. Joseph Mendelssohn's son Benjamin, a historian, and the first editor of the works of Moses Mendelssohn, was on intimate terms with the anti-Semite Moritz Arndt. Felix's oldest son Karl Mendelssohn Bartholdy, on the other hand, had inherited some of his father's honest convictions. This brought him again and again into conflict with his uncle and guardian Paul Mendelssohn Bartholdy who was in every way the prototype of the assimilated Jew who wanted to "forget his father."

Nothing exposed the moral fiber as quickly as the attitude of a "new Christian" toward an observant Jew. It sometimes seems like a caricature of the personified "bad conscience." There was one person in Mendelssohn's life who can be considered a veritable touchstone if we observe how differently Felix and various members of his family behaved toward him. That man was a *klezmer*: the itinerant musician Michael Joseph Gusikow (1806?-1837), an instrument maker and composer, improvisor and master of his instrument. This instrument was a kind of "straw fiddle" (*stroyner tsimbl* in Yiddish). Gusikow performed in Leipzig shortly after Mendelssohn had become director of the Gewandhaus. He called Gusikow a "genius," a "terrific fellow," and "a true artist", and gave him very cordial letters of

recommendation to his family in Berlin, especially to his sister Fanny and to his mother. Their reactions were very different from his own. Fanny wrote to Klingemann on 8 February 1836:

> The rage here is a Polish Jew who is supposed to display phantastic virtuosity on an instrument that consists of bundles of straw and sticks of wood. I would not believe it if Felix hadn't written about it. I have seen him, and I can assure you that he is an uncommonly good-looking man. In dress and habit he flirts with strict Judaism and seems to have great success at court with it.
>
> ..I could quote you a very pertinent Jewish saying, but you wouldn't understand it...
>
> 12 Febr. I have heard the phenomenon play, and I assure you, without being quite as carried away as many others, he does turn all virtuosity topsy-turvy.... Very cleverly he has it [the instrument] put together in front of the audience, he seems to be a first-rate fox altogether..... We are all convinced that if father could have heard him, he would have taken great interest in him, though he would probably not have esteemed him very highly....

Felix's mother also saw in the orthodox Jew a pompous fellow who gave himself airs, although she was more sympathetic toward him. Fanny, the assimilated new Christian, was full of fury and envy because an orthodox Jew had been accepted at court. Later, after Gusikow's appearance at the Gesellschaft der Freunde (Society of Friends), Fanny was indignant: "This affair of the Polish Jew is... very good.... That churl (*Kerl*) is a sensation, but all that fuss about him tries my patience..." Why the sarcasm? Why the impatience? Why does Fanny call an artist "that churl," an expression she would normally disapprove of? Contrary to her brother, she has begun to be ashamed of her Jewishness. Felix was free of such resentments. With the warmest words he recommended Gusikow to his colleagues Ferdinand Hiller and Ignaz Moscheles. They could no longer be of any use to poor Gusikow. Suffering from tuberculosis, he died in 1837, during a concert at Aix-La-Chapelle.

Mendelssohn was not spared anti-Semitic attacks; he had to suffer them all his life. Perhaps his most crucial experience was a totally senseless, nevertheless effective critique of the first performance of Schumann's Second Symphony at the Gewandhaus. How was that possible? On November 5, 1846 Mendelssohn conducted the first performance of the Second Symphony of his friend Schumann, during the second half of the program.

The first half of the concert had started with Rossini's William Tell Overture, which was so well received that Mendelssohn found himself compelled—against his usual custom—to repeat it. An anonymous music critic of the *Leipziger Tagblatt* interpreted this as a hostile gesture against Schumann's new work. As an explanation for it, he referred to Mendelssohn's "hebraic interests." This explanation was not very plausible, since Rossini was not a Jew. He did, however, have influential Jewish friends in Paris, and that was enought to make anybody suspect of "semitic French sympathies." To accuse Mendelssohn of favoring Rossini, whom he despised, over Schumann, that in itself was a shabby piece of journalism; to embellish it with anti-Semitic touches was a demagogical trick that throws ominous light on the "freedom-loving" journalism of the *Vormaerz* (=the epoch before 1848).

As was to be expected, Mendelssohn wrapped himself in proud silence and declined to conduct Schumann's Symphony at a concert given by his wife Clara. Only the combined entreaties of Robert and Clara Schumann and his colleague Nils Gade persuaded him to relent and play the Symphony again. Yet the long-lasting effect of these libellous statements can easily be seen. The well-known German musicologist W. Boetticher falsified Schumann's diaries and published these spurious documents with a pro-Nazi slant in 1941. With the help of photostatic copies of the original documents I was able to prove that these were falsifications (in my book on Mendelssohn as well as in my Mendelssohn article in the German encylopedia *Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart*).

On the other hand, we do have positive proof of Mendelssohn's feelings of solidarity with the European Jews and their destiny. As mentioned before, at the suggestion of Rabbi Dr. Fraenkel, he composed Psalm 100 for a small orchestra and chorus for the Reform synagogue in Hamburg. My book on Mendelssohn contains the entire correspondence between Fraenkel and Mendelssohn.

We also have to bear in mind the subject matter he chose for his two great oratorios: *St. Paul* and *Elijah*. The text for *St. Paul* was planned as a kind of *apologia pro vita sua*. It is understandable that of all his son's works, this oratorio interested Abraham most. It transfigured the thinly disguised opportunism of baptism by way of an ideal prototype. Other motives led to the choice of Elijah. Jokingly Felix wrote in his letters that he would gladly have composed the Og of Bashan, or Gog and Magog, if he could have found good biblical librettos. The compiler of both texts was a friend of his

youth, the Reverend Julius Schubring, an orthodox Lutheran without the slightest knowledge of the Hebrew Bible, a theologian who at any cost wanted to arrange the text for *Elijah* christologically. He suggested various means to this end: the introduction of Peter, or John, or even Jesus—anyway, a whole retinue of barbaric anachronisms. Mendelssohn had to bring to bear all his human and artistic authority to reject these suggestions without seriously offending his friend. Felix's knowledge of the Bible was solid, but he was neither a Bible scholar nor a historian. No wonder that to any expert the libretto for the oratorio is a monstrosity; it is a mixture of religious fanaticism and pietistic drivel, resulting in a nasty dissonance. However, it would not have been possible under the best of circumstances to come up with a smooth integration of historical texts about the savage period of the Kingdom of Israel and the prophetic poetry of much later periods. The libretto for *Elijah* tries to combine totally incompatible ingredients: from the Book of Judges to the Book of Daniel and the last Psalms, the Bible encompasses about a millennium of ethical-religious development. Schubring was not aware of such a development. As far as he was concerned, there was hardly any difference between the time of Abraham and the time just before Jesus, and certainly no historical or moral development. Yet Mendelssohn had what he wanted: a text from the Old Testament. He modified and "humanized" some passages, but he could not eliminate all contradictions. How much he grieved over the resignation of the Prophet, in whom he thought to see himself, can be felt in the old synagogal melody which this master of monumental crescendos made the basic motif for the theophany, the meeting of God and Elijah; it flowed out of his pen, he was not even conscious of what it was. It is a variation of the festive melody of the "Adonai, Adonai" as it is sung on High Holy Days. He must have heard it in the synagogue when he was less than ten years old. And that was not the only time something like this happened. The twelve-year-old fledgling composer had used a melody of "Yigdal" by Leoni, an air that was often sung at that time, in one of his symphonies for strings that have only recently been published. He must have heard this melody from his father.

Such childhood memories had an influence on Mendelssohn's work that has been little noted till now, yet they helped shape his position in the German-Jewish symbiosis. In view of all the examples that have been cited here, I think one may safely say that Felix Mendelssohn felt closer to Judaism as a political-ethnic community than his father did; and he was

also a much more honest and sincere Christian. He lived the life of a conscious German and Christian and a semi-conscious Jew, in as close a proximity with the German people as they would let him. There were some remnants of old prejudices and reservations left on both sides. But on the whole, from a historical viewpoint, 130 years after his death Felix Mendelssohn has reached his goal: he has a place in the pantheon of German music.

V

Mahler and the Next Generation

Moravian Jewry, from which Mahler descended, had an unofficial caste system, an outgrowth of the Jewish quota established by Charles VI. There was a difference between "free," i.e., *priviligierten* families, who within certain limits were free to choose their domicile and had the right of settlement, and *Familianten,* i.e., families in which the oldest son was allowed to marry without any difficulties. Younger sons emigrated or married daughters of other *Familianten.* Many of them married illegally, i.e., only ritually. Their children were not considered legitimate. A special class consisted of *Bestandjuden.* These were mainly distillers, sellers of brandywine, and publicans in the ghetto or on its borders, comparable to the *Kretschmers* or tavern keepers of Galician Jewish communities. This stratification, and the Jewish quota that had caused it was officially abolished in 1848, but in fact it continued to be a social system until circa 1870, at least in Moravia. Mahler's father was such a *Bestandjude,* which means that he belonged to the lower caste of a strictly observed and preserved order of precedence. Since a *Privileg* could sometimes be bought if one had enough money, "pursepride" blossomed in the ghetto—even after it was abolished—in strange and not exactly pleasant ways. Unbridled ambition and the urge to succeed were typical for Moravian Jews of the nineteenth century. They produced many important personalities, but their fruits were only harvested by the second generation, after the ghetto was abolished, that is to say, between 1840 and 1870. Among them were many scholars, artists, industrialists, politicians, etc. To name but a few: M. Steinschneider, Ad. Jellinek, Rudolf Singer-Sieghart (the director of the Creditanstalt), Sigmund Freud, Ignaz Brüll, families such as Fanto, Broch, Zweig, Ignaz Kuranda, A. Fischhof and many others. The young Mahler must have felt these class distinctions even inside the Jewish community. But while within the community intellectually creative men—whether they were scholars, philosophers, poets, or artists—were at least respected, this intellectual

elite was largely ignored by the general Austrian public outside Vienna. Before the turn of the century, the influence of, and the respect paid to the high aristocracy and, somewhat later, the great industrialists, was almost universal. The aristocracy and its imitators enjoyed hunting, riding, and similar sports, but paid little attention to artistic or scientific achievements—with very few exceptions. Long gone were the days of the Lobkowitz, Lichnowsky, and their friends—not to mention the archdukes—who had commissioned works by Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven, or had supported them outright. The Austrian aristocrats confined their musical interests to Italian and German operas and their corps de ballet.

For a provincial petit bourgeois like Mahler, whose mother had given birth to twelve children, there was only one way to go: onward and upward. That meant accomplishment and succes. To do him justice, we must admit that it was a question of not only outwardly visible achievement, but just as much of ethical improvement, which for Mahler was at all times the highest goal, as can be seen from his letters. This pursuit of ethical goals can be traced to his childhood, if one gives credence to an anecdote told of the not quite ten-year-old Mahler. When asked what he wanted to become, he answered: "a martyr." It seems that early impressions of Jewish life left more traces in his work than has been generally assumed. The victory theme in the finale of his First Symphony is nothing but a variation of the victory melody *maᶜôz ẓûr* played at Hanukah. Another proof of his rudimentary Jewish knowledge was his suggestion to re-name the character of Jokanaan in Richard Strauss's *Salome* Baal Shem, because of insurmountable difficulties with the censor, since he wanted to perform the opera at the Vienna Court Opera at all cost. This reminiscence is vividly recorded in Alma Mahler's otherwise not always completely trustworthy memoirs (1906). How did Mahler know that name? If he had not read it somewhere, he must have had it from his friend Siegfried Lipiner who was quite well informed about Hassidic thought and Hassidic personalities. As previously mentioned, the naïveté of those circles (Lipiner, the musicologist Guido Adler, the labor leader Victor Adler, the archaeologist Fritz Loehr-Loewy, and others) in dealing with the problems of the "well-aimed" assimilation to the German nation and its culture, seems incredible today—or at least hard to understand. This social circle which (following a suggestion of Richard Wagner's) met regularly at a vegetarian restaurant in Vienna, consisted of naïve assimilationists: men who had no idea how problematical their aims

were. Lipiner, of whom Alma Mahler said that he "goethelte, wenn er schrieb und mauschelte, wenn er sprach", succeeded in getting an interview with Richard Wagner. And Mahler was deeply shocked when he learned that Cosima Wagner had schemed against his becoming director of the Vienna Court Opera. Yet it did not prevent him from continuing to correspond with her, even though he was the only prominent conductor whom she had never invited to Bayreuth. Only later, when Viennese anti-Semitism became more and more virulent, did he learn his lesson. The resultant remark, "a Jew everywhere in the world" has been quoted earlier. Was this naïveté of the post-1848 generation understandable? Another famous example: The Jewish composer Karl Goldmark (1830-1915) could not understand how such a "liberal mind" as Brahms could criticize Goldmark's composition of some of Martin Luther's *Sprueche* with scornful derision. Yet he was not such an opportunist as his somewhat younger, baptized contemporary, Rudolf Singer-Sieghart, or the painter Lipschitz-Lippay, nor a "problem child" like Anton Bruckner's friend and benefactor Dr. Friedrich Eckstein: chemist, musician, philosopher, and an eccentric to the highest degree.

Austrian assimilation was not a product of anti-Semitism, it grew out of ignorance and the resultant shame of the "ugly" and "barbaric" religion. The criterion was not ethical or theological, it was aesthetical. And the monstrosity that was taught to Jewish pupils as the spirit of Judaism was to them a horror. Religious instruction was usually provided by totally incompetent teachers (failed rabbinical candidates). Some of my contemporaries—I am 80—still carry these bitter memories with them. I myself was not spared such a experience as a student at a Vienna Gymnasium in 1915-16. But my Zionist parents had made me somewhat immune to the unhistorical and sometimes downright malicious nonsense served up by our teacher. Several times it came to heated arguments between him and me. Since I was reasonably well read and proficient in Hebrew, and since my father was the director of a Gymnasium and therefore outranked him, there was not much he could do to me. However, I can well understand that he, and through him all of Judaism, became an object of disgust and derision for most of my fellow students. *Hinc illae lacrimae.*

With a few notable exceptions, teachers like this one tyrannized two whole generations of Austrian school-children. The generation of teachers that came after Herzl (especially from the 1920's onwards) was quite different and much better. In contrast to Mahler's generation, the one, which

had lived through the collapse of Austria-Hungary as adults, pursued a completely aimless, ostrich-like assimilation. They vacillated between cosmopolitanism, love for the Austrian homeland, social democracy, and the Catholic church—following now one, now another trail. It was the period between the two wars, when Austrian Jewry—as far as it did not survive in Israel or America—lost its battle for an assimilation which in better days had, after all, produced intellects like L.A. Frankl, Arthur Schnitzler, Gustav Mahler, Sigmund Freud and sank into a mindless, chaotic "indifference"—to put it kindly. For that generation the Jewish religion had become an object of derision, they did not want to belong to the Jewish nation, their homeland became more and more anti-Semitic, their old escape routes were about to be closed off. A sad situation indeed. Many social and political movements contributed to the picture of the completely aimless, often irrational attitude of the assimilationist Jews in the countries of the former monarchy: the socialist-communist ideology considered every national trend or movement suspect; the extreme conservative parties perpetuated the legend of the "stab in the back" and held Jews and socialists responsible for the defeat of Germany and Austria in World War I; and the German part of Austria that remained, soon became Pan-Germanic and Christian-Socialist. Even Austria's historians, like the Jew Pribram and the Serb Srbik, outdid themselves in their praise of Bismarck and admiration of Pan-Germanic ideology. Despite Masaryk—who was politically shortsighted and certainly much weaker than the world realized—a radical, anti-Jewish Pan-slavism arose in Czechoslovakia, though for the time being it was in the minority. Poland sank deeper and deeper into the abyss of a fanatical clerical anti-Semitism which was hailed as a popular and "traditional" movement. In Hungary, after Bela Kun's communist uprising, the Jews were looked at with suspicion by his followers and his enemies alike. In short, any not "nationally conscious" citizen of any of the successor states had to feel that he did "not belong" and was not wanted. Yet the law still vouchsafed certain important freedoms. Assimilation took refuge behind its walls. Since its proponents could not very well think and act nationalistically, their attachment to a spiritual and political homeland was attacked and derided as anachronistic fanaticism. Austrian intellectuals of Jewish descent were convinced, at any rate they hoped, that the "real powers" would grant them sufficient protection—the Church, the Social-Democratic Party, or the successor-states after the Austrian monarchy, because of their antagonism to Germany's policy. These institu-

tions or states, however, were neither allied with each other, nor ever inclined to help. In Austria, to begin with, all parties subscribed to the *Anschluss* to Greater Germany. Let it not be forgotten, that the leader of the Socialist Party, Dr. Karl Renner, published a big poster which stated that he was voting for Hitler and the *Anschluss*. And the Austrians, to be fair, had ample reasons for their attitude, for Austria was an economical monstrum, unable to live and unwilling to die. The successor-states did not wish for an immigration of have-nots who spoke German and felt themselves to be carriers of German culture. Thus the Austrian Jews remained without any defense whatsoever. The situation got critical with Hitler's rise to power; they became Germans not recognized by their country-fellowmen, while remaining Jews against their own will.

In retrospect most of this group behaved like inhabitants of a burning house, who hoped to find salvation in a neighboring house, and fled there. However, the owners of such houses were by no means ready, let alone inclined to grant hospitality to such fugitives. They were afraid that their own houses might become "hot" and inflammable. Hence the fleeing masses of Jewish descent—not being Jewish by religion or by voluntary affiliation —sought refuge in other, far-away zones, where neither fire nor the arsonists would follow them. Much of human diginity was lost in this process; yet most of the refugees did not even sense it. All their moral and intellectual forces were bent and directed to one goal: survival at any price! Thus ended, sadly, tragically, and ignominiously, the paradigmatic story of the once hopeful Vienna Jews—but one generation after they had ridiculed the warnings of Theodor Herzl.

YUVAL

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ABBREVIATIONS

קיצורים

אדלר, כתבים עבריים	ראה Adler, *HWCM*
מתכ"י	המכון לתצלומי כתבי יד, בית הספרים הלאומי והאוניברסיטאי בירושלים
ריס"מ	ראה *RISM*

Adler, *HWCM*	I. Adler, Hebrew Writings Concerning Music in Manuscripts and Printed Books, from Geonic Times up to 1800, München, 1975
Cat. Margoliouth	Margoliouth, G., Catalogue of the Hebrew and Samaritan Manuscripts in the British Museum
Cat. Neubauer	Neubauer, A. Catalogue of the Hebrew Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library
Cu	Cambridge University Library
EI^2	The Encyclopaedia of Islam, new ed. Leiden, 1960-
EJ^2	Encyclopaedia Judaica, Jerusalem, 1971-72
Erlanger	Erlanger, R. d', La musique arabe, Paris, 1930-1939
HUCA	Hebrew Union College Annual
IMHM	Institute of Microfilms of Hebrew Manuscripts, Jewish National and University Library, Jerusalem
JA	Journal asiatique
JJS	Journal of Jewish Studies
JMRS	Jewish Medieval and Renaissance Studies, ed. A. Altmann, Cambridge, Mass., 1967
JNUL	The Jewish National and University Library, Jerusalem
JQR	Jewish Quarterly Review
JRAS	Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society
KS	Kiryat Sefer; Bibliographical Quarterly of the JNUL
Lbm	London, The British Library

Mbs	München, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek
MGWJ	Monatsschrift für Geschichte und Wissenschaft des Judenthums
Mus. pass.	Passage(s) concerning music
Njts	New York, Jewish Theological Seminary of America
Ob	Oxford, Bodleian Library
Pn	Paris, Bibliothèque nationale
REJ	Revue des études juives
RISM	Répertoire international des sources musicales
Tb	The Babylonian Talmud