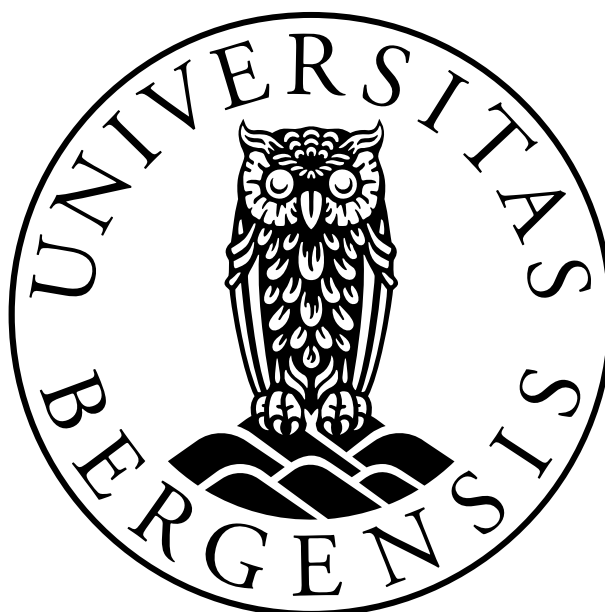


Jewish Reactions to Antisemitism in Norway, 1945–1983

A master's thesis in history
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Abstract (Norwegian)

Denne masteroppgaven i historie omhandler jødiske reaksjoner på antisemittisme i Norge i årene 1945–1983. Oppgavens problemstillinger er: *Hvordan definerte sentrale aktører i det jødiske samfunn i Norge antisemittisme i årene 1945–1983? Hvilke strategier og metoder ble utviklet og brukt av norske jøder for å bekjempe antisemittisme?* Oppgaven analyserer arkivkildemateriale, herunder dokumenter etter enkelte aktører og organisasjonsdokumenter, samt pressemateriale og kvalitative intervjuer med norske jøder.

Oppgaven består av to analysekapitler som tar for seg to aspekter ved diskursen om antisemittisme i etterkrigstidens Norge: Naziantisemittisme (1945–1978) og antisjonisme (1967–1983). Det første analysekapittelet omhandler jødiske reaksjoner på rettsakene mot nazister og nordmenn som hadde bistått fienden under krigen i rettsoppgjøret. Videre tar kapittelet for seg jødiske reaksjoner på ‘Swastika–epidemien’ i 1960, og rettsaken mot nynazisten Olav Hoaas i 1976. Det andre analysekapittelet omhandler jødiske reaksjoner på antisemittisme i lys av fremveksten av en antisjonistisk bevegelse i Norge. En overordnet problemstilling for dette kapitlet er: *Hvordan oppfattet aktørene sammenhengen mellom antisjonisme og antisemittisme, og hva var funksjonen til pro–sjonistisk arbeid i kampen mot antisemittisme i Norge?*

Resultatene fra oppgaven viser at norske jøder utviklet og brukte mangefasetterte strategier og metoder for å bekjempe antisemittisme etter 1945. Etter Holocaust ble ikke alle former for ekskludering og utenforskap definert som ‘antisemittisme’, selv om aktørene opplevde forskjellige manifesteringer av jødefiendtlighet. Noen av aktørene undersøkt i denne oppgaven var ledende personer i DMT, mens andre var aktivister mot antisemittisme som enkeltpersoner. Aktørene reagerte mot diskriminering i form av ekskludering fra samfunnet, for eksempel i form av mangel på rettsikkerhet.

Fra slutten av 1960–tallet, anerkjente aktivister i DMT antisjonisme som en legitim form for politisk debatt, men allikevel gjenkjente en viss antisemittisme i antisjonistisk argumentasjon og kjempet mot den gjennom pro–sjonistisk arbeid. Oppgaven legger vekt på strategiene for selvorganisering og allianse med ikke–jødiske aktører i kampen mot antisemittisme i Norge. Videre fremhever oppgaven en integrerende funksjon av å bekjempe antisemittisme, og understreker verdien av å bekjempe antisemittisme som en kamp for et demokratisk, mangfoldig samfunn.

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¹ Kjetil B. Simonsen. *I skyggen av Holocaust. Antisemittisme i norsk historie, 1945–2023* (Oslo: Humanist forlag, 2023 forthcoming).

informants, and express particular appreciation to the Mendelsohn family's hospitality and trust in allowing me to delve into their history.

Finally, I am grateful to my dearest family who love me unconditionally and support me all the way. Any mistakes and inaccuracies in this thesis are purely my own.

Note on translation

All translations from other languages are my own unless stated otherwise. Translations follow common praxis with help of Norwegian–English juridical dictionaries.² Where needed, the original appears in a footnote. Terms which are not conclusive are translated literally and idiomatically in order to capture the essence of the original, and where needed include an explanation in a footnote.

Institutions

Storting – Norwegian Parliament

Regjering – Norwegian Government

Oslo Byrett – Oslo City Court

Rettsoppjøret – National Legal Purge

International Military Tribunal (IMT)

Høyesterett – Supreme Court

Lagmannsrett – Court of Appeal

Påtalemyndighet – Public Prosecutor’s Office

Justisdepartement – Ministry of Justice

Utenriksdepartement – Norwegian Foreign Ministry (UD)

Kirke- og utdanningsdepartement – Ministry of Church and Education

Statspoliti – State Police

Kriminalpoliti – Criminal Police

Ordenspoliti – Order Police

Norsk Utenrikspolitisk Institutt – Norwegian Institute of National Affairs (NUPI)

Reichssicherheitshauptamt – Reich Security Main Office (RHSA)

Israel Defence Forces (IDF)

United Nations (UN)

General Assembly (GA)

Titles

Justisminister – Minister of Justice

Utenriksminister – Minister of Foreign Affairs

Kirke- og utdanningsminister – Minister of Church and Education

² Åge Lind. *Norsk–engelsk juridisk ordbok* (Oslo: Cappelen akademisk forlag, 1995), edn. 2; Per–Erik Kirkeby, Willy A. Kirkeby. *Stor engelsk–norsk ordbok* (Oslo: Vega, 2012).

Byråsjef (departmentsråd i Justisdepartementet) – Secretary General in the Ministry of Justice
Høyesterettsadvokat – Supreme Court Barrister
Riksadvokat – Attorney General
Statsadvokat – State Attorney
Kriminalsjef – Head of Criminal Police
Politiinspektør – Police inspector
Bobestyrer – Estate trustee
Stortingsrepresentant – Member of Parliament
Borgarrepresentanter – Council of Burghers

Political parties, associations, and organisations

Norwegian Federation of Trade Unions (LO)
Histadrut – Israeli federation of trade unions
Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO)
Nansenhjelpen – Nansen Relief
Nansenkomité – The Nansen Committee
Jødisk Hjelpeforening – Jewish Aid Association
The Norwegian Jewish Community (DMT)
Skandinavisk Jødisk Ungdomsforening (SJUF)
Norsk Jødisk Ungdomsforening (JUF)
Nordic Organisation of Jewish Students (NOJS)
Studentklubben – Norwegian Jewish Students' Organisation
Studentersamfunnet – Norwegian Students' Association
Landsstyret for Norsk Studentunion – Student Union National Board
Kristelige Folkeparti – Christian Democratic Party (KfP)
Arbeiderparti – Labour Party
Sosialistisk Folkeparti – Socialist People's Party (SF)
Sosialistisk Venstreparti – Socialist Left Party (SV)
Sosialistisk Ungdomsforbund – Socialist Youth League (SUF[ml])
Arbeidernes Kommunistparti – Workers' Communist Party (AKP–ml)
Palestinakomité – Palestine Committee (PalKom)
Palestinafronten – Palestine Front (Palfrent)
Med Israel For Fred – With Israel For Peace (MIFF)
La Israel Leve – Let Israel Live

Centralverein deutscher Staatsbürger jüdischen Glaubens – Central Association of German Citizens of Jewish Faith (CV)

World Jewish Congress (WJC)

Norsk rikskringkasting – Norwegian Broadcasting Cooperation (NRK)

Norsk Telegrambyrå – Norwegian News Agency (NTB)

Norsk Lektorlag – Norwegian organisation of high school teachers

Nordland Fylkeskolestyre – Nordland district school board

Nasjonal Samling (NS)

Nasjonal Ungdomsfylking (NUF)

Conventions and definitions

International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA)

Jerusalem Definition of Antisemitism (JDA)

International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Hatred (ICERD)

Terms

Forskjellsbehandling – Discrimination

Nedvurdering – Undervaluing

Underslag – Embezzlement

Displaced Persons (DPs)

Aliyah – Immigration to Israel

Chaluzim – Pioneer settlers in Israel

Haskala – Jewish Enlightenment

Maskilim – Enlightened Jews

Jøssinger – Byname for Norwegians who opposed the German occupation

1. Introduction

In 1947, Alfred Leopold, a member of the Jewish community in Oslo (DMT) wrote to Marcus Levin in the community leadership to discuss anti-Jewish attitudes after Norway's liberation from the Nazis. Leopold believed that these negative attitudes were reflected in everyday life, and feared they would be manifested in bureaucratic procedures of the National Legal Purge (*Rettsoppgjøret*). He hoped that Norwegian society would become more accepting and tolerant according to democratic and liberal values. Thus, he encouraged Levin to persevere in the active fight against anti-Jewish hatred in Norway:

It is going slowly. It drags on. It is very difficult. But, dear Marcus, after all, it has been moving forward all along. Often invisibly. Especially because one sees first and foremost the setbacks and difficulties. But all those setbacks and the many difficulties have proven to be a necessity. A necessary evil, which is only of a passing nature. And beneath the outer facade, something new is growing and thriving. Something good. Something better. Something resilient. Something that lasts.³

Over 80 years later, in 2022, a study conducted by the Norwegian Center for Holocaust and Minority Studies finds that antisemitic attitudes still exist in Norway. Since 2017, dislike and social distance from Jews decreased, however the prevalence of anti-Jewish prejudice (stereotypes) remains stable.⁴ While the study notes a decline in anti-Jewish attitudes among the Norwegian population, Norwegian Jews report increased discrimination. The study attributes this increase to growing attention and openness about such experiences. It analyses this discrepancy with the sociological theory of 'integration paradox' whereby immigrants' reports on discrimination increase proportionally with increased integration. One factor contributing to this pattern is that the process of integration highlights feelings of exclusion or otherness, leading individuals to interpret their experiences as discrimination.⁵

Understanding the roots of post-Holocaust antisemitism in Norway calls for an investigation of its development, preservation, and manifestation in society. An aspect of this field essential for comprehending the implications of antisemitism is Jewish reactions to such manifestations. **This master's thesis in history sets to explore Jewish reactions to**

³ Letter from Fred Leopold to Marcus Levin, untitled, 10.3.1947, JMO/PA/AS11015/Y1. 'Det gaar langsomt. Det gaar trøgt. Det gaar meget besværligt. Men, kjære Marcus, det har trodts alt hele Tiden gaaet fremad. Ofte usynligt. Særligt fordi man først og fremmest ser Modgangerne og Besværlighederne. Men alle de Modganger og de mange Besværligheder har viset sig at være Nødvendighed. Et nødvendigt Ondt, som dog kun er af forbigaaende Natur. Og under den ydre Fasade vokser og groer noget nyt frem. Noget godt. Noget bedre. Noget af Bestand. Noget som holder.'

⁴ Vibeke Moe, ed. *Holdninger til jøder og muslimer i Norge 2022. Befolkningsundersøkelse, minoritetsstudie og ungdomsundersøkelse* (Oslo: Norwegian Center for Holocaust and Minority Studies, 2022) pp. 44, 118.

⁵ Ibid p. 111; on 'integration paradox' see Jan-Philip Steinmann. 'The Paradox of integration: why do higher educated new immigrants perceive more discrimination in Germany?', *Journal of Ethic and Migration Studies*, 45:9 (2019) pp. 1377–1400; Claudia Diehl, Elisabeth Libeau, Peter Mühlau. 'How Often Have You Felt Disadvantaged? Explaining Perceived Discrimination', *KZfSS Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie und Sozialpsychologie*, 73 (2021) pp. 1–24.

antisemitism in Norway between 1945–1983. *How did central actors in the Norwegian Jewish community define ‘antisemitism’ between 1945–1983? Which strategies and methods were developed and used by community members to combat antisemitism?* Analysing endeavours in the Jewish community to achieve acceptance and equality will contribute to the research field of Norwegian Jewish history and particularly to the study of post–Holocaust antisemitism. This knowledge would be helpful for improving the methods to combat antisemitism in the future.

1.1. State of research – post–Holocaust antisemitism in Norway

A systematic historical analysis of Jewish reactions to antisemitism in post–Holocaust Norway has to my knowledge not been undertaken before. Most studies on Jewish reactions to antisemitism after 1945 appear to concentrate on the immediate postwar years or on specific case studies.⁶ Therefore, the following historiographical review presents selected steps in the development of research on post–Holocaust antisemitism in Norway, to identify the gap and relevance of research.

Antisemitism in Norway was not seen as a relevant research topic for a very long time. After the Second World War, a patriotic memory culture developed in the country which originated largely in the resistance against Nazi occupation and Norwegian collaborators, as a unifying factor in rebuilding a sense of national unity and community.⁷ The understanding of antisemitism as an import from Nazi Germany conceptualised it as the ideology of a small group of traitors representing fascism and extremism and was thus seen as un–Norwegian. Such a memory culture emphasised rather the solidarity demonstrated by Norwegians towards Jews, leading to the understanding that antisemitism in Norway was a marginal phenomenon.

Since the late 1960s and through the 1980s, another obstacle had been a lack of consensus on what could be regarded as antisemitic. Whereas explicit hostility towards Jews was unanimously rejected, ‘antisemitism’ became increasingly politicised as it became enmeshed in debates on the Israeli–Palestinian conflict.⁸ A new form of antisemitism within anti–

⁶ Leonard Dinnerstein. ‘Anti–Semitism Exposed and Attacked’, *American Jewish History*, 71:1 (1981) pp. 134–149; Julia Sahlström. ‘Recognition, Justice, and Memory: Swedish–Jewish Reactions to the Holocaust and the Major Trials’, in Heuman, Johannes, and Pontus, Rudberg, eds. *Early Holocaust Memory in Sweden: Archives, Testimonies and Reflections* (Cham: Springer; Palgrave MacMillan, 2021) pp. 287–313.

⁷ Jon Reitan. *Møter med Holocaust. Norske perspektiver på tilintetgjørelsens historiekultur* (doctoral dissertation, NTNU) pp. 99–101; Christhard Hoffmann. ‘A Marginal Phenomenon? Historical Research on Antisemitism in Norway 1814–1945’ in Adams, Jonathan, Heß, Cordelia, eds. *Antisemitism in the North: History and State of Research* (Berlin / Boston: Gruyter, 2020b) pp. 155–172, p. 155.

⁸ The terms ‘the Israeli–Palestinian conflict’ and ‘the Middle East conflict’ are used according to the formulations in primary material, both referring to the conflict between Israel and its neighbouring countries, and the Palestinian population.

Zionism was contested and considered controversial.⁹ Yet, the Scandinavian countries were among Israel's ardent supporters after 1945. Israel symbolised democracy's triumph over fascism and represented living proof of the rehabilitation of Jews.¹⁰ On the other hand, Israel's victory in the Six Day War in 1967 drew attention to its resilience, and new views on Israel emerged reframing Zionism as a post-colonial movement tied with Western Imperialism.¹¹ In Norway, these views were initially limited to radical socialist circles but became more prevalent in the 1970s, and after the First Lebanon War in 1982 marked a sharp shift in public opinion – Israel was more commonly viewed as an illegitimate state.

The first major publication of Norwegian Jewish history is Oskar Mendelsohn's monumental work *Jødenes historie i Norge gjennom 300 år* (the Jewish people's history in Norway over 300 years).¹² This reference work is considered the most comprehensive source of Norwegian Jewish history to date. At a time when national archives were not digitised nor freely accessible, Mendelsohn manually compiled and processed a magnificent amount of diverse archival and press material to create the historical basis upon which future researchers would rely. Nevertheless, Mendelsohn's work has been criticised for lacking a systematic analysis of antisemitism, which is rather brought as an auxiliary theme in the broader narrative of Jewish integration in Norway.¹³

With the exception of Mendelsohn's *Jødenes historie*, and a survey conducted by the Institute of Social Research in Oslo in 1952 on the dynamics of nationalist attitudes,¹⁴ research was scarce until the 1990s when history of antisemitism became a teaching and research field

⁹ Dov Waxman, David Schraub, Adam Hosein. 'Arguing about Antisemitism: Why we disagree about antisemitism, and what we can do about it', *Ethnic and Racial Studies* (2021) pp. 1–2; in Norway, see Hoffmann, Christhard. 'A Fading Consensus: Public Debates on Antisemitism in Norway, 1960 vs. 1983' in Hoffmann, Christhard, Moe, Vibeke, eds. *The Shifting Boundaries of Prejudice: Antisemitism and Islamophobia in Contemporary Norway* (Oslo: Universitetsforlag, 2020a) pp. 26–50.

¹⁰ Åsmund B. Gjerde. 'Thinking with the Jewish State: The Norwegian Labour Movement, Israel and 'Civilisation', 1949–1951', *Contemporary European History* (2022) pp. 1–14; Hilde H. Waage. *Norge – Israels beste venn* (Oslo: Universitetsforlag, 1996) pp. 27, 36, 388.

¹¹ Karl Egil Johansen. *Jødefolket tar en særstilling': Norske haldninger til jødane og staten Israel* (Kristiansand: Portal, 2008) pp. 173–174; Åsmund B. Gjerde. *The Meaning of Israel: Anti-Zionism and Philo-Zionism in the Norwegian Left, 1933–1968* (doctoral dissertation, University of Bergen, 2018) p. 274f.

¹² In my analysis of the second volume, I use Oskar Mendelsohn. *Jødenes historie i Norge gjennom 300 år* (Oslo: Universitetsforlag, 1987) vol. 2, edn. 2

¹³ Christhard Hoffmann. 'Nasjonalhistorie og minoritetshistorie: jødisk historiografi i Norge' in Heiret, Jan, Ryymin, Teemu, Skålevåg, Svein Atle, eds. *Fortalt fortid. Norsk historieskriving etter 1970* (Oslo: Pax, 2013) pp. 240–263, pp. 246–250, 261; Kjetil B. Simonsen. 'Norwegian Antisemitism after 1945: Current Knowledge' Adams, Jonathan, Heß, Cordelia, eds. *Antisemitism in the North: History and State of Research* (Berlin / Boston: Gruyter, 2020b) pp. 173–190, pp. 174–176; Dagfinn Rian. 'Oskar Mendelsohn i memoriam. En jødisk humanist og sin verk', *Nordisk Judaistisk*, 14:1 (1993) pp. 5–7, p. 6; Espen Søybe. 'Innledning' in Oskar Mendelsohn. *Jødenes historie i Norge gjennom 300 år* (Oslo: Forlaget, 2019) pp. 11–23, p. 14.

¹⁴ Christian Bay, Ingemund Gullvåg, Harald Ofstad, Herman Tønnesen. *Nationalism I–III* (Oslo: Institute of Social Research; Typoscript, 1950–1953).

in Norway's academic institutions.¹⁵ From 1999, Norway officially considered Jews as a national minority – together with other minorities – which legally validated their status and strengthened their presence in the social and intellectual discourse.¹⁶ The establishment of the Norwegian Center for Holocaust and Minority Studies in 2001, and the Jewish Museum in Oslo in 2005, facilitated socio-historical on antisemitism in Norway. The focus, however, was still not on post-Holocaust antisemitism.¹⁷

In Sweden, Henrik Bachner's doctoral dissertation from Lund University was the first to focus entirely on post-Holocaust antisemitism.¹⁸ Using books, journals, and public press material, he linked traditional antisemitic notions and their contemporary manifestation in five public debates. Unlike Mendelsohn, who contextualised antisemitism as a racist component in extremism, Bachner investigated preservation and evolvement of antisemitism according to social conventions and concluded that anti-Zionism was the main contemporary form of antisemitism in Sweden. There is yet no equivalent to Bachner's study in Norway; potentially since most postgraduate studies examine antisemitism in a limited scope. Exceptionally, the project *Shifting Boundaries: Definitions, Expressions and Consequences of Antisemitism in Contemporary Norway* of the Norwegian Center for Holocaust and Minority Studies, established methodological insights into the mechanisms and effects of contemporary antisemitism in Norway.¹⁹ A forthcoming book by historian Kjetil Braut Simonsen provides a systematic historical analysis of antisemitism in Norway after 1945.²⁰ I have had access to early-stage drafts of chapters from his book. Where my ideas have been inspired by these drafts, it is acknowledged in a footnote.

In their respective historiographical papers, Hoffmann and Simonsen discuss the recent emergence of research literature on post-Holocaust antisemitism in Norway.²¹ In March 2023, my own critical assessment of research literature on postwar antisemitism in Scandinavia was published in the University of Oslo's history magazine *Fortid*.²² Shorter works explore

¹⁵ Hoffmann (2020b) p. 157.

¹⁶ The Norwegian convention was part of the EU Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities. 'Details of Treaty No. 157', *Council of Europe* <https://www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/full-list?module=treaty-detail&treatynum=157> [accessed 25.8.2022].

¹⁷ *Senter for studier av Holocaust og livssynsminoriteter* <https://www.hlsenteret.no/om/> [accessed 1.12.2021]. *Jødisk museum i Oslo* <https://www.jodiskmuseumoslo.no/museets-historie> [accessed 2.11.2022].

¹⁸ Henrik Bachner. *Återkomsten. Antisemitism i Sverige efter 1945* (Stockholm: Natur och kultur, 1999).

¹⁹ Antisemittismens skiftende grenser, HL-senteret <https://www.hlsenteret.no/forskning/jodisk-historie-og-antisemittisme/shifting-boundaries-definitions-expressions-and/> [accessed 5.12.2021].

²⁰ Kjetil B. Simonsen. *I skyggen av Holocaust. Antisemittisme i norsk historie, 1945–2023* (Oslo: Humanist forlag, 2023 forthcoming).

²¹ Hoffmann (2013) pp. 240–263; Simonsen (2020b) pp. 173–190.

²² Noa Ben David. 'A Critical Assessment of Research Literature on Post-Holocaust Scandinavian Antisemitism', *Fortid*, 1 (2023) pp. 68–73.

antisemitism in Norway in two main channels: Nazi antisemitism, and anti-Zionism.²³ Similarly to Bachner in Sweden, historian Karl Egil Johansen examined Norwegian attitudes towards Israel after 1945 through written and visual press material.²⁴ He did not define criticism of Israel as antisemitic but described how traditional anti-Jewish tropes were used in certain anti-Zionist argumentation. Historian Vibeke K. Banik published her doctoral dissertation on Norwegian Jewish attitudes towards Israel. Through diverse archival and press material as well as oral history, she explained the meaning of Israel in Norwegian Jewish identifications as a component of national consciousness and self-worth, as a free state and a Jewish cultural centre.²⁵ This explanation is helpful for understanding solidarity with Israel, and how certain actors in the Jewish community saw a connection between anti-Zionism and antisemitism.

The edited book *Antisemitism in the North: History and State of Research* in the academic publication series *Religious Minorities in the North* since 2019 brings interdisciplinary studies on antisemitism in the Nordic region, dealing particularly with the questions: how and why antisemitism existed in a geographical area of very few Jews. According to Sofie Lene Bak, antisemitism in Denmark like Norway was considered a marginal phenomenon after the war, because the memory culture emphasised the Danish resistance's rescue of Jews and rejected the possibility that Danish people could be antisemitic.²⁶ Lars Dencik argues that while 'classic antisemitism' has been considered a taboo, 'Aufklärungsantisemitismus', directed against Jewish religious practices such as circumcision or ritual slaughter, and 'Israel-derived antisemitism', are on the rise in Scandinavia.²⁷

The project *Negotiating Jewish Identity: Jewish Life in 21st Century Norway* of the Norwegian Center for Holocaust and Minority Studies was concluded in October 2022, with the publication of *Jødisk. Identitet, praksis og minnekultur* (Jewish: Identity, Practice, and Memory Culture).²⁸ The project emphasised social aftereffects of the Holocaust on culture

²³ On neo-Nazism: Kjetil B. Simonsen. 'Holocaust benektelse i Folk og Land (8. mai), 1948–1975. En diskurs tar form', *Historisk Tidsskrift*, 98:1 (2019) pp. 8–25; Kjetil B. Simonsen. 'Antisemitism on the Norwegian Far Right, 1967–2018', *Scandinavian Journal of History*, 45 (2020a) pp. 1–23.

²⁴ Johansen (2008), the empirical chapters refer primarily to pp. 73–136.

²⁵ Vibeke K. Banik. *Solidaritet og tilhørighet. Norske jøders forhold til Israel 1945–1975* (doctoral dissertation, University of Oslo, 2009) pp. 136–140.

²⁶ Sofie Lene Bak. 'Chronicles of a History Foretold: The Historiography of Danish Antisemitism' in Jonathan Adams et al, eds. *Antisemitism in the North: History and State of Research* (Berlin / Boston: Gruyter, 2020) pp. 127–138.

²⁷ Lars Dencik. 'Antisemitisms in the Twenty-First Century: Sweden and Denmark as Forerunners?' in Jonathan Adams et al, eds. *Antisemitism in the North: History and State of Research* (Berlin / Boston: Gruyter, 2020) pp. 233–268.

²⁸ Cora Alexa Døving, ed. *Jødisk. Identitet, praksis og minnekultur* (Oslo: Universitetsforlag).

and communal dynamics in context of changing traditions. However, it did not systematically examine Jewish incentives for integration, including their reactions to antisemitism. Torkel Brekke's recent publication *Ingen er uskyldig. Antisemittisme på venstresiden* (No One is Innocent: Antisemitism on the Left) has reignited the debate on definitions and boundaries of antisemitism in Norway through a scrutiny of antisemitism in the socialist Left.²⁹

1.2. Project objectives

This study provides a historical analysis of Jewish reactions to antisemitism in postwar Norway. Whereas the first studies concentrated on external attitudes towards Jews, this study recognises the importance of including Jewish points of view in understanding antisemitism. By focusing on these actors' definitions and responses, and by including qualitative interviews with members of the community, this study prioritises the power of definition of those affected. The research is not comprehensive nor representative of the entire Jewish community but focuses on selected case studies involving individual activists against antisemitism. The example of Norway is relevant for analysing strategies where the Jewish community has been small and antisemitism latent. The research questions of this study are:

- *How did central actors in the Norwegian Jewish community define antisemitism between 1945–1983?*
- *Which strategies and methods were developed and used by community members to combat antisemitism?*

An overarching element in the research is how perspectives and strategies for combatting antisemitism changed over time. The study begins in 1945 enabling a systematic historical analysis of Jewish reactions to antisemitism in the postwar period. The study concludes in the aftermath of the First Lebanon War in 1982, marking a shift in Norwegian public opinion on Israel. In 1983, the Nansen Committee against the persecution of Jews organised the first International Hearing on Antisemitism in Oslo. Its objectives were to define, describe, and explain antisemitism throughout the ages, and discuss the manifestations of antisemitism in the postwar period. Later developments are beyond the scope of this study.

This research focuses largely on actors who were members of the Norwegian Jewish community, mainly DMT in Oslo. It focuses on Jewish *defensive responses against*

²⁹ Torkel Brekke. *Ingen er uskyldig. Antisemittisme på venstresiden* (Oslo: Cappelen Damm, 2023). So far, the book received wide press coverage but little academic review. In the major newspapers: Erling Rimehaug. "antisemittismen ligger som en understrøm i kulturen" *Vårt Land* 18.3.2023; Dag Eivind Undheim. "–Holder ikke mål faglig" *Klassekampen* 22.3.2023. The book has come out mere weeks before this thesis' submission, and therefore it will not be analysed further.

antisemitism and not *attitudes and reactions to antisemitism* in the broader sense. For example, the study does not discuss cases where actors formed a view over antisemitism but could not or did not respond openly. It does not analyse the advantages and disadvantages of private versus open response, and nuances of diplomatic and explicit responses. As the study focuses on selected actors, it does not thematically consider *individual* versus *collective* responses. Lastly, it is beyond the range of this study to consider sociological and psychological factors in developing perspectives and reacting to antisemitism. While the study acknowledges an integrationist function of fighting antisemitism it does not thematically discuss the permutations of integration and Norwegian Jewish identifications.

1.3. Defining ‘antisemitism’ and ‘anti-Zionism’ – contemporary debates

This study uses a flexible definition of antisemitism focusing on modern and contemporary notions of anti-Jewish hatred. The primary definition or set of perspectives over ‘antisemitism’ and ‘anti-Zionism’ has followed the definitions of actors in the Norwegian Jewish community in the case studies.

1.3.1. ‘Antisemitism’

The term ‘antisemitism’ was introduced into political language in 1879 by the journalist Wilhelm Marr. In his pamphlet *The Victory of Judaism over Germanism*, Marr maintained that in winning emancipation for themselves, Jews had come to control the German economy, and had become the true rulers of Germany. The antisemitic movement aimed to stop the process of the so-called ‘Jewification’ of German life. Marr subsumed negative traits of modern society, like the loss of tradition, capitalism, and free trade under the vague term ‘Semitism’, thereby indicating that these developments were caused by ‘Jewish influence’. Anti-Semitism became the brand name for a social movement which organised itself in political parties, pressure groups, and associations, united under the slogan ‘fight against the foreign rule of the Jews’. Ideologically, it combined anti-capitalism, anti-liberalism, and anti-modernism with racial theories. Distancing itself from traditional religious anti-Jewish hatred, a new, ‘sterile’ term should indicate scientific objectivity.³⁰ Today, ‘antisemitism’

³⁰ On Marr: Moshe Zimmerman. *Wilhelm Marr: The Patriarch of Antisemitism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987); Rusi Japsal. *Antisemitism and Anti-Zionism: Representations, Cognition and Everyday Talk* (Farham: Routledge, 2014) p. 20; this paragraph builds largely on a lecture by Christhard Hoffmann in the module RELV360 at the University of Bergen; on the definition of antisemitism see for example: ‘Hva er antisemittisme?’, *Religions Orkalene* <https://religionsoraklene.no/hva-er-antisemittisme/> [accessed 27.9.2023].

functions as a generic term to denote all forms of anti-Jewish hatred. One definition of the term that distinguishes between different expressions and actors, was given by Helen Fein:

A persisting latent structure of hostile beliefs towards *Jews as a collectivity* manifested in *individuals* as attitudes, and in *culture* as myth, ideology, folklore and imagery, and in *actions* – social or legal discrimination, political mobilization against the Jews, and collective or state violence – which results in and/or is designed to distance, displace, or destroy Jews as Jews.³¹

In 2016, the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) proposed a non-legally binding work definition of antisemitism as:

A certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities.³²

The IHRA definition considers the targeting of Israel as a manifestation of antisemitism when Israel is conceived as a Jewish collectivity. Several of the examples given could be interpreted as relating to criticism of Israel. However, the IHRA definition emphasises that criticism of Israel within the same framework as criticism of other states, cannot be regarded as antisemitic. The IHRA definition has been contested, due to a lack of clarity in distinguishing between legitimate criticism of Israel, and illegitimate anti-Jewish sentiment based on conspiracy theories.³³ Moreover, it has been contested due to the limiting freedom of speech in practical terms. For this reason, in 2020 the Jerusalem Definition of Antisemitism (JDA) was drafted under the auspices of the Van Leer Institute, and signed in by over 350 scholars in Jewish and Holocaust history and Middle Eastern studies to outline the bounds of antisemitic expression while protecting free expression.³⁴ To contrast from the IHRA definition, the JDA seeks to protect the political debate on Israel–Palestine and gives concrete examples of when criticism of Israel is not antisemitic. Thus, hostility to Israel could be an expression of an antisemitic animus, or it could be a reaction to a human rights violation.

1.3.2. ‘Anti-Zionism’

According to the Merriam–Webster dictionary, anti-Zionism is opposition to the establishment or support of the state of Israel, thus opposition to Zionism.³⁵ In this broad

³¹ Helen Fein. ‘Dimensions of Antisemitism: Attitudes, Collective Accusations, and Actions’ in Fein, Helen, ed. *The Persisting Question: Sociological Perspectives and Social Contexts of Modern Antisemitism* (Berlin: Gruyter. 1987) pp. 67–85, p. 67. Italics in the original.

³² ‘What is antisemitism?’, IHRA <https://www.holocaustremembrance.com/resources/working-definitions-charters/working-definition-antisemitism> [accessed 1.5.2023].

³³ *Action plan against antisemitism 2021–2023 – a continuation*, p. 7.

³⁴ JDA <https://jerusalemdeclaration.org> [accessed 1.5.2023].

³⁵ ‘anti-Zionism’, *Merriam–Webster* <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/anti-Zionism> [accessed 9.5.2023].

definition, many Jews in Western countries before the Holocaust, and ultra-Orthodox Jews, were anti-Zionist. The meaning of anti-Zionism changed with the establishment of the state of Israel. This would entail adopting a retaliatory position to the new reality of Jewish sovereignty in the Middle East. The prevailing idea of anti-Zionism after 1948 has been to dismantle the current state of Israel and replace it with something else.³⁶

Historian Åsmund Borgen Gjerde defines three positions which evolved in the Norwegian socialist Left since 1967: 1. The ‘bridgehead of imperialism position’ saw Israel for an outpost of Western imperialism. 2. The ‘anti-Zionist position’ saw Israel as fundamentally illegitimate and therefore a state that should not exist; and 3. The ‘pro-Palestinian position’ supported the Palestinian struggle for self-determination under foreign rule.³⁷ Criticism of Zionism as a national movement, and of Zionism as an imperialist endeavour, as well as the humanitarian solidarity struggle for the Palestinians, are differentiated as arguments which do not necessarily contradict support of the right of Jews to secure nationhood in the Middle East.³⁸

1.4. Research methods

The study analyses diverse archival source material, including papers after individual actors and community and organisation papers, press material, and qualitative interviews. The project comprised three research trips to Oslo of 10 days each, to collect data and conduct interviews.

Archival material

The Jewish Museum in Oslo contains the DMT correspondence archive between 1945–1975, documenting the Jewish community’s activities including correspondence with the authorities and central political actors. DMT was a point of contact for members who experienced antisemitism. Documents in the archive include community members’ accounts of antisemitic incidents, community outreach correspondence and drafts of official statements. The Norwegian National Archive in Oslo (*Riksarkivet*) has the private archive of Oskar Mendelsohn, including annotated drafts of *Jødenes historie* and the materials he used. The Norwegian Center for Holocaust and Minority Studies holds the private archive of psychiatrist Leo Eitinger, an Auschwitz survivor and an outspoken figure in the Jewish community against

³⁶ Shany Mor. ‘On Three Anti-Zionisms’ *Israel Studies* 24:2 (2019) pp. 206–216.

³⁷ Gjerde (2018) pp. 274–275.

³⁸ On Zionism and anti-Zionism: Walter Lacqueur. *History of Zionism* (Holt: Reinhart and Winston, 1997); Jeffrey Herf, ed. *Anti-Semitism and anti-Zionism in Historical Perspective: Convergence and Divergence* (London: Routledge, 2013); Eirik Eigladd, ‘Anti-Zionism and the Resurgence of Antisemitism in Norway’ in Rosenfeld, Alvin H., ed. *Resurgent Antisemitism: Global Perspectives* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013) pp. 140–174.

antisemitism. His archive includes personal correspondence, the entirety of his published press material and annotated unpublished manuscripts, diverse visual material, and neo-Nazi materials and threats he received. Eitinger was the main intellectual driving force behind the International Hearing on Antisemitism in Oslo and the archive contains important documents regarding this and other initiatives of the Nansen Committee against the persecution of Jews, of which he was Vice Chairman.

Archival work has posed challenges. For example, some archives are more organised than others, making orientation difficult. Some sources, especially correspondence, can be unsigned, untitled, and undated, and the physical state of decades' old paper arks requires careful treatment. Different types of sources were crossed and compared critically. For example, while certain registers provided detail and were helpful in building sequence of events and persons, they may not provide explanations of actions and situations. Personal correspondence and statements, on the other hand, could provide this nuance.

Press material

A systematic study of Norwegian newspaper articles was conducted using the digital collection of the Norwegian National Library with a focus on relevant timeframes. The digital archive is imperfect due to gaps, and the engine cannot always detect key words within the text. However, searching for press material reciprocally complemented the rest of the research. Relevant items were analysed in context of various factors integral in press publication. For example, what cultural context is relevant for understanding the item? Who was the author? Where was the newspaper or magazine positioned within the discourse?³⁹ Press material functions as a form of communication. Interviewees in newspaper articles can be misquoted and what they say appears in context of the news item. In this study, focusing specifically on the use of language of central actors, their statements were compared with other statements made elsewhere, and the informants were asked regarding certain expression in the press during their qualitative interview. This was particularly relevant when seeking to understand their attitudes towards 'antisemitism'.

The study sought to balance a range of major and local newspapers across a wide political spectrum. Reactions of central actors to cases are taken up in the empirical chapters were typically covered by the major newspapers. Which incident triggered Jewish reaction? Were Jews first to react or did they engage in existing debates? Local newspapers and magazines often provided nuanced input. For example, Jewish voices were concentrated in a magazine

³⁹ Johan Laurits Tønnesson. *Hva er sakprosa?* (Oslo: Universitetsforlag, 2008) pp. 95–128.

written by Jews, for Jews. *Jødisk Nytt*, edited by Kai Feinberg in 1946–1948, and *Jødisk Menighetsblad For Det Mosaiske Trossamfund* (abbreviated henceforth) edited by Oskar Mendelsohn from 1976 came out in two to three yearly issues, often discussing antisemitism in Norway. Which matters were appropriate to bring up in the major newspapers? How did perspectives on antisemitism differ in the community?

Qualitative interviews

Interviews were conducted with members of the Norwegian Jewish community who could contribute helpful information regarding the case studies. While the definitions and boundaries of ‘antisemitism’ are contested, as are the boundaries of freedom of speech; and ‘perceptions’ and ‘attitudes’ are complicated notions in the historical study of reactions to antisemitism, it was important to keep an essential connection with the community and in this to prioritise their input as a primary source.

Qualitative interviews are essential for this research because they provide information which cannot be obtained otherwise.⁴⁰ While existing papers concentrate on *evident, active* responses *against* antisemitism, the research questions of this study were initially wider, asking *how* the actors reacted, considering extent and manner of reaction, including the inclination to subtle response and the idea of ‘silence’. The informants, including those who were eventually not included in this study, emphasise on their own initiative one essential element that they believe explains diverse reactions to antisemitism in Norway: ‘Jews do not want to make a fuss.’⁴¹ Many Jewish people historically kept to themselves and expressed their identities within their own close circle as a self-preservation tradition.⁴² Simply put, people experience situations and react differently, making personal accounts obtained via interview a helpful research tool.

Open responses against antisemitism were documented precisely because they addressed an audience. To rely exclusively on such evidence, without a consideration of different notions of antisemitism would limit the lens of research and draw the conclusion that actors in the Jewish community systematically stood up for themselves against antisemitism – which might not be representative. Therefore, the selection of informants sought to include both active actors against antisemitism, and members of the community who were not active in these cases directly but could provide relevant information. For example, Irene Levin and Leif Arne

⁴⁰ On oral history theory: Lynn Abrams. *Oral History Theory* (London, Routledge, 2016); Steinar Kvale. *Det kvalitative forskningsintervju* (Oslo: Gyldendal Akademisk, 2017).

⁴¹ This was related to me by the informants in different ways including this particular phrasing, which is daily speech. This one perspective is not representative of all Jewish people.

⁴² Chapters 2 and 3 take up ‘low-profile tradition’ in the Norwegian Jewish community.

Mendelsohn were able to describe reactions to antisemitism among their parents' generation. The interviews provide the added value of insight into daily life experiences and community dynamics, for example by informing of other actors who cannot be interviewed at present. The study acknowledges that the information collected in the interviews is related after several decades and may thus be subjected to distortion or be presented under the influence of today's perspectives on the topic. As a complementary source, however, it enriches the research.

Qualitative work was ethically approved through the system for risk and compliance of the University of Bergen (RETTE) according to the Norwegian National Ethics Guidelines for Social Sciences and Humanities and the Norwegian Data Protection Act.⁴³ I completed a postgraduate module in research ethics (AHKR100) in preparation for qualitative study. Informants were found through communication with DMT and selected specifically for these research purposes. Therefore, each informant is treated as a separate primary source. Each informant participated in one individual interview of 1–2.5 hours.⁴⁴ Interviews were recorded, and then selected passages were transliterated and standardised into English to be published in the appendix. The informants received an information sheet on the complete interview process and signed a consent form. Each had the opportunity to review verbatim quotes. Since the interview revolves around the informant's own activity, their identity is not anonymised in the paper. The data is destroyed after conclusion of the master's project.

The purpose was to complement the archival research and not to function as a comprehensive survey of attitudes. Since the community is very small, the informants are likely to know each other and have experience interviewing on Jewish life and antisemitism. Thus, they might have formed answers to similar questions which do not reflect their original response. The interviews were semi-structured, meaning that they all followed a general questionnaire. Since each interview had specific relevance, the questions differ from one informant to another.⁴⁵

1.5. Structure of paper

This paper is structured thematically after the research questions, rather than chronologically, because of the temporal frame and the nature of source material. The time of events often

⁴³ RETTE <https://rette.app.uib.no/> [accessed 6.5.2023]. 'Forskningsetiske retningslinjer for samfunnsvitenskap og humaniora', *De nasjonale forskningsetiske komiteene* <https://www.forskningsetikk.no/retningslinjer/hum-sam/forskningsetiske-retningslinjer-for-samfunnsvitenskap-og-humaniora/> [accessed 6.5.2023].

⁴⁴ With one exception, Michael Melchior met for two interviews.

⁴⁵ See interview guide with basic questions in the appendix.

overlapped, and certain primary sources were useful in multiple instances. Chapter 2 provides background to Jewish activities against antisemitism in Norway, looking at the pre-war period. It introduces the concept of a 'low-profile tradition' among Jews in reaction to antisemitism, in preparation to consider the incentives for reaction in the postwar period. To what extent was the 'low-profile tradition' functional in postwar Norway?

The paper comprises two large empirical chapters focusing on two selected aspects of the discourse on antisemitism in postwar Norway: Nazi antisemitism, and anti-Zionism. Chapter 3 analyses Jewish reactions to the trials of German Nazis and Norwegian collaborators in the National Legal Purge. It then analyses examines community reaction to the 'Swastika Epidemic' in 1960, and the trial against neo-Nazi high school teacher Olav Hoaas in 1976.

Chapter 4 analyses Jewish reactions to antisemitism associated with the emergence of the Norwegian anti-Zionist movement. How did central actors perceive the connection between anti-Zionism and antisemitism? To what extent did engagement with the defence of Israel, and the debate concerning its existence, function as a part of the struggle against antisemitism? Chapter 5 concludes the study by reflecting over the evolvement of definitions of antisemitism in the community, and strategies and methods employed by the actors to combat antisemitism.

2. Jewish reactions to antisemitism in Norway prior to the Second World War

This chapter historically contextualises Jewish responses to antisemitism in Norway looking at the pre-war period. Which methods were employed to combat antisemitism? To what extent did Norwegian Jews adopt a ‘low-profile tradition’ in reaction to antisemitism? In preparation for the empirical chapters on the postwar period, this chapter provides a background by exploring the extent of a ‘low-profile tradition’ among Norwegian Jewish actors.

2.1. Strategies for defensive action against antisemitism

With the emergence of modern antisemitism in the 1880s in countries that had introduced Jewish emancipation, Jews as citizens formed an organised defence against the new antisemitic movement and introduced methods for protecting their rights. Focusing on Germany, historian Stefanie Schüler-Springorum identifies six of these methods applied in different dimensions. For example, individual self-defence was confrontive and could take physical form. The scholarly confrontation with antisemitism, by its documentation and analysis effectively laid the ground for what is today regarded as ‘antisemitism research’.⁴⁶ The power of numbers, through self-organisation of those affected for the purpose of fighting back, validated the cause of the individual and proved effective in asserting the rights of the collective to external actors.

The legal battle against anti-Jewish discrimination, insults, and violence in Germany referred largely to the penal code against insulting a religion and incitement to racial hatred. It utilised the legal measures which were in place to protect against anti-Jewish agitation and assert those boundaries which protected citizens.⁴⁷ Through education and advocacy, Jewish actors appealed to a non-Jewish public and tackled antisemitic attitudes which resulted in anti-Jewish hostility. Finally, the power of alliance with political comrades-in-arms outside the Jewish sphere recruited the support of the public and influential non-Jewish actors. In the words of historian Richard S. Levy: ‘Without the engagement of the larger society, there is no winning in the battle against antisemitism. [...] Jews are reliant on the support of non-Jews who would listen to them, because only they are listened to.’⁴⁸

⁴⁶ Stefanie Schüler-Springorum. ‘Fighting Back! How to Deal with Antisemitism: A Historical Perspective’, *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book* 62 (2017) pp. 245–262, p. 250.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.* p. 255f.

⁴⁸ Richard S. Levy. ‘The Defense against Antisemitism: Minor Victories, Major Defeats, 1890–1939’ in Lange, Armin, Mayerhofer, Kerstin, Porat, Dina, Schiffman, Lawrence H., eds. *Comprehending Antisemitism through the Ages: A Historical Perspective* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2021) pp. 233–244, p. 242.

Levy explains that the reason Jews were historically reluctant to confront antisemitism was their lack of confidence in the sympathies of the mass of their fellow citizens. In Germany in the 1880s, Jewish associations strategised their defence around winning the support of the public. However, they feared that by asking for special protection they admitted their difference from the larger society and thus contributed to their own negative image – of a self-interest group that needed protecting. The Central Association of German Citizens of Jewish Faith (abbreviated *Centralverein*, CV) asked for ‘no other protection than that afforded to all law-abiding citizens and committed itself to a public defense of Judaism, to a dignified assimilation, and to full participation in German life.’⁴⁹

2.2. Jews against the ‘Jewish clause’ in the Norwegian constitution, 1814–1851

The earliest example of anti-Jewish discrimination in modern history of Norway is the so-called ‘Jewish clause’ in the Norwegian constitution of 1814 which banned Jews from the country until its repeal in 1851. The Norwegian constitution built upon principles of self-determination, popular sovereignty, separation of powers, and human rights, and was therefore considered at the time one of the most liberal and democratic constitutions in the world. Nevertheless, the radical exclusion of Jews in the constitution – together with Jesuits and monastic orders – stood in contrast with the traditional practice which was restrictive yet allowed for exceptions with issuing of travel and residence permits for Jews.⁵⁰

Jews who wished to enter Norway had to convert. Meanwhile, a small number of Jewish converts settled in Norway, among them Heinrich Glogau in Bergen.⁵¹ Glogau became engaged with the question of rights of Jews in Norway and the Christian majority’s attitudes towards Jews. After the signing of the constitution, the Council of Burghers in Bergen appealed to the City Magistrate in request to investigate whether the converted Christians in town were still Jewish or not, so they might be expelled from Norway.⁵² An anonymous letter followed in the newspaper *Bergens Adressecontoirs Efterretninger* against ‘baptised and unbaptised Jews’, asking ‘why do they settle down and send gold and silver out of our country?’⁵³ Glogau reacted both against intolerance towards Jews in Norway, and the exclusion of converted Christians. The letter meant that converted Christians like himself,

⁴⁹ Ibid pp. 235–237, quote p. 237.

⁵⁰ Hoffmann (2020b) p. 158.

⁵¹ Oskar Mendelsohn. *Jødenes historie i Norge gjennom 300 år* (Oslo: Universitetsforlag, 1969) p. 31.

⁵² Frode Ulvund. *Fridomens grenser 1814–1851. Handhevinga av den norske «jødeparagrafen»* (Oslo: Scandinavian Academic Press, 2014) pp. 134, 148.

⁵³ Untitled, *Bergens Adressecontoirs Efterretninger* 17.12.1814 in Ulvund (2014) p. 149. ‘[...] hvorfor de tilsjakkre sig og udsende af Landet vort Guld og Sølv.’

who fulfilled the residence requirements and were eligible to the same rights as any Norwegian-born, were not considered Norwegian, because they were seen as ‘Jews’.⁵⁴ By using the example of §100 in the constitution which forbade defamation, Glogau warned against ‘ingrained prejudice, mixed with hate, evil, and slander.’⁵⁵ However, he never received a response in the newspaper.

In 1817, Glogau sent a letter to Christian Magnus Falsen, who was considered the father of the constitution, requiring an explanation of the reasons for the ‘Jewish clause’. Glogau referred not only to the ban on residency for Jews but the ban on safe passage through Norway altogether.⁵⁶ He maintained: was it not humiliating enough that Jews were not allowed to live in Norway as citizens or to trade, but were banished from upon Norwegian ground, in the modern nineteenth century, while essentially no other country applied a similar prohibition?⁵⁷ The ‘Jewish clause’ was a religious clause in that it only applied to people who did not forfeit their Jewish faith in favour of another, unprotected by the constitution.⁵⁸ Yet, Falsen’s open response to Glogau indicates that the clause was essentially anti-Jewish:

He [the Jew] lives in a constant state of war with every nation which accepts him, and his religion makes it his duty to work for his nation’s destruction. [...] it [Norway] could, without doing injustice to anyone, include in its Constitution an article which perhaps would have been most beneficial to other countries as well.⁵⁹

To this, Glogau responded that he found no sufficient reason to ban Jews in the constitution, albeit he respected and honored Norwegian law.⁶⁰ Glogau was an outspoken individual who confronted directly ‘the father of the Norwegian constitution’ – in the latter’s own ‘constitution magazine’. Arguably, he was able to confront Falsen from the legitimate position of a converted Christian. He did not have to risk his standing, but ultimately criticised the exclusion of people who willingly assimilated into Norway and embraced the nation’s religion – yet regardless of their sacrifice were barred from integration because they were categorically seen as ‘different’ – as Jews.

The poet Henrik Wergeland – son of Nicolai Wergeland who was one of the authors of the Norwegian constitution and a staunch supporter of the ‘Jewish clause’ – launched a campaign

⁵⁴ Untitled, *Bergens Adressecontoirs Efterretninger* 24.12.1814. Glogau’s letter is dated 22.12.1814. letter meant that converted Christians like himself, who fulfilled the residence requirements and were eligible to the same rights as any Norwegian-born, were not considered Norwegian because they were seen as ‘Jews’.

⁵⁵ ‘[...] skaffe mig Ret imod ingroede Fordomme, blandede med Avind, Ondskab og Bagvaskelse.’

⁵⁶ Ulvund (2014) p. 177.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Bjarne Berulfsen. ‘Antisemitisme som litterær importvare’, *Edda*, 58 (1958) pp. 123–144, p. 134.

⁵⁹ Samuel Abrahamsen. ‘The Exclusion Clause of the Jews in the Norwegian Constitution of May 17, 1814’, *Jewish social Studies*, 30:2 (1968) pp. 67–88, p. 81.

⁶⁰ Ulvund (2014) p. 180.

for its repeal.⁶¹ In doing so, he had important allies. Since there were officially no Jews in Norway, Wergeland maintained correspondence with liberal Jews in Sweden and Germany, including Salomon Ludwig Steinheim and Gabriel Riesser in Hamburg.⁶² German Jewish journals like *Allgemeine Zeitung des Judenthums* published and discussed many of Wergeland's works on the topic. Wergeland died in 1845 and never witnessed the repeal of the 'Jewish clause'. The fight against the clause was seen as a matter of principle in the struggle for Jewish emancipation in Europe.⁶³ The lawyer Riesser and the physician Steinheim, both activists for Jewish emancipation, provided him with useful information and advice to bring the case up in the Norwegian Parliament.⁶⁴

By the time of Wergeland's death Jews were able to apply for certain entry permits to Norway. In 1848, the German Jewish Talmudist and archaeologist Ephraim Moses Pinner applied for such a visa for a 'research trip'. Pinner was academically engaged with Jewish emancipation in Europe. In one of his books, he included an open letter to the Norwegian Parliament regarding the 'Jewish clause' where he criticised not only the ban but its relentless enforcement.⁶⁵ The purpose of Pinner's 'research trip' was never specified in the forms. According to Frode Ulvund, he may have intended to travel to Norway to influence the outcome of the Parliamentary debate on the ban which took place in Oslo that summer. In any case, Pinner received a visa for the time after the debate would occur and this could be the reason he cancelled the trip.

2.3. 'The World Crisis and Us' – responses to antisemitism in interwar Norway

The Norwegian Supreme Court lawyer and writer Eivind Saxlund was a representative of 'modern antisemitism' strongly influenced by racial ideology in early twentieth century Norway. In 1910, he published the antisemitic propaganda book *Jøder og Gojim* where he agitated against Jews as a threat to Norwegian society. Saxlund also engaged in the kosher slaughter controversies with articles in the Agrarian party's daily *Nationen* and the conservative *Aftenposten*.⁶⁶ Oskar Mendelsohn explains that the small Jewish community in

⁶¹ Hoffmann (2020b) p. 158.

⁶² Christhard Hoffmann 'Introduction' in Hoffmann, Christhard, ed. *The Exclusion of Jews in the Norwegian Constitution of 1814* (Berlin: Metropol, 2016) pp. 13–22, p. 16.

⁶³ Hoffmann (2016) p. 16.

⁶⁴ Mendelsohn (1969) p. 73.

⁶⁵ Ulvund (2016) pp. 165–168.

⁶⁶ Andreas Snildal. *An Anti-Semitic Slaughter Law? The Origins of the Norwegian Prohibition of Jewish Religious Slaughter c. 1890–1930* (doctoral dissertation, University of Oslo, 2014), pp. 56, 59; Mendelsohn (1987) pp. 496–504. On Saxlund and the reception of his book see Olav S. Christensen. *Jøder og Gojim. Mottakelsen av et antisemittisk skrift fra 1910* (unpublished master's thesis, University of Oslo, 1998).

the interwar years found itself in a disadvantaged position and could not do much to combat antisemitism except through open debate.⁶⁷ Moritz Rabinowitz, a Jewish businessman from Haugesund, was specifically targeted because he was an outspoken critic of Nazism and an activist against antisemitism. In the early 1920s he confronted Saxlund in the local newspaper *Haugesunds Avis* regarding his claims relating to *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*.⁶⁸ He consistently challenged Saxlund and other antisemites in local press and was featured in the major newspapers. In 1927, Rabinowitz sued Mikal Sylten from the antisemitic magazine *Nationalt Tidsskrift* which targeted him as a Jewish businessman. The two were confronted in court, however Sylten was ultimately acquitted, and Rabinowitz lost the case.⁶⁹

Prior to Hitler's rising to power, Rabinowitz predicted a devastating world war. From 1933, he engaged in an extensive struggle to spread information on the emergence of Nazism in Europe through lectures and press publications.⁷⁰ His series of articles 'Verdenskrisen og vi' (The World Crisis and Us) was later published as a booklet where he attacked Nazism and antisemitism.⁷¹ Rabinowitz contacted central political actors before it would be too late to act. He wrote to the Nazi party in Norway Nasjonal Samling (NS) that they should not target Norwegian Jews because Jews were not Norway's enemy. Thereby, he exposed himself as the Jew who had 'taken upon himself the task to combat antisemitism in Norway.' Rabinowitz 'felt morally obliged both as a Jew and a Norwegian citizen' to convey that his people should be seen as valuable citizens and a true part of Norwegian society.⁷² Rabinowitz asked the Reich President Paul von Hindenburg, Franklin D. Roosevelt, and Neville Chamberlain to intervene on behalf of German Jews.⁷³ Because of his active efforts as a Norwegian Jew, he was on the top of the lists of the Nazis when Germany invaded Norway in April 1940. He went in hiding but was eventually arrested and thereafter deported to Sachsenhausen concentration camp. In 1942, Rabinowitz was stomped to death.⁷⁴

⁶⁷ Mendelsohn (1969) p. 634.

⁶⁸ Ibid p. 569. On the promoters of the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*: Martin A. Ringdal. "Norge vokn op!" *Syv norske aktørers fortolkning og bruk av "Sions vises protokoller" 1920–1945* (unpublished master's thesis, University of Oslo, 2018).

⁶⁹ Sylten's world view was based on völkich–racism and conspiracism. On Sylten and *Nationalt Tidsskrift*: Kristin Brattelid. *Mikal Sylten. Et antisemittisk livsprosjekt* (unpublished master's thesis, University of Oslo, 2004); Arne Vestbø. *Moritz Rabinowitz. En biografi* (Oslo: Spartacus, 2011) pp. 87–97; on Moritz Rabinowitz: Per Kristian Sebak. "...vi blir neppe nogensinne mange her". *Jøder i Bergen 1851–1945* (Bergen: Vigmostad & Bjørke, 2008).

⁷⁰ Kristian Ottosen. *I slik en natt. Historien om deportasjonen av jøder fra Norge* (Oslo: Aschehoug, 1994) p. 32.

⁷¹ Moritz Rabinowitz. *Verdenskrisen og vi* (Haugesund, independent publishing, 1933).

⁷² Vestbø (2011) p. 148. 'Jeg har fått i oppdrag å bekjempe antisemitismen i Norge og jeg føler meg moralsk forpliktet til som jøde og norsk statsborger.'

⁷³ Ibid pp. 139, 153, 169, respectively.

⁷⁴ Vestbø (2011) p. 209.

Like Glogau a century earlier, Rabinowitz criticised hostility towards Norwegian Jews who established themselves as patriotic and law-abiding citizens but were nevertheless targeted because they were not truly considered Norwegian. In this way, fighting antisemitism as a form of exclusion had an integrationist function. From 1933 until the Second World War in 1939, the annual visit to Henrik Wergeland's grave on the Norwegian Constitution Day on 17. May – organised by the Jewish Youth Association (JUF) – became a platform for protest against antisemitism among Jews and non-Jews alike. Wergeland as a national figure also symbolised the Jewish community's integration in Norway. Wergeland's vision and efforts to include Jews functioned as a basis of forming Norwegian Jewish identifications, and a legal and ideological basis for integration in the Norwegian nation.⁷⁵ From 1937, the annual commemoration was officially broadcasted as part of the television program of 17. May, and JUF's speech was televised by the Norwegian Broadcasting Cooperation (NRK) to the whole country.⁷⁶

2.4. A 'low-profile tradition'?

Regarding the Jewish community in Oslo prior to the Second World War, historian Vibeke K. Banik explains the 'low-profile tradition' as an integrationist function. The older generation feared assimilation among the younger generation which adopted a local identity.⁷⁷ Thus, on the one hand, attempts to integrate could be interpreted as a form of assimilation. On the other hand, evolvement of identifications could also function as a preservation of tradition. From separatism on one end of the pole and assimilation on the other, emerged a modern integrationist approach. Moses Mendelssohn, who is considered the father of Jewish Enlightenment (Haskala) coined it thus: 'Be a cosmopolitan man in the street and a Jew at home.' Those who defined their Judaism as a set of beliefs sought to show that apart from their faith, they shared the same liberal values as their peers. Hence, they maintained that the difference between Jews and Christians was not essential, and the legal and social differences between Jews and Christians could not be defined by their religious factors. This marked a process of acculturation. Largely in Germany but also in other countries in Western Europe,

⁷⁵ Hoffmann (2013) see p. 249; Alf Magne Sirevåg. *Henrik Wergeland sin kamp for jødane i den norske minnekulturen 1845–1945* (master's thesis, University of Bergen, 2010) p. 69. 'de norske jødernes identitetsskapende opprinnelsesmyte og det rettslige og ideologiske grunnlaget for deres integrasjon i det norske nasjon.'

⁷⁶ Sirevåg (2010) p. 74.

⁷⁷ Vibeke K. Banik. 'The Faith of the Fathers, the Future of the Youth: Being Jewish on the Periphery of the Diaspora', *Jewish Studies in the Nordic Countries Today*, Scripta Instituti Donneriani Aboensis 27 (2016) pp. 153–172.

Enlightened Jews (Maskilim) were to integrate into the local culture while valuing their Jewish belonging within their own close circle.⁷⁸

Historian Marta Gjernes presents the geographical and socio-economic placement of the earliest Jewish community in Norway in the late nineteenth century. On the one hand, Jewish individuals responded directly against antisemitism in the press when they believed discrimination against them was enacted on a stereotypical rather than a personal basis because they were seen as ‘Jews’. On the other hand, most of them took a non-provocative approach.⁷⁹ Thus, a member of the Jewish community wrote in the magazine *Israelitten* in 1916: ‘But when the subject is a Jew, then not only the accused is criticised but all Jewish people as one. [...] Therefore we should be doubly careful in our behavior, and not provide material for the antisemitic propaganda.’⁸⁰

The sense of collective responsibility, where one’s actions affect others, is central in Norwegian Jewish community consciousness. In her book on her family’s deportation and exile during the Second World War, sociologist Irene Levin describes how Jewish individuals during the early twentieth century in Norway protected the community by looking out for their own behavior. She argues that they did not have the liberty to act in a way that drew attention, but they were expected to contribute to the reputation of the community as individuals.⁸¹ Thus, a question arises, whether the ‘low-profile tradition’ has meant not to draw attention as a Jew, or to not to respond against hostility and discrimination as a Jew? In the example in *Israelitten*, it is evident that Jews knew they were being stigmatised, so their counterstrategy was to prove others wrong, by acting differently from the stereotype of a Jew. In this way, Gjernes shows that the older Jewish community made efforts to embrace the incoming Jewish population so that they might integrate faster and not become noticeable in their difference.⁸²

⁷⁸ Reinhard Rürup. ‘The Politics of Jewish Emancipation in Europe at the Beginning of the Nineteenth Century’ in Hoffmann, Christhard, ed. *The Exclusion of Jews in the Norwegian Constitution of 1814: Origins – Contexts – Consequences* (Berlin: Metropol, 2016); Gil Troy. *The Zionist Ideas: Visions for the Jewish Homeland – Then, Now, Tomorrow* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2018) p. xxxvi.

⁷⁹ Marta Gjernes. *Jødar i Kristiania. Dei fyrste innvandrarene si geografiske og sosialøkonomiske plassering i samfunnet frå 1851–1942* (Oslo: Norwegian Center for Holocaust and Minority Studies, 2007) pp. 172–182, 219–226, 232–235.

⁸⁰ *Israelitten* 1917 Nr. 5 in Gjernes (2007) p. 178. ‘men er vedkommende er jøde, da kritiseres ikke bare gjerningsmanden, men alle jøder under et. [...] Derfor bør vi være dobbelt forsiktige i vor opførsel, og ikke gi stof til den antisemittiske propaganda.’

⁸¹ Irene Levin. *Vi snakket ikke om Holocaust. Mor, jeg og tausheten* (Oslo: Gyldendal, 2021) p. 21, reflecting on a conversation with Solveig Levin. See also p. 175.

⁸² Gjernes (2007) pp. 179–180.

Nevertheless, a ‘low–profile tradition’ hardly applied to the entire Jewish community. There were surely various incentives for integration and for adopting ‘local’ traditions and identifications, apart from assimilation out of fear. This example of a ‘low–profile tradition’ does, however, illustrate that the Jewish community understood the relationship between distinctive Jewish belonging and criticism of society. Therefore, Gjernes argues that the community undertook a cautious integrationist approach which she defines as ‘integration through prosperity’ – proving belonging in society by focusing on common grounds and the positive aspects of integration.⁸³ By establishing oneself socially and economically in Norway, one contributed to society as Norwegian. Gjernes explains that sometimes, integrating in a new country meant adopting new approaches and moving away from the community.⁸⁴ This in itself may not indicate a ‘low–profile tradition’. Nevertheless, Gjernes identifies an important tendency in understanding the cultural and social premises for reacting against antisemitism. There may be an overlap between ‘keeping one’s head down’ visibly as a Jew, and ‘keeping one’s head down’ when threatened or harmed for being a Jew.

2.5. Concluding remarks

Long before Jews were officially allowed to enter Norway, liberal Jews in Germany and the neighboring Scandinavian countries created important alliances to lobby for the inclusion of Jews under the Norwegian constitution –collaborating with Henrik Wergeland and appealing directly to the Norwegian Constituent Assembly and Parliament. Individual Jewish actors like Heinrich Glogau and Moritz Rabinowitz maintained that Norwegian Jews should be seen and treated as Norwegian. People who successfully integrated into Norwegian society, who made sacrifice to be able to embrace Norwegian identity and showed a good sense of citizenship, should not be ‘abandoned’ and targeted in their homeland due to traditional prejudice, because they were not seen as Norwegian. In this way, the fight against anti–Jewish hostility as a form of exclusion had an integrationist function, maintaining social acceptance and a sense of belonging. Researchers like Marta Gjernes, Vibeke K. Banik, and Oskar Mendelsohn contextualise the fight against antisemitism in the ‘low–profile tradition’ that existed in the community as a self–preservation mechanism. Looking ahead to the empirical chapters: did the ‘low–profile tradition’ remain functional in the postwar period?

⁸³ Ibid pp. 233–234.

⁸⁴ Ibid p. 223.

3. Norwegian Jewish reactions to persistent Nazi antisemitism, 1945–1978

This chapter analyses Norwegian Jewish reactions to anti-Jewish hostility and discrimination in the aftermath of the Second World War, following three case studies: 1. Trials against Nazis and Norwegian collaborators in the National Legal Purge (*Rettsoppgjøret*). 2. The ‘Swastika Epidemic’ in 1960 and the community’s involvement in the creation of Article 135a against incitement to racial hatred; and 3. The legal case against neo-Nazi Olav Hoaas, who was convicted according to Article 135a in 1976. How did central actors in the Jewish community define antisemitism in the aftermath of the Second World War and the Holocaust? Which strategies and methods were developed and used in response against anti-Jewish hostility and discrimination?

3.1. Responses to verdicts in the National Legal Purge, 1945–1948

In 1946, the International Military Tribunal (IMT) in Nuremberg concluded the main trial against former leaders of Nazi Germany. Their verdict distinguished crimes against peace, crimes of war, and crimes against humanity.⁸⁵ Juridical proceedings in the liberated countries including Norway’s National Legal Purge applied the same ‘Nuremberg principles’ to Nazis and collaborators.⁸⁶ While the atrocities of the Holocaust had been known, the IMT was criticised for regarding crimes against Jews as an auxiliary theme in the context of other crimes.⁸⁷ According to historian Laura Jockusch, Jewish witnesses in the trials represented the Allied Nations rather than the Jewish collective against the Nazis. The Institute of Jewish Affairs at the World Jewish Congress (WJC) lobbied to set the standard that national and international tribunals should treat the persecution of Jews as a distinctive crime and include the persecution of racial, religious, and political minorities prior to and during the war.⁸⁸ The advocates of the legal norms established by the IMT sought to categorise crimes against Jews as ‘crimes against humanity’ as a precondition for ensuring Jewish security.⁸⁹ Their efforts were aimed at ‘restorative justice’ rather than ‘retributive justice’.⁹⁰

A patriotic memory culture developed in Norway originating in the resistance against Nazi occupation and the collaborators and functioned as a unifying factor in postwar national unity

⁸⁵ ‘Nazi War Crimes – War Crimes Trials’, *Jewish Virtual Library* [War Crimes Trials \(jewishvirtuallibrary.org\)](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/War-Crimes-Trials) [accessed 24.11.2022].

⁸⁶ Reitan (2016) pp. 62–63.

⁸⁷ Laura Jockusch. ‘Justice at Nuremberg? Jewish Responses to Nazi War-Crime in Allied-Occupied Germany’, *Jewish Social Studies*, 19:1 (2012) pp. 107–147, pp. 109–110, 134; Sahlström (2021) p. 288.

⁸⁸ Jockusch (2012) pp. 113–116.

⁸⁹ *Ibid* p. 132.

⁹⁰ Sahlström (2021) pp. 295, 297.

and community.⁹¹ Many in Norway – as in other liberated countries – rejected the ideas associated with fascism and the far-right altogether, implementing a taboo against their open expression. The framing of ‘antisemitism’ as an import from Nazi Germany conceptualised it as the ideology of a small group of traitors, representing fascism and extremism. This memory culture emphasised the solidarity Norwegians showed Jews prior to and during the war, leading to the understanding that antisemitism in Norway was a marginal phenomenon.⁹²

The new image of antisemitism as it was manifested in the Holocaust created blindness to less visible forms of antisemitism such as ‘prejudice rooted in culture, and negative attitudes passed on by broader segments of the population.’⁹³ Yet, there were self-critical voices in Norwegian public debate towards antisemitism not only as a remnant from Nazism but a daily phenomenon. In 1947, lawyer and DMT member Leon Jarner wrote an article in *Verdens Gang* on postwar antisemitism in the country. Jarner stressed that antisemitism was first and foremost a prejudiced worldview and a latent aversion against Jews originating in conspiracy thinking and irrational hatred.⁹⁴ Due to its abstract nature, antisemitism was durable and flexible in the way that it could exist wherever Jews found themselves, including liberated Norway. While policy could be put in place to protect against discrimination, antisemitic attitudes among the population were difficult to detect. Jarner maintained: ‘If someone asked me whether ‘antisemitism’ was more widespread in Norway today than previously, the answer would have to be an unequivocal yes!’⁹⁵ Jarner asked disappointedly, what was the point in calling out antisemitism if no one was going to understand or change their ways.

3.1.1. Rehabilitation challenges and integrationist approaches

The first issue of DMT’s magazine *Jødisk Nytt* after the Second World War opened with the statement: ‘Hitler lost the war but won the battle against the Jews.’⁹⁶ Norwegian Jews faced individual and collective challenges of rehabilitation. All survivors lost dear ones in the Holocaust, and upon their return families struggled to reclaim confiscated possession and homes. Jewish estates were sold, furniture auctioned, and many struggled to recover their businesses.⁹⁷ In her book on liquidation of Jewish property in Norway, Synne Corell deals

⁹¹ Hoffmann (2020a) pp. 27–28; Reitan (2016) pp. 99–101.

⁹² Hoffmann (2020a) pp. 29–31. Antisemitic expression before the war was supposed to be minor and could be easily overlooked: Hoffmann (2020b) pp. 155–156.

⁹³ Bachner (1999) p. 14, translation by Simonsen (2020b) p. 177.

⁹⁴ Leon Jarner, “—Jeg har hørt at jødene —” *Verdens Gang* 29.11.1947.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ *Jødisk Nytt*, 9.1946 Nr. 1.

⁹⁷ Bjarte Bruland. *Holocaust i Norge. Registrering, deportasjon, tilintetgjørelse* (Oslo: Dreyer, 2017) pp. 487, 514–549. Reitan (2016) pp. 112–113.

with the question why there were so few testimonies of Jewish victims regarding the liquidation after the war. She emphasises that the Norwegian police did not systematically ask Jews about their experience of arrest and persecution in Norway.⁹⁸ The editor of *Jødisk Nytt* addressed the arrival of Jewish displaced persons (DPs), Holocaust survivors from Eastern Europe: ‘Our new members and fellow citizens must understand that a new life has begun, and the past with all its horror and misery must be forgotten.’⁹⁹ DMT Vice President Moses Leopold Milner greeted the newcomers: ‘Today you start a new life. The past must be forgotten, now we must look forward.’¹⁰⁰ Rabbi Leopold Goldmann emphasised the feeling of belonging in Norway as embodied by the figures of national heroes like Henrik Wergeland and Odd Nansen, representing freedom and confidence in a better future.¹⁰¹

In August 1945, two Jews from Bergen were interviewed by the police on their detainment in Norwegian concentration camps. Both were released since they were married to non-Jews. They were asked if they wished to press charges against the police officers who carried out their arrests, and both ‘had no reason to complain’ since the officers treated them respectfully.¹⁰² Wilhelm Goldberg stated that he ‘was given plenty of time to organise himself and the police officers behaved professionally, so he has no reason to complain about them.’¹⁰³ This should be seen in context of three similar statements made by non-Jewish teachers who were arrested in Bergen. One of them could not complain against the police officer who arrested him because he ‘was a good man who did not know, or realised too late, what he was involved in.’¹⁰⁴ By contrast, another maintained that the policeman who arrested him should be prosecuted and punished as traitor because he collaborated with the German Security Police. The third stated that the police officers who arrested him ‘probably had to follow orders from higher up, and I do not demand they be punished for it.’

⁹⁸ Synne Corell. *Likvidasjon. Historie om Holocaust i Norge og jakten på jødenes eiendom* (Oslo: Gyldendal, 2022) pp. 7–12.

⁹⁹ K. F. Untitled. *Jødisk Nytt* 1947 Nr. 2. Kai Feinberg was the son of Elias Feinberg, chairman of Jewish Aid Association before the war. Kai survived Berg concentration camp and subsequently Auschwitz and lost his family in the Holocaust. He provided an affidavit in the Nuremberg Trials. ‘Affidavits and Hearings of Survivors of the Buna/Monowitz Concentration Camp’, *Wollheim Memorial*: http://www.wollheim-memorial.de/en/affidavits_and_hearings_of_survivors_of_the_bunamonowitz_concentration_camp [accessed 15.3.2023]. Feinberg re-established DMT’s magazine after the war in the new name *Jødisk Nytt* as chief editor until 1948.

¹⁰⁰ Eva Scheer. ‘Våre trosfeller og vordende medborgere kommer til Norge’ *Jødisk Nytt* 1947 Nr. 2.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Affidavits of Alexander Kremner and Wilhelm Goldberg to Bergen Police, RA/Landssvikarkivet/Bergen politikammer/D/Da/L0164: Dnr. 490, 1941–1948.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Affidavits of Lars Sörås, Karl Handal, and Dag Öivind Hofstad to Bergen Police, RA/Landssvikarkivet/Bergen politikammer/D/Da/L0164: Dnr. 490, 1941–1948.

Both the Jewish and the non-Jewish victims forfeited the opportunity to see those who arrested them behind bars. They thought the police officers should not be punished, because the way they treated them personally was appropriate. They probably had an understanding of occupation by a totalitarian power where an individual policeman had limited space for action. Only one non-Jewish witness thought that to collaborate with the Germans justified punishment. Otherwise, the witnesses separated between the Norwegian police officers' professional conduct, and the implication of their crime. This case highlights the potential transformation in the perceptions of Norwegian Jews regarding hostility and discrimination following the war, suggesting a nuanced shift in their understanding of the actions and motives of those involved in their arrests.

3.1.2. Jewish testimonies in the trial against Vidkun Quisling

Norwegian Holocaust survivors were interviewed in the press as early as May 1945.¹⁰⁵ In August, Leo Eitinger and Asriel Hirsch testified in Vidkun Quisling's trial. They sought to explicate Quisling's responsibility for sending Norway's Jews to their death. Quisling had argued that neither he nor the State Police (*Statspolitiet*) knew the Jews were being deported until the ship S/S Donau left Norway on 26.11.1942, and they were not aware that Jews were being sent to gas chambers.¹⁰⁶ Hirsch and Eitinger reported that by the time they had arrived in Oslo, a Norwegian policeman told them that the Jews were deported to Germany.¹⁰⁷ In the concentration camp Bredtveit 'nothing was done to hide the fact that we were going to be deported, and the guards talked all the time about the others who were sent to Poland.'¹⁰⁸

Hirsch addressed primarily the question of deportation and did not say that the Jews knew they were being sent to their death. Eitinger explained similarly that while Jews in Norway knew of the Nuremberg laws and Nazi persecution in Europe, they could not tell what would happen to them outside Norway. Nevertheless, Eitinger stressed that while Quisling claimed he was only informed of the deportation after S/S Donau had sailed, those Jews who did not make it to the ship were imprisoned in concentration camps in Norway, indicating that

¹⁰⁵ '5 unge norske jøder er kommet til København' *Dagbladet* 24.5.1945; 'Den eneste overlevende av en transport på 540 norske jøder' *Arbeiderbladet* 13.6.1945.

¹⁰⁶ *Straffesak mot Vidkun Abraham Lauritz Jonnsøn Quisling* (Oslo: Eidsivating lagstols landssvikavdeling, 1946) pp. 160, 205; 'Quislings selvportrett: Fedrelandsvenn, filantrop, legatstifter, og avholdsmann' *Aftenposten* 24.8.1945.

¹⁰⁷ Eitinger and Hirsch were taken too late and missed the sailing of S/S Dondau, and hence were sent to the concentration camp Bredtveit until a subsequent deportation act on the ship Monte Rosa.

¹⁰⁸ *Straffesak mot Vidkun Abraham Lauritz Jonnsøn Quisling* (1946) p. 160.

Quisling was aware of subsequent deportation acts and did not hinder them. Later, Quisling defended the deportation on S/S Donau in a public speech in Trondheim.¹⁰⁹

Senior Gestapo official Wilhelm Wagner and Norwegian police officer Knut Rød also testified in the trial. Wagner admitted that Rød, and the head of State Police Karl Marthinsen were notified early of the Reich Security Main Office (RSHA)'s order to deport the Jews from Norway.¹¹⁰ Wagner understood the order as one that 'conformed with the Norwegian government's intentions.'¹¹¹ Rød on his part was ambivalent regarding Quisling's responsibility, albeit in an earlier hearing he had admitted Quisling knew of the plan.¹¹² Quisling was convicted for negligent homicide and the court determined he could not have known that the Jews were being sent to their death.¹¹³

3.1.3. Reactions to the verdicts against Wilhelm Wagner and Knut Rød

Police inspector Knut Rød was member of Nasjonal Samling (NS) during the German occupation of Norway and was responsible for the arrest of Jews in Oslo and Aker district prior to their deportation. He resigned from the State Police in autumn 1943 and was arrested in May 1945 in accordance with §86 against treason and aid to the enemy.¹¹⁴ Rød never confirmed so himself, but his defence solicitor argued for him that he was involved in the Norwegian resistance movement, and therefore, he subscribed to NS to camouflage his work supposedly as leader of a resistance group within the Oslo Police – and this was considered in his trial.¹¹⁵ Rød was acquitted in the Court of Appeal (*Lagmannsrett*) in February 1946, as the majority concluded his actions against the Jews were committed 'exclusively in purpose of providing a camouflage to his extremely important work for [...] the Norwegian resistance movement.'¹¹⁶ The Attorney General (*Riksadvokat*) appealed the verdict to the Supreme Court (*Høyesterett*), and it was taken for the second and final time in the Court of Appeal (*Lagmannsrett*) in 1948, where Rød was acquitted. He was nevertheless unwelcome back at the Oslo Police. Rød appealed his permanent suspension from the police to the Ministry of Justice (*Justisdepartement*) which rejected his plea. In 1949, the matter was brought up again

¹⁰⁹ Ibid p. 159.

¹¹⁰ Ibid p. 204. There is evidence to show that Quisling accepted the Third Reich's plan to solve the 'Jewish question' and himself took the initiative to execute the plan in Norway: Mendelsohn (1987) p. 214f.

¹¹¹ *Straffesak mot Vidkun Abraham Lauritz Jonnsøn Quisling* (1946) p. 203.

¹¹² Ibid p. 220. Hans Fredrik Dahl. *Quisling. En norsk tragedie* (Oslo: Aschehoug, 2012) p. 601.

¹¹³ Reitan (2016) p. 115.

¹¹⁴ Per Ole Johansen, ed. *På siden av rettsoppjøret* (Oslo: Unipub, 2006) pp. 65–66. 'Bistand til fienden'.

¹¹⁵ Ibid pp. 55, 61, 66; Øivind Kopperud and Irene Levin. 'Da norske jøder ikke fantes', *Nytt norsk tidsskrift*, 27:3 (2010) pp 1–9, 3–5.

¹¹⁶ Kopperud and Levin (2010) p. 2.

as a civil case in the Oslo City Court (*Oslo Byrett*) where Rød was given his job back as police inspector. The police appealed to the Supreme Court together with the Ministry of Justice. They maintained Rød should not be taken back due to his contribution to the resistance movement which could not be verified. Nevertheless, the court rejected the appeal and Rød remained in the Oslo Police until his pension in 1965.¹¹⁷

Researchers propose different interpretations of Rød's acquittal considering whether the court did not consider Jews as 'Norwegian' and thus excluded them from the national collective in the verdict. Øivind Kopperud and Irene Levin argue that Rød was tried for his crimes against the Jews but acquitted because he helped 'Norwegians'. They explain that the court's statement, that Rød never acted 'unnationally', indicated the Jews were not included in the national collective.¹¹⁸ Historian Christopher S. Harper interprets the language used in the trials to argue that the court separated between 'Jews' and 'Norwegians' in formulations like 'good Norwegians', 'protect Norwegian interests', and 'benefit their countrymen', and suggests that the understanding Rød helped Norwegians in the war outweighed his actions against Jews.¹¹⁹ Historian Per Ole Johansen explains that the court had a traditional understanding of violence, looking for evil character and direct contact with the victims, that was inappropriate for understanding an organised genocide.¹²⁰ The court interpreted the atrocious policy against Jews as what was dictated by the Nazi occupier and executed by the treacherous Quisling regime. Thus, the Norwegian police contributed to crimes against Jews, but ultimately played a minor role in the larger scheme of war.¹²¹

Another major trial which raised crucial questions on justice and responsibility, was that of senior Gestapo official Wilhelm Wagner, Hitler's *Judenreferent* in Norway who headed the office in the Norwegian Security Police responsible for the 'Jewish question'. Wagner stood trial in October 1946 for the administration of the deportation of Norwegian Jews to concentration and extermination camps.¹²² Head of the Gestapo in Norway Hellmuth

¹¹⁷ Johansen (2006) pp. 66–70.

¹¹⁸ Kopperud and Levin (2010) p. 4.

¹¹⁹ Christopher S Harper. 'Landssvikoppjørets behandling av jødeforfølgelsen i Norge 1940–1945. En gjennomgang av de to frifinnende dommene i saken mot politiinspektør Knut Rød i 1946 og 1948', *Lov Og Rett* 49:8 (2010) pp. 469–489, pp. 483–484. 'gode nordmenn', 'verne norske interesser', 'gagne sine landsmenn'. This paragraph has been inspired by an interpretation of scholarship in Elise Barring Berggren. *Exclusion by Ignorance. Lawmakers' Lack of Attention to Norwegian–Jewish Needs in Restitution Legislation 1945–1947* (master's thesis, University of Oslo, 2021) pp. 76.

¹²⁰ Johansen (2006) pp. 48–49.

¹²¹ Ibid. Reitan (2016) pp. 119–120. Another interpretation of the Rød case: Torgeir E. Sæveraas. *I skyggen mellom trærne. Om krig og ansvar* (Oslo: Spartacus, 2018).

¹²² Bjarte Bruland. *Det norske Holocaust. Forsøket på å tilintetgjøre de norske jødene* (Oslo: Norwegian Center for Holocaust and Minority Studies, 2008) p. 30; 'Wagner trodde jødene skulle på jordbruksarbeid i Polen' *Verdens Gang* 2.10.1946.

Reinhard informed the RSHA of the pending transport of Jews to the continent, and the Norwegian State Police carried out the arrests.¹²³ Still, the Court of Appeal found Wagner responsible for the execution of the deportation, which made him a war criminal, and he was sentenced to death.¹²⁴ However, Wagner's verdict was revised in April 1947 to 20 years of forced labour.¹²⁵ The Supreme Court concluded the case with a majority of 3:2 that 'The convicted person's participation in the implementation of this criminal measure has been of such a subordinate nature that it would not be appropriate to sentence him to the most severe punishment in the law.'¹²⁶ Wagner's responsibility was determined limited since the court claimed he would have risked his life if he had refused German orders, and therefore he could not be punished by death.

Several returning Jews testified in Wagner's trial including DMT Trustee Harry Koritzinsky, and Holocaust survivors Kai Feinberg and Josef Berg.¹²⁷ Wagner based himself in the Nuremberg defence rhetoric that he 'merely followed orders' and was not personally motivated to persecute Jews. He appealed his death sentence to the Supreme Court, and DMT followed the developments with great concern. While the verdict had been under reassessment, DMT member Alfred Leopold wrote to Marcus Levin in the community leadership with concern that 'unconscious Nazi attitudes' still existed in Norway.¹²⁸ To Leopold, ruthlessness and egoism encompassed the basic evil inclination that existed in everyone, which explained how this thinking survived the war. Leopold did not use the term 'antisemitism' but conceptualised those latent attitudes as a remnant from Nazism among ordinary people. He did not address Wagner or other trials, but his description appears to imply that latent anti-Jewish attitudes among the Norwegian population could tip the scale in Wagner's favour. Therefore, he encouraged Levin to persevere in the active struggle against Nazi attitudes in Norway, hoping that the efforts would lead to positive outcome in the long term.¹²⁹ Indeed, DMT kept correspondence with the Ministry of Justice by providing

¹²³ Mendelsohn (1987) p. 305. Kai Feinberg, Oskar Mendelsohn, and Walter Rothholz testified in Hellmuth Reinhard's trial in 1967, p. 306.

¹²⁴ 'Wagner trodde jødene skulle på jordbruksarbeid' *Verdens Gang* 2.10.1946.

¹²⁵ In 1951, Wagner was pardoned and expelled from Norway. He received a secure job at a bank in his hometown Bad Godesberg in Germany where he resided for the rest of his life: Odd Bergfald. *Hellmuth Reinhard. Soldat eller morder?* (Oslo: Chr. Schibsted, 1967) pp. 56–57; Bruland (2008) p. 30.

¹²⁶ Mendelsohn (1987) p. 305.

¹²⁷ 'Allerede tidlig i 1942 truet tyskerne i norske jøder med utryddelse' *Aftenposten* 3.10.1946.

¹²⁸ Letter from Fred Leopold to Marcus Levin, untitled, 10.3.1947, JMO/PA/AS11015/Y1. 'ubevidst nacistisk Indstilling'. Alfred (Fred) Leopold came to Norway as a refugee from Germany in 1938. He fled to Sweden in 1940 and lost his mother in the Holocaust: 'Marta Leopold (1882–1942)', *Snublestein.no* <https://www.snublestein.no/Marta-Leopold-1882-1942/p=733/> [accessed 29.11.2022].

¹²⁹ Letter from Fred Leopold to Marcus Levin, untitled, 10.3.1947, JMO/PA/AS11015/Y1.

witnesses and information concerning the persecution of Jews by the German Security Police and the Norwegian State Police under the occupation.¹³⁰

Marcus Levin previously expressed himself explicitly against ‘antisemitism’ in postwar Norway. In 1946, he wrote a report to the Jewish humanitarian organisation JOINT, where he warned that Jews in Norway were met with ‘the antisemitism that cannot be denied, even though at the moment it does not hit particularly hard and is not particularly noticeable, other than in private.’ He argued that the antisemitic propaganda during the occupation ‘left its mark’ in Norway, and ‘oddly enough, became noticeable as soon as the external pressure had vanished.’¹³¹ Like Leon Jarner and Alfred Leopold, Levin acknowledged the Nazis’ role in introducing antisemitism to Norway, and also recognised anti-Jewish attitudes as a basic inclination that could exist in anyone and thrive in private and daily life.

Levin would have heard that Wagner’s verdict was being revised, and he protested the decision to the Attorney General before the trial took place.¹³² Levin asserted that the new verdict would not have the preventative effect that should be its purpose. Thus, he suggested that Norwegian Jews were not equally protected by the law as other Norwegian citizens: ‘We, Jews, are not given the protection that we, Norwegian citizens, should have in the constitution by this Supreme Court’s verdict.’¹³³ The verdict meant that the Supreme Court could make similar judgement in other cases and Jewish citizens would not be protected by the juridical authority. Levin accused the Supreme Court of contradicting its own policy, by breaking the just principles which so far had been applied. He did not accuse the Supreme Court of being antisemitic, but implied that the court would have made a different verdict, if the victims had been non-Jews:

One cannot let go of the feeling that the court’s verdict gives expression to undervaluing of the certain group of people here in question – and one asks oneself whether the court would reach the same result, if the matter regarded a different group of Norwegian citizens of a similar number, of whichever random composition.¹³⁴

¹³⁰ Letter from Assor Hirsch, receiver unspecified, undated, ‘Ad Forklaringer angående sak mot gestapist Wagner’, undated, JMO/PA/AS11015/Y1.

¹³¹ Bruland (2017) p. 33. ‘desværre møtes de også av den antisemitisme som ikke kan benektes selv om den i øyeblikket ikke stikker så serlig dypt og ikke gjør seg noget serlig merkbar selv om ved privat omgang.’, ‘Den antisemitiske propaganda som har pågått unner hele okkupasjonen ser allikevel ut til å ha fått et slags fotfeste og blev eiendommelig nok merkbar såsnart det ytre trykket forsvant.’

¹³² Letter from Marcus Levin to the Attorney General, ‘Ad Høiesteretsdom mot gestapisten Wagner’, 5.4.1947, JMO/PA/AS11015/Y1.

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ Ibid. ‘En kan ikke fri sig fra følelsen av at domsresultatet gir uttrykk for en nedvurdering av den bestemte menneskegruppe det her gjelder – og man spør sig selv om retten ville komme til samme resultat, hvis saken hadde omfattet en anden gruppe norske statsborgere av et liknende antall av hvilken som helst tilfeldig sammensetning.’

Levin concluded that Wagner was indicted only partially. He was charged for the murder of 530 Jews deported on S/S Donau, but he should have also been charged for crimes of conscience, like direct abuse of Jews by himself and by his subordinates. Moreover, Wagner should have been charged for the arrest of all Jews from February 1941 to 26.11.1942 and thereafter. 160 Jews were deported on the ship M/S Gotenland because they missed S/S Donau, but this should have been considered as a continuation of the same deportation process. Finally, Levin refuted Wagner's claim that he was unaware of the plans of deportation by arguing that Wagner must have known by the time he had administered the deportation of 21 Jews with the ship M/S Monte Rosa on 19.11.1942.

A month later, DMT released the following statement in *Arbeiderbladet*: 'The verdict seems to us, Norwegian Jews, as one of many cases in which the Supreme Court unconsciously undervalues a certain group of Norwegian citizens.'¹³⁵ DMT did not insinuate for antisemitism but implied that Jews were not being treated equally to 'Norwegians', thus the Supreme Court's undervaluing of a certain group of people was unconscious. On the same day, physician and DMT member Bernhard Goldberg argued in an article in *Dagbladet* that Wagner's crimes were neither taken seriously enough by the court, nor stirred proper reaction in the Norwegian public because they only concerned Jews.¹³⁶ Neither did he use the term 'antisemitism' but he implied that Norwegian Jews were of lesser value in the application of the law – thus ultimately indicating latent a anti-Jewish sentiment.

Goldberg framed his criticism as something the Norwegian reader could sympathise with. It was not revenge the Jews were seeking, but justice. No one could bring back those who were lost, but Norwegian society – including the Jews – had the power to hold a criminal accountable: 'Now we Jews ask: what protection does the Supreme Court give us? Do crimes against Jews not fall under crimes against humanity?'¹³⁷ On the one hand, he highlighted the solidarity between Jews and non-Jews by arguing that before the war 'there was no Jewish problem in Norway.'¹³⁸ Yet, the tension left its mark, and the situation of Norwegian Jews

¹³⁵ Styret for Det Mosaiske Trossamfund, 'Dommen over Wagner. En protest fra jødene' *Arbeiderbladet* 12.5.1947. 'Domsresultatet virker på oss norske jøder som en av høyesteretts flertall ubevisst nedvurdering av en bestemt gruppe norske borgere.'

¹³⁶ B. Goldberg. 'Er vi norske jøder allikevel av mindre verdi? Et apropos til Wagner-dommen' *Dagbladet* 12.5.1947.

¹³⁷ Ibid. 'Nå spør vi jøder: Hvilken beskyttelse gir Høyesterett oss? Eller kommer ikke forbrytelser mot jøder inn under forbrytelser mot menneskeheten?'

¹³⁸ Ibid. 'Før krigen var her intet jødeproblem.' Notably, by saying that there was no 'Jewish problem' in Norway, Goldberg claims that there were no principal debates on the position of Jews in Norwegian society prior to 1940. This is wrong, considering the debates in Eidsvold in 1814, where the proponents of the 'Jewish clause' argued only a total ban of Jews would prevent Norway from becoming 'a Jewish problem.'

after the war was unique: ‘No group has paid as deeply for its freedom as the Jews. [...] I think I dare say that *we* have not bothered *you* with our grief, with the fantastic loss *we* have had.’¹³⁹

Goldberg was not only a proud Jew, but a proud resistance fighter. During the war he fled to Shetland where he worked as a physician in the British Royal Navy.¹⁴⁰ He became the most decorated Norwegian Jewish soldier of the Second World War, having received St. Olav’s Medal with an Oak Branch.¹⁴¹ His father, David Goldberg, was himself a prominent figure in the Norwegian Jewish community and a proud resistance fighter. In the 1930s he was Secretary of the Jewish Aid Association (*Jødisk Hjelpeforening*) which collaborated with the humanitarian organisation Nansen Relief (*Nansenhjelpen*) to help Jewish refugees from central Europe into Norway.¹⁴² Bernhard Goldberg’s parents and siblings were all deported and murdered in Auschwitz.¹⁴³ His strong standing in the military resistance together with his activist background may explain his clear position that Jews shared their fate with other Norwegians during the war, and that they should be treated equally when it comes to correcting the wrongs made against them.

Why did Goldberg not use the term ‘antisemitism’? Indeed, he demonstrated that there were various ways to call out antisemitism other than calling it by its name. Leon Jarner used the term ‘antisemitism’ when he discussed anti-Jewish attitudes in daily life. Marcus Levin in his letter to JOINT also used the term ‘antisemitism’ to describe latent anti-Jewish attitudes. Other actors distinguished between ‘antisemitism’ as an import from Nazi Germany meaning legal discrimination and violent brutality against Jews on the one hand, and other notions of social exclusion and ‘othering’ on the other, by using a different terminology. DMT in their statement did not raise the issue of ‘antisemitism’ in contemporary Norway but brought up specifically ‘undervaluing’, or underestimation of Norwegian Jewish citizens in the eyes of the law. Alfred Leopold claimed that unconscious Nazi attitudes still circulated among the Norwegian population but described them as rooted in irrational hatred, meaning that they could exist in liberated Norway without the help of the occupying Nazi regime. In other words, ‘antisemitism’ could be used to refer generally to anti-Jewish hatred in the postwar period but there was also a separation between Nazi antisemitism as the brutal policy of

¹³⁹ Ibid. ‘Ingen norsk befolkningsgruppe har betalt så dyrt for sin frihet som den jødiske. [...] Jeg tror jeg tør si at vi ikke har plaget dere med vår sorg, med de fantastiske tap vi har hatt.’ My italics.

¹⁴⁰ Gunnar Magnus, ‘Norske jøder I AKTIV INNSATS’ *Aftenposten* 12.2.1998.

¹⁴¹ Mendelsohn (1987) p. 15; Bruland (2008) p. 32; ‘Månedens gjenstand for oktober 2016’, *Jewish Museum in Oslo*, <https://www.jodiskmuseumoslo.no/mg-okt16> [accessed 26.5.2022].

¹⁴² Bruland (2017) p. 92.

¹⁴³ ‘Månedens gjenstand for oktober 2016’, *Jewish Museum in Oslo*.

annihilation of Jews that was by no means approved in liberated Norway, and other, less visible forms of anti-Jewish hostility and discrimination, such as ‘undervaluing’ of Norwegian Jewish citizens in the application of the law, which could and needed to be acknowledged. Nevertheless, anti-Jewish discrimination was difficult to detect because it was a matter of conception.

3.1.4. ‘A red bloody thread’ – Jewish responses to the Feldmann case

On 27.10.1942 Jewish elderly couple Jacob and Rakel Sonja Feldmann were killed by two Home Front escape agents, whose service they used to cross the border to Sweden. Peder Pedersen and Håkon Løvestad stole the couple’s valuables and threw the bodies in a pond. Their trial took place in August 1947 separately from the National Legal Purge, since they were no Nazis and their crimes could be tried under criminal law.¹⁴⁴ In their defence, they argued that the Feldmanns burdened and risked their group being exposed, and they were acquitted of murder in the Court of Appeal. In January 1948, Pedersen and Løvestad were nonetheless convicted of embezzlement (‘underslag’), and hence were to be held in custody for 10 months.¹⁴⁵ At this time, they had already paid 12,000 Norwegian crowns as compensation for the valuables stolen. Still, the lawyer representing the Feldmann case and also serving as the estate trustee, who personally purchased the Feldmanns’ home for a symbolic price, maintained that the fine should be considered as compensation for the valuables, and the judge reiterated that the fine was not to indicate their culpability in the embezzlement.¹⁴⁶

Several Jews provided evidence for the case including Julius Martin Selikowitz and Ben London. None of the Jewish refugees reported a negative experience with the accused. However, Selikowitz testified that he had seen Håkon Løvestad wear a remarkable golden hand watch which led the court to conclude it belonged to Jacob Feldmann.¹⁴⁷ Ben London, who knew the Feldmanns, interjected during the trial in protest that the court accepted such a derogatory depiction of them. He said that he spoke to many who agreed the Feldmanns could

¹⁴⁴ Banik (2009) p. 109.

¹⁴⁵ Mendelsohn (1987) pp. 237, 329–334.

¹⁴⁶ Sigurd Senje. *Ekko fra skriktjenn. En dokumentarroman basert på Feldmann-saken* (Oslo: Pax, 1987) p. 134.

¹⁴⁷ ‘Dom i Feldmannsaken til uken’ *Dagbladet* 30.8.1947.

surely have crossed the border and that they neither burdened nor risked the group being exposed. Thus, in handling the case London argued that the court disgraced the dead.¹⁴⁸

An overarching question in the public debate was how the accused should have been judged, considering they as Home Front men led other Jews into safety in Sweden, and that was their major contribution to the ‘national struggle’. A Home Front veteran published an anonymous letter in *Verdens Gang* – organ of the Norwegian resistance movement veterans. He himself recounted a similar dilemma to that which Pedersen and Løvestad faced in October 1942. The author of the letter had helped a Jewish mother and son across the border to Sweden. He described that the mother was unstable, ‘wild, without any thoughts or plans.’ He was ready to kill her because ‘every attempt was made’ to save her from the Nazis:

And she hated. Not those dressed in green, those who were slowly killing her husband. Not the Nazis who with all their souls wanted to see her and her son sent the same way as the other Jews in town. It was us she hated. It was us she threatened. It was us who received the blame for all her fear.¹⁴⁹

Oskar Hasselknippe, himself a veteran of the Norwegian resistance movement and Chief Editor of *Verdens Gang*, introduced this letter as ‘perhaps the most important contribution for wakening the people’s conscience regarding the Feldmann case.’¹⁵⁰ Hasselknippe previously argued that the accused were acting under pressure as ‘soldiers’ to defend their people and they merely followed orders to ensure the group’s safety. Leo Eitinger refuted Hasselknippe’s argument and reminded the public that a soldier must refuse a criminal order. The accused were no soldiers since they did not report their action thereafter. Regarding the embezzlement, Eitinger explained that a soldier was forbidden to take the enemy’s property under martial law.¹⁵¹ Hasselknippe counterargued that there was a difference between standard conduct of war and the exception of illegal struggle of the Home Front.¹⁵² There appears to be no disagreement that the killing of Jacob and Rakel Sonja Feldmann was not antisemitic but the question remained whether the acquittal of the killers in the Norwegian court of law in the aftermath of the Second World War was unjust towards the Feldmanns as Norwegian Jews.

¹⁴⁸ ‘Nå ligger kortene på bordet, sier forsvareren’ *Sarpsborg Arbeiderblad* 2.9.1947; ‘Forsvarerne påstår de to tiltalte frifunnet’ *Sarpen* 2.9.1947. ‘Det var synd at de ved siden av den grufulle død skulle få smuss kastet på sitt minne.’

¹⁴⁹ ‘Vi visste ikke at vi var soldater’ *Verdens Gang* 11.9.1947 in Reitan (2016) p. 124. ‘Og hun hatet. Ikke de grønnklædte, de som langsomt dreper hennes mann. Ikke nazistene som av hel sitt innerste vesen ønsket å se henne og sønnen sendt den samme vei som byens andre jøder. Det var oss hun hatet. Det var oss hun truet. Det var vi som fikk skylden for all hennes redsel.’

¹⁵⁰ Ibid. ‘har vi mottatt dette som kanskje vil bli det viktigste bidrag til å vekke folks samvitighet i Feldmann-saken.’

¹⁵¹ Leo Eitinger. ‘De var soldater. Svar til Oskar Hasselknippe av dr. LEO EITINGER’ *Verdens Gang* 6.9.1947. The original article where Oskar Hasselknippe would have argued in favour of Pedersen and Løvestad was not accessible.

¹⁵² Oskar Hasselknippe. ‘Soldater er farlige folk’ *Verdens Gang* 12.9.1947.

Were Pedersen and Løvestad acquitted because the court did not consider their crime appropriately as it only concerned Jews? A few weeks prior to the killing of the Feldmanns, Pedersen and Løvestad successfully helped Oskar Mendelsohn and his wife Thora across the border. In his book *Jødenes historie*, Mendelsohn takes a distant approach to the Feldmann case, and brings forward press items which address mainly the embezzlement and not the issue of the killing.¹⁵³ Mendelsohn does not take up the question of anti-Jewish discrimination in the application of the law. Rather, he essentially poses the question: what was the responsibility of the Home Front agents towards the Feldmanns? Indeed, it is difficult to interpret Mendelsohn's narration considering the limited context and lack of evidence. Nevertheless, one cannot but wonder if a reason for his cautious description of the Feldmann case was affected by his own experience, namely that he could not openly condemn the people who de facto saved his life?

In his interview for this study, Leif Arne Mendelsohn, son of Oskar Mendelsohn confirms that his parents were rescued by the same agents as the Feldmanns shortly prior. His father told him that he recognised an injustice in the verdict and many in the Jewish community believed Pedersen and Løvestad should have been punished. Based on what he had learned in person, Leif Arne Mendelsohn explains that the acquittal was perceived as discriminatory against Norwegian Jews ('forskjellsbehandling') because there was a suspicion that the killers would have received a harsher verdict if the matter had not only concerned Jews. In other words, the value of Norwegian Jewish citizens appeared lower in the eyes of the law than that of non-Jewish citizen. Nevertheless, to the question whether the Feldmann case was perceived as antisemitic, Leif Arne Mendelsohn answers negatively. He explains that while 'antisemitism' was still associated with the violent and discriminatory policy introduced by the Nazis, whereas anti-Jewish discrimination in the Feldmann case was conceived as a form of social exclusion coupled with different treatment as citizens.¹⁵⁴

After the trial in September 1947, in an article in *Dagbladet*, DMT member Aksel Scheer compared the Feldmann case and those of Wilhelm Wagner and Knut Rød: 'The court has made its verdict. Once again, in a case where Jews lost their lives. This time admittedly only two lives.'¹⁵⁵ Scheer continued DMT's argumentation by asserting that it was only natural for a Jew to draw a parallel between the Feldmann case and similar cases where Jews were the

¹⁵³ Mendelsohn (1987) pp. 237, 329–334.

¹⁵⁴ Interview with Leif Arne Mendelsohn 29.9.2022 Oslo.

¹⁵⁵ Aksel Scheer. 'Epilog til Feldmann-saken' *Dagbladet* 5.9.1947. 'Retten har avsagt sin dom. Det gjaldt igjen en sak hvor jøder hadde mistet livet. Denne gang riktignok «bare» to liv.'

victim. He used a metaphor of a ‘red bloody thread’ linking the verdicts of Wagner and Rød, suggesting explicitly that the court ‘undervalued’ (‘nedvurdering’) the Jews *consciously*. ‘Is the reason a conscious or unconscious undervaluing of a certain group of people?’¹⁵⁶ Scheer asked, ‘how much does it cost to kill a Jew in Norway?’¹⁵⁷ If the price of a Jew did not equal that of a non-Jew, Scheer concluded that Jews were of lesser value in the application of the law.

3.2. Jewish reactions to the ‘Swastika Epidemic’, 1960–1961

On Christmas Eve 1959, the newly rededicated synagogue in Cologne was defaced with a swastika, splashes of red and white paint, and the slogan ‘Juden Raus’ (‘Jews out’). Over the next days, swastika graffiti appeared on synagogues and estates across West Germany and spread to other cities in Western Europe.¹⁵⁸ In Oslo, Franklin Roosevelt’s monument was defaced with the slogan ‘Potsdam Jewish merchant’.¹⁵⁹ In Stavanger, swastikas and slogans appeared in multiple locations and a Jew received a threat–letter instructing him that he should leave Norway or be liquidated.¹⁶⁰ Offenders in other countries did not stop at threats, but vandalised estates and planned attacks on Jewish people.¹⁶¹ In late January, a ‘white book’ published by the federal authorities in West Germany noted 685 antisemitic incidents in the Federal Republic alone. Eventually nearly 2,500 incidents were registered in over 400 locations globally.¹⁶² This marked the first public antisemitic outburst since the Second World War.

In Norway, the ‘Swastika Epidemic’ caused a major reaction in civil society. The Church expressed its concern in the press. The Federation of Trade Unions (LO) sent a resolution to their partner organisation in West Germany emphasising an urgency to combat all forms of racial hatred. In late January, the Norwegian Student’s Organisation arranged a demonstration against antisemitism. With numbers rising around the world, the public remained confused as to what stood behind the ‘Swastika Epidemic’. Some believed that a neo-Nazi movement originating in West Germany spread to other countries. Others were convinced that the

¹⁵⁶ Ibid. ‘Er grunnen en bevisst eller ubevisst nedvurdering av en viss gruppe mennesker?’

¹⁵⁷ Ibid. ‘Hva koster det å slå i hjel en jøde i Norge?’

¹⁵⁸ Hoffmann (2020a) p. 33.

¹⁵⁹ ‘Roosevelt-monumentet ved Skansen ble tilsvinet i natt’ *Aftenposten* 6.1.1960. ‘Potsdam Jødisk Landhandler’.

¹⁶⁰ ‘Hakekors i Stavanger’ *Dagbladet* 4.1.1960; ‘Truselbrev til jøde i Stavanger’ *Dagbladet* 9.1.1960.

¹⁶¹ Herman D. Stein, John M. Martin. ‘“Swastika Offenders: Variations in Etiology, Behavior and Psycho-Social Characteristics’, *Social Problems* 10:1 (1962) pp. 56–70, pp. 60, 64.

¹⁶² Johansen (2008) pp. 88–89; Hoffmann (2020a) pp. 31–32. This presentation of the ‘Swastika Epidemic’ is inspired by Simonsen (2023 forthcoming).

communists in Soviet Russia deliberately ignited the flame. Some believed Arab countries launched an attack on Israel.¹⁶³ A survey of the Society for the Study of Social Problems found that almost all the offenders were underage. It suggested that adults were more aware of the dangerous implications of Nazi symbolism.¹⁶⁴ Same in other countries, the young profile of the perpetrators overall led to an understanding that the ‘Swastika Epidemic’ was juvenile delinquency.¹⁶⁵

In the US, disagreements over the definition of antisemitism made it difficult for Jewish associations to promote an international convention to outlaw antisemitism. What began as a bill against antisemitism eventually included other forms of racism and was not oriented specifically towards anti-Jewish hostility and discrimination.¹⁶⁶ The International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD) passed by the General Assembly in 1965. Nevertheless, because the law was neutral with respect to which groups were attacked, it did not uniquely address anti-Jewish hatred. After the ‘Swastika Epidemic’ Aase Lionæs, Labour party Member of Parliament raised the question: what could be done to combat racial persecution in Norway?¹⁶⁷ Minister of Justice Jens Haugland determined that the law did not permit legislation regarding specific minorities, and therefore one ought to resort to existing laws, like Article 135 of general criminal law, and Article 142 of freedom of religion. Still, he suggested that the Parliament would consider consulting the law in other countries on whether there was a justification for a legislation to protect specific groups. That day, a special committee commenced in the Ministry of Justice to discuss the possibilities regarding legislation against antisemitism. The committee included, among others, Members of Parliament, officials in the Ministry of Justice and in the Criminal Police (*Kriminalpoliti*), and representatives of DMT.

In early January 1960, a swastika was inscribed on the door to the business of DMT member Otto Rabl for import of toys.¹⁶⁸ In the following days Rabl received multiple threat letters. One in German called on the ‘swine’ to disappear or the sender ‘will cook good soap

¹⁶³ James Loeffler. 11.12.2014. ‘The Swastika Epidemic: Jewish Politics and Human Rights in the 1960s’, lecture at John W. Kluge Center [The Swastika Epidemic: Jewish Politics & Human Rights in the 1960s | Library of Congress \(loc.gov\)](#) [accessed 4.12.2022].

¹⁶⁴ Stein and Martin (1962) pp. 56–70.

¹⁶⁵ Nathan Kurz. *Jewish Internationalism and Human Rights after the Holocaust* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021) p. 115.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid* p. 121.

¹⁶⁷ Stortingsforhandling 1959–1960 104:7a pp. 1354–1356, p. 1354.

¹⁶⁸ ‘Jødehatere til aksjon i Oslo i natt’ *Dagbladet* 2.1.1960.

from him!’¹⁶⁹ Mrs. Rabl insisted that the letters were the product of pure evil, not foolishness or misunderstanding. Yet, the Rabls maintained that they had never encountered similar antisemitism in Norway. In another letter, the sender threatened that Rabl would never feel safe again: ‘WE STRIKE WHEN YOU LEAST EXPECT IT.’¹⁷⁰

According to Oskar Mendelsohn, the authorities and the public were not inclined to believe Nazism could be renewed in Norway, and therefore the attacks were perceived as single standing, more of foolish pranks than an overall tendency.¹⁷¹ Indeed, press articles largely reported the incidents as sporadic mob actions, rather than a purposeful trend: ‘It would be wrong to attribute these phenomena too large a meaning: in most cases they seem to be interpreted as crowd’s rampage strikes committed by irresponsible and thoughtless youths.’¹⁷² However, Norway took a zero-tolerance policy regarding a new Nazi movement. Various articles described the resurgence of antisemitism using medical metaphors thereby coining ‘the Swastika flu’. An editorial in *Arbeiderbladet* maintained that the incidents began in West Germany, but the question now was whether foreign Nazism would infect Norway.¹⁷³

The Holocaust naturally functioned as a contextual framework in articles criticising the incidents only 15 years after Norway’s liberation from the Nazis.¹⁷⁴ An anonymous writer in *Dagbladet* expressed sympathy towards Jews once again persecuted: ‘We are all guilty. We were to blame last time [...] I am ashamed, both as a Norwegian and as a European on behalf of those who are affected by the hatred. What is happening now is perhaps not serious. Let us only remember: it was always the way it began.’¹⁷⁵ While the ‘Swastika Epidemic’ was seen as rampage it was to be taken very seriously. One must assume that antisemitism was present in the Western world and could be triggered off at almost any time. Karl Egil Johansen proposes that the ‘Swastika Epidemic’ was seen differently in Norwegian and in German contexts. While the incidents in Norway were seen by the authorities and the public as sporadic inconveniences, the conception of a ‘Swastika Epidemic’ originating in West

¹⁶⁹ ‘«Jeg skal koke såpe av deg»’ *Friheten* 5.1.1960; ‘Motbydelig trusel-brev til Oslo-jøde’ *Arbeiderbladet* 5.1.1960.

¹⁷⁰ Letter to Otto Rabl, signed ‘Hakekors og SS tegn’, undated. JMO/PA/D00394/0251_0002/DSC_0302. Capitals in the original.

¹⁷¹ Mendelsohn (1987) pp. 366–367.

¹⁷² ‘Antisemittene’ *Verdens Gang* 4.1.1960. ‘det ville være for galt å tillegge disse fenomener for stor betydning: i de fleste tilfelle synes det å være tale om rampestreker begått av ansvarsløs og tankeløs ungdom.’

¹⁷³ ‘Et oppgjør nødvendig’ *Arbeiderbladet* 8.1.1960.

¹⁷⁴ ‘Truselbrev til norsk jøde’ *Friheten* 5.1.1960; ‘Hakekorset spøker’ *Valdres* 9.1.1960.

¹⁷⁵ K. M. H. ‘Til våre jødiske medmennesker’ *Dagbladet* 8.1.1960. ‘Vi er alle medskyldige. Vi hadde skyld forrige gang [...] Jeg skammer meg, både som nordmann og som europeer overfor dem som rammes av hetsen. Det som skjer nå er kanskje ikke alvorlig. La oss bare huske: det var alltid slik det begynte.’

Germany indicated the rise of neo-Nazism.¹⁷⁶ In his book on post-Holocaust antisemitism in Sweden, Henrik Bachner shows similarly that antisemitism did not fit into the image of violence in the country – what in West Germany was ‘antisemitism’ in Sweden became slurs, brawls, and immaturity.¹⁷⁷

Police inspector Asbjørn Bryhn featured in an article in *Morgenbladet*, where it was described that he assumed the ‘Swastika Epidemic’ in Norway was not rooted in any substantial neo-Nazism because ‘antisemitism here in this country has never really been a problem.’¹⁷⁸ Johan Borgen, a friend of Otto Rabl who himself had been prisoner in Grini argued against Bryhn that the police did not take antisemitism seriously enough, thereby indicating the police was blinded by the assumption that Nazism could not exist in Norway.¹⁷⁹ In a private letter, Rabl thanked Borgen for expressing his stance: ‘You were among the few who took up the issue from the right place.’¹⁸⁰

In late January, Rabl was interviewed by the magazine *NÅ* regarding his response to the Swastika Epidemic.¹⁸¹ He criticised press use of terminology like ‘rampage strikes’ (‘rampestreker’) which did not reflect the concrete threat on society. Rabl was convinced that ‘an organised, Nazi underground movement’ stood behind the incidents. He claimed that he had turned to the police promptly following the first assault, however in the interview he did not mention what protection was provided for his household. Rabl continued to receive threats after being interviewed by the press, meaning that the act of exposure did not discourage further harassment. Nevertheless, his openness gained large support. His case was seen as a warning against resurgent Nazism in Norway, and in private Rabl received numerous messages from people admitting he changed their perception of antisemitism.¹⁸² After Rabl’s interview for the magazine *NÅ* he received a letter from Marcus Levin: ‘It looks as though you have been made a scapegoat for all of us Jews.’¹⁸³ However, in an interview with *Morgenbladet* together with Otto Rabl, DMT Trustee Harry Koritzinsky expressed a different stance:

¹⁷⁶ Johansen (2008) pp. 89–90; ‘Hakekors i Oslo, men neppe noen organisert hets’ *Arbeiderbladet* 4.1.1960.

¹⁷⁷ Bachner (1999) p. 141.

¹⁷⁸ ‘Ikke spor av ny-nazisme i Norge’ *Morgenbladet* 5.1.1960. ‘Antisemittisme har her i landet aldri vært noe egentlig problem.’

¹⁷⁹ Johan Borgen. ‘Overvåkerne våre’ *Dagbladet* 12.1.1960.

¹⁸⁰ Letter from Otto Rabl to Johan Borgen, untitled, 18.1.1960, JMO/PA/D00394/0251_0002/DSC_0307. ‘De var e nav de få som tok saken fra den riktige side.’

¹⁸¹ ‘Skriften på veggen’ *NÅ* 23.1.1960.

¹⁸² Various letters in JMO/PA/D00394/0251_0002.

¹⁸³ Letter from Marcus Levin to Otto Rabl, 27.1.1960. JMO/PA–Rabl, Otto/0251_0002/DSC_0286.

One gets a strong impression that general incitement against the Jews has been initiated from one side or another. However, I do not expect the situation to be serious anywhere in Europe. Here in Norway, I do not think there is any conscious antisemitism.¹⁸⁴

While Levin acknowledged in a private letter that Rabl was being scapegoated for the deliberate actions of antisemites, Koritzinsky used the term ‘demonstration’ (‘demonstrasjon’) rather than vandalism, and the article used the term ‘crowd’s rampage’ (rampestreker) rather than an organised neo-Nazi activity – as Rabl himself called the incidents in *NÅ*.¹⁸⁵ Koritzinsky was surprised that Rabl was targeted since he lived a very secluded life and never wanted to make himself known. Rabl disagreed with Koritzinsky and maintained that the ‘vandalism’ was aimed at him as a Jew.¹⁸⁶ Anecdotally, in an earlier interview for *Dagbladet* Koritzinsky had given an explanation that while some individuals would certainly be dragged into antisemitic thinking due to stupidity, antisemitism as an ‘aggressive term’ (‘aggressivt begrep’) was not Norwegian and could not exist among Norwegian people.¹⁸⁷ Koritzinsky’s public approach as DMT representative may have differed from Rabl’s approach representing himself as an individual and the direct object of persecution, and also might have differed from Levin’s approach writing to Rabl in private. Still, while he provided a diplomatic response in the major newspapers, Koritzinsky led DMT’s negotiations with the Ministry of Justice for a legislation against incitement to racial hatred in Norway.

In early January 1960, during the days of the ‘Swastika Epidemic’, Gunnar Josephson, Chairman of the Jewish community in Stockholm wrote to Harry Koritzinsky in DMT in encouragement to ‘express our view of the situation and thereby perhaps influence public opinion in a favourable direction.’¹⁸⁸ To his letter Josephson attached a proposal of a united Jewish response in the Nordic countries to the ‘Swastika Epidemic’, to be published on behalf of the Jewish communities in Stockholm, Malmo, Oslo, Trondheim, Copenhagen, Helsinki, and Turku: ‘Should something be done, it must naturally happen as quickly as possible,’ Josephson maintained. DMT would find power in a union with the Jewish communities in Sweden, Denmark, and Finland, and benefit from their experience of building and

¹⁸⁴ ‘Trolig ramp’ *Morgenbladet* 4.1.1960. ‘At det fra et eller annet hold er tatt initiativ til almindelig hets mot jødene, får man et sterkt inntrykk av, sier jeg. Jeg regner imidlertid ikke situasjonen for å være alvorlig noe sted i Europa. Her i Norge tror jeg ikke det finnes noen bevisst antisemittisme.’; ‘Hakekors i Oslo, men neppe noen organisert hets’ *Arbeiderbladet* 4.1.1960.

¹⁸⁵ ‘Skriften på veggen’ *NÅ* 23.1.1960.

¹⁸⁶ ‘Trolig ramp’ *Morgenbladet* 4.1.1960.

¹⁸⁷ K. E. H. ‘Ikke antisemittisme i Norge’ *Dagbladet* 4.9.1952.

¹⁸⁸ Letter from Gunnar Josephson to Harry Koritzinsky, 8.1.1960, JMO/DMT/D30. ‘vara riktigt at ge uttryck för vår syn på förhållandena och därmed kanske påverka opinionen i en lungande riktning.’ Proposal not found in the file.

maintaining a relationship with the local authorities. Their power was in numbers. By organising themselves together with the Jewish communities of the neighbouring Nordic countries, antisemitism would no longer be overlooked as a local problem but would be seen as a common, concrete concern for Nordic Jewry that required a solution. According to the primary sources available in this study it is uncertain whether the Jewish community in Stockholm was first to encourage Harry Koritzinsky in DMT to respond to the ‘Swastika Epidemic’ or whether their correspondence could be tracked further back. It was common for the Jewish communities in Scandinavia to collaborate on matters of common interest, as in the Scandinavian Jewish Youth Association (SJUF), in mutual visits, and in various other inter-communal initiatives. Self-organisation of those affected for the purpose of fighting back would validate the cause of the smaller group and prove effective in asserting the rights of the collective to external actors, in this case the Norwegian authorities. Nevertheless, later that month Josephson informed Koritzinsky that the initiative for a united front was off the table.¹⁸⁹

Koritzinsky informed the community leaderships in Stockholm and Copenhagen that DMT was considering approaching the Norwegian authorities to form a law to outlaw antisemitism. He wanted to know what laws existed in Sweden and Denmark, what they covered, and how they were being enforced.¹⁹⁰ The Jewish Community in Denmark wrote back to Koritzinsky introducing Article 226b from 1939 against incitement to racial hatred targeting faith, ethnicity, and national affiliation. The sender of the letter informed him that only one person had been indicted according to this article, and the Danish Minister of Justice said it would be wise to ignore such cases, rather than to give such offenders publicity by bringing them to court. Moreover, the Danish law did not apply for being a member in an anti-Jewish league.¹⁹¹ Harry Koritzinsky was himself the WJC’s representative in Norway and he reached out to global Jewish organisations for information and support regarding the bill. In a confidential letter, Koritzinsky informed the WJC that the Norwegian Parliament was planning to formulate a legal provision against racial hatred and asked for advice to validate their case. As things stood, the only law in Norway that came close was a law from 1955 against harassment on the phone.¹⁹² Forging an alliance with a prominent organisation like the WJC

¹⁸⁹ Letter from Gunnar Josephson to Harry Koritzinsky, 28.1.1960. JMO/DMT/D30.

¹⁹⁰ Letter to Mosaiska Församlingen i Stockholm and Det Mosaiske Troessamfund i København, ‘Ad lover mot antisemitisme’, unsigned, 17.1.1960, JMO/DMT/D30.

¹⁹¹ Letter from Det Mosaiske Troessamfund i København to Harry Koritzinsky, ‘Forespørsel i skr. 17. ds. Vedr. lov mot antisemittisme’, 19.1.1960, JMO/DMT/D30.

¹⁹² Letter to the World Jewish Congress, Stockholm, ‘Konfidentielt’, 18.1.1960, JMO/DMT/D30.

not only broadened DMT's network of support but solidified the legitimacy and effectiveness of its cause as a compelling demand from the authorities. In the Parliamentary meeting on 25.1.1960, which introduced the proposal of a law, Aase Lionæs referred to statistics of the WJC regarding incidents in the 'Swastika Epidemic' worldwide, indicating that DMT's correspondence with the WJC potentially helped preparing the case to inform the Norwegian Parliament of the necessity of a law.¹⁹³ Furthermore, the DMT archives contain annotated drafts of a bill against racial discrimination, very similar to the proposal which was eventually presented in the Norwegian Parliament. The drafts are unsigned, and it is uncertain whether they came from DMT or originated in the Ministry of Justice. Nonetheless, that they are found in the DMT records and that they were revised by the DMT leadership indicates DMT was not only promoting the bill but may have helped to formulate it.¹⁹⁴

After the Parliamentary meeting and the commencing of the committee in the Ministry of Justice, Marcus Levin wrote a letter to the Secretary General in the Ministry of Justice Rolv Rysdal, regarding the head of the Criminal Police (*Kriminalsjef*) Lars L'Abée-Lund. The latter had previously stated regarding the 'Swastika Epidemic' that there was no reason to draw lines in an international perspective because some mob scratched a swastika on the door of some Jew's business. He concluded that the cases should be seen as self-standing, and there was no evidence to suspect that the incidents in Norway were tied with tendencies in West Germany and other countries.¹⁹⁵ According to Levin in his letter to Rysdal, L'Abée-Lund blamed Jewish people for not going to the police when they were attacked. He claimed that he had not received a single complaint from a Jew against antisemitism in five years working at the Criminal Police. To this Levin counterargued that Jews were not complaining because the Public Prosecutor's Office (*Påtalemyndighet*) 'had a tendency to downplay such incidents. Since these complaints, based on experience, seldom went forward, Jews in general were reluctant to accept this disruption in their life.'¹⁹⁶

Levin sent another letter to the Minister of Justice regarding L'Abée-Lund. In this he explained that Jews were not going to the police for fear of reprisals: 'It is a fact that

¹⁹³ Stortingsforhandlinger 1959/1960 104:7a, pp. 1354–1356 p. 1355.

¹⁹⁴ Draft of a proposal for a law against racial discrimination, 'Utkast. Lov mot hets', unsigned, undated. JMO/DMT/D30; Manuscript of a law against racial discrimination, untitled, unsigned, undated, JMO/DMT/D30.

¹⁹⁵ 'Hakekors i Oslo, men neppe noen organisert hets' *Arbeiderbladet* 4.1.1960.

¹⁹⁶ Letter from Marcus Levin to Byråsjef Rysdal, untitled, undated. JMO/DMT/D30. 'Årsaken var etter vedkommendes mening at Påtalemyndigheten hadde tilbøielighet til å bagatellisere slike episoder, og siden de erfaringsmessig sjeldent førte frem, kvier jøder sig i almindelighet å ta alt det bryderi som medfører ved å skaffe vidner, ved siden av det avbrekk i den daglige gjerning som må påregnes.'

antisemitic defamation occurs often.’¹⁹⁷ As an example, Levin brought the case of Mrs. Sender, a member of DMT who worked at a shop in Oslo. One day, a man entered the shop and asked to speak to her boss, and when she answered that he was not available the man shouted at her: ‘All Jews should have gone to hell, to the gas chamber with them, and you as well!’¹⁹⁸ Mrs. Sender’s immediate reaction was to lock the door and ring the police, but the police officer let the man go without taking his details, and Mrs. Sender ‘never heard back.’¹⁹⁹

L’Abée–Lund responded to these accusations in a letter to the Ministry of Justice and Police Department in late February. Despite having previously claimed that he never received a single complaint on antisemitism in the police, he now mentioned several complaints which were received, including one where two Jews immediately reported on two drunken men who assaulted them and they received fines of 250 and 500 crowns, or 50–75 conditional imprisonment days.²⁰⁰ Levin’s letters to the Ministry of Justice fulfilled several functions. Firstly, the examples of Otto Rabl and Mrs. Sender contradicted L’Abée–Lund’s dismissive argument that Jews were not seeking the usual solution for their problem and thereby blamed the victim. Secondly, Levin was the first to point out Jews were being sceptical about the authorities and the public’s understanding of their situation. He was also the first to complain explicitly to the Minister of Justice that Jews were reluctant to turn to court, because they always experienced not being taken seriously. He threw the ball back to the authorities’ court and insisted Jews could not be ignored.

The Parliament signed a proposition to add Article 135a against incitement to racial hatred to general criminal law on 3.3.1961 and it came into force in May 1961.²⁰¹ The article was officially formulated in a general manner against racial discrimination and not specifically against antisemitism. Nevertheless, the protocol stated explicitly that it was an answer to antisemitism.²⁰² DMT’s multifaceted lobbyism demonstrates that they were a central driving

¹⁹⁷ Letter to Jens Haugland at the Ministry of Justice, unsigned, ‘Antisemitismen’, 5.2.1960. JMO/DMT/D30. Based on the identical structure of the two letters and the time they were sent, it is concluded here that both were formulated by Marcus Levin on behalf of DMT. ‘At det ofte forekommer fornærmende antisemitiske uttrykk, er en kjensgjerning.’

¹⁹⁸ Ibid. ‘Alle jøder skulde gå til helvede, i gasskameret med dem.’ Also: letter from Marcus Levin to Byråsjef Rysdal, untitled, undated. JMO/DMT/D30. ‘Alle jøder skulde gå til helvede, i gasskameret og du også.’

¹⁹⁹ Ibid. Underscore in the original.

²⁰⁰ Letter from Head of the Criminal Police L’Abée–Lund to the Ministry of Justice and police department, untitled, 24.2.1960. JMO/DMT/D30.

²⁰¹ ‘Ot. prp. Nr. 45. (1961) om endring av §135 i den alminnelige borgelige straffelov av 22. mai 1902’, Stortingsforhandlinger 1960–1961 105:4 pp. 1–3; Regarding the evolvement of Article 135a against incitement to racial hatred: Helge Årsheim. ‘Giving Up in the Ghost: On the Decline and Fall of Norwegian Anti–Blasphemy Legislation’ in Temperman, Jeroen, Koltay, Andreás, eds. *Blasphemy and Freedom of Expression: Comparative, Theoretical and Historical Reflections after the Charlie Hebdo Massacre* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017) pp. 566–573.

²⁰² Ibid. Stortingsforhandlinger 1959–1960 104:7a pp. 1354–1356, pp. 1354–1355.

force behind the bill. The protocol reflected the formulation appearing in annotated drafts found in the DMT archives, suggesting that the DMT leadership would have seen these formulations before. It referred to parallel legislations in the neighboring Scandinavian countries and considered legislations made outside Scandinavia, proving that DMT's collaboration with Jewish communities in the Nordic countries and global Jewish organisations were pivotal for building the case. However, several limitations can be pointed out regarding the new law. The protocol emphasised that the legislation was not meant to hinder 'concrete debate on the problems linked to minority groups in society,'²⁰³ hence the article merely covered public hateful expression. A hateful expression made in private or in writing without a third-party witness was not punishable: 'Only the grossly inappropriate attacks are included. Insults and threats etc. against private individuals will fall outside the provision.'²⁰⁴ In 1970, Article 135a was extended and brought in line with the United Nations Convention of 1965 on the Elimination of Racial Prejudice.²⁰⁵

Otto Rabl resorted to the new when he experienced an anti-Jewish attack again in April 1961. In a letter intended presumably to DMT he reported that a man littered the doorway of his office and blocked his way coming down the stairs, calling him 'Polish', 'foreigner', and 'You goddamn Jewish fucker.'²⁰⁶ Rabl had the office ring the police immediately while he grabbed the man physically in the corner until the police came. The next morning, Rabl was informed that the man had been taken to the Criminal Police in accordance with the new law, and he should provide a statement there. When Rabl arrived, the police officer responsible for the case introduced himself to be no other than Knut Rød and informed Rabl that the man would actually be returned to the Order Police (*Ordenspoliti*) and be fined there, only for littering the doorway, not according to the new law. Rabl, who had not known Rød, asked whether the man should not be charged for antisemitism, and Rød refused using the familiar argument that the decision 'came from higher orders.'²⁰⁷ Rabl stressed that if the law against antisemitism was not in place, anyone could come at any time and harm him without the police doing anything. According to Rabl's account, 'Mr. Rød said that the Criminal Police

²⁰³ 'Ot. prp. Nr. 45. (1961) om endring av §135 i den alminnelige borgelige straffelov av 22. mai 1902', Stortingsforhandlinger 1960–1961 105:4 pp. 1–3, p. 2. 'Det er ikke meningen at bestemmelsen skal hindre en saklig debatt om de problemer som knytter seg til minoritetsgrupper i samfunnet.'

²⁰⁴ Ibid. 'det bare er de grovt utilbørlige angrep som rammes. Fornærmelser og trusler m. v. mot private vil falle utenfor bestemmelsen.'

²⁰⁵ Stortingsforhandlinger 1969–1970 114:4.

²⁰⁶ Letter from Otto Rabl, receiver unspecified, untitled, 13.4.1961. JMO/DMT/D31. 'polakk', 'utlending', 'Du forbannede jødefan'.

²⁰⁷ Ibid.

had so many more important things to do that they could not deal with such issues.²⁰⁸ Rabl assumed that the case would be dismissed, and Rød ‘did not like his reaction’ and said in what would be interpreted as a threatening tone: ‘It is not easy to be a Jew these days.’²⁰⁹ That Knut Rød himself was in a position to handle legal cases of persecution of Jews in postwar Norway was inconceivable to DMT and they reached out to the Minister of Justice as soon as they had heard.²¹⁰ DMT insisted that Rød should be morally disqualified from ‘dealing with, or meddling in cases where Jews are one of the parties concerned’ due to his previous aid for the enemy in deporting 800 Jews to gas chambers in Auschwitz. DMT demanded that Rød be dismissed and that the Ministry of Justice reinforce the Criminal Police to handle further cases.²¹¹

No response from either the Ministry of Justice or from the police has been found in the DMT archives. Without such records it is difficult to conclude in what way Knut Rød was involved in cases of persecution of Jews concerning the new Article 135a, and whether he was removed from his position after DMT had intervened. In any case, this example is indicative of several tendencies. Firstly, DMT’s intervention on behalf of its members in dealing with the authorities demonstrates the power of self-organisation. Rabl was exemplary in his prompt response against anti-Jewish hostility each step of the way, but while he stood weak against a single police officer. DMT – which apparently contributed to the creation of a penal code against racial discrimination – was now able to appeal directly to the Minister of Justice using Rabl’s case as a warning. Secondly, in April 1961 Article 135a had been accepted in Parliament, but had not yet come into force. Although the addition of the article to the penal code prioritised crimes against racial discrimination, the law was limited both in criteria and how it was enforced. It is difficult to answer what prevented Rabl his justice. Was it Rød or the law itself? The man who assaulted Rabl targeted his ethnic affiliation, insulted him as a foreigner and physically invaded his space, thereby fulfilling all criteria for public hateful expression. Since Rabl had his employee ring the police, there was also a third-party witness as per the conditions of Article 135a. Rød, on his part, refused to go forward with Rabl without providing a reason (he suggested Rabl make a private case), although it had been stressed in the Parliamentary meeting of January 1960 that the Criminal Police should handle cases

²⁰⁸ Ibid. ‘Herr Rød uttalte at Kriminalpolitiet hadde så mange viktigere ting og gjøre at politiet ikke kan befatte seg med sånne saker.’

²⁰⁹ Ibid. ‘men dette uttrykk likte ikke herr Rød, (og uttalte samtidig «Det er ikke lett å være jøde i Norge i dag»)’

²¹⁰ Letter from DMT to Minister of Justice Jens Haugland, ‘Ad: Otto Rabl’, 13.4.1961. JMO/DMT/D30.

²¹¹ Ibid.

relating to the penal code and not the Order Police.²¹² Not only was it challenging to answer the criteria for Article 135a, but the Criminal Police also did not handle this case as was expected and the law was not enforced.

Two years later in 1963, Marcus Levin reported a hostile incident involving his former employee Elsa Schei to the Criminal Police.²¹³ DMT wrote to the Minister of Justice on behalf of Levin, and suggested that the case had not been handled by the police earlier because it would have been received by Knut Rød.²¹⁴ When Levin fired Schei, she was outraged and returned to Levin over the following days to threaten him. She swore that Levin was a crook and a fraud and ‘should have been in the gas chambers like all the other Jews.’²¹⁵ Levin turned to the Criminal Police because he believed the incident fell under the penal code. However, the police inspector responsible – who DMT argued was Knut Rød – dismissed the case some months later for ‘lack of evidence’ and said that prosecution was not in the public’s interest. Levin then wrote to the State Attorney, copying in L’Abée–Lund. This time he insisted that the absence of Jewish reaction to harassment did not mean the absence of a crime.²¹⁶ He attached an affidavit from a customer who witnessed the incident thereby fulfilling the condition of a third–party witness to apply Article 135a.²¹⁷ Levin concluded that should the matter not result in prosecution, Article 135a would have no meaning.²¹⁸ In October, the Criminal Police informed Levin that Schei was convicted according to Article 246 of the penal code on grounds of defamation, and not according to Article 135a, and was consequently not imprisoned but fined 500 crowns.²¹⁹

In 1966, Otto Rabl complained to L’Abée–Lund in the Criminal Police against a man who offended him because he knew Article 135a would not be sufficient to prosecute him. Rabl had retrieved a tripod which belonged to his company from another firm that was borrowing it for a long time. One Knut Andre Jensen, who represented that firm, violently threatened Rabl and accused him of theft. Jensen declared that he could ‘make such hateful expressions

²¹² Letter from DMT to Minister of Justice Jens Haugland, ‘Ad: Otto Rabl’, 13.4.1961. JMO/DMT/D30.

²¹³ This is indicated in a confirmation of receipt by the Oslo Criminal Police: letter from Criminal Police Oslo to Marcus Levin, 31.10.1963, DMT/D32.

²¹⁴ Letter from DMT to Minister of Justice Jens Haugland, 10.7.1963. JMO/DMT/D32.

²¹⁵ Ibid. ‘Du skulde ha vært i gasskammrene som alle andre jøder.’

²¹⁶ Letter from Marcus Levin to the public prosecutor in Oslo, Head of the Criminal Police L’Abée–Lund copied in, 14.9.1963, JMO/DMT/D32.

²¹⁷ Letter from Erik Bruun to Firma Bertha Olsens Eftf, 13.9.1963, JMO/DMT/D32.

²¹⁸ Letter from Marcus Levin to the public prosecutor in Oslo, Head of the Criminal Police L’Abée–Lund copied in, 14.9.1963, JMO/DMT/D32.

²¹⁹ Letter from Oslo Criminal Police to Marcus Levin, 31.10.1963, JMO/DMT/D32; ‘500 kroner for å si JØDEKJELTRING!’ *Verdens Gang* 2.11.1963.

as much as he wanted, because they were not punishable.²²⁰ Rabl immediately filed a complaint to the Criminal Police. The police first answered that the Attorney General and the State Attorney in Oslo agreed this offence should be punishable according to §247 on grounds of defamation, and not in accordance with Article 135a.²²¹ Nevertheless, one month later Rabl received a clarification that the Attorney General did not trust Jensen would be indicted according to §247 and therefore suggested instead to arrange a private meeting between himself and Jensen, to hear what happened.²²² In his letter to L'Abée–Lund, Rabl insisted on applying Article 135a nonetheless and nominated three witnesses.²²³

This example is remarkable because it shows that even the offender could recognise the limitations of Article 135a and use them against the victim. Since it was inconclusive whether the assault took place in public or in private, and whether it was antisemitic, Rabl struggled to apply the law in the case. Not only did it affirm DMT's argument that the new article did not protect Jews as promised, but it also demonstrated how the gaps in the new penal code could be weaponised against vulnerable community members. Notwithstanding the purpose of Article 135a to protect from antisemitic harassment, its limited coverage would leave most incidents – for which the law was brought on the agenda in the first place – out of the question. Fundamentally allowing 'concrete debate on the problems linked to minority groups in society', the article subjected to interpretation and made it difficult to conclude whether something was offensive, or it was to be considered in a concrete debate protected by the freedom of speech.

3.3. Community responses to neo–Nazi antisemitism and Holocaust denial in the case of Olav Hoaas, 1975–1978

West Germany stood in the forefront of legislation against racism in the 1960s in light of the 'Swastika Epidemic' unanimously prohibiting incitement to hatred against segments of the population in a way that might disturb the peace. Similarly to Norway, notwithstanding the clear purpose to outlaw racism, the penal code in Germany did not initially cover racist speech.²²⁴ According to the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of

²²⁰ Letter from Otto Rabl to Oslo Police, 14.4.1966. JMO/DMT/D34. 'Jeg kan bruke slike uttrykk som [sic] mye jeg vil for det er ikke straffbart.'

²²¹ Letter from Otto Rabl to Oslo Criminal Police, 11.9.1965, JMO/DMT/D34. Letter from Oslo Criminal Police to Knut Andre Jensen, Otto Rabl copied in, 8.11.1965, JMO/DMT/D34.

²²² Letter to Otto Rabl, unsigned, 'Ad: anm. mot K. A. Jensen', 8.12.1965, JMO/DMT/D40.

²²³ There has not been found a response from the police in the DMT archives.

²²⁴ Erik Bleich. *The Freedom to be Racist? How the United States and Europe struggle to preserve freedom and combat racism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011) pp. 20–22.

Racial Hatred (ICERD), countries should ‘condemn all propaganda and all organisations which are based on ideas of superiority of one race or group of persons of one colour or ethnic origin, or which attempt to justify or promote racial hatred in any form.’²²⁵ The conviction rate of Article 135a in Norway was apparently low. According to an article in *Aftenposten* from 2001, six persons were convicted for incitement to racial hatred since 1977.²²⁶

The Hoaas case in 1976 is often mistaken to be the first conviction in Norway in accordance with Article 135a, when in fact a student at the University of Oslo was convicted few months prior in March 1976, for spraying racist graffiti on public premises and making racist threats. The student, who had a previous criminal record, expressed hatred against people of color, particularly of black and Pakistani background. He became known to the authorities because he sent threats not only to private people and to the Consul of Pakistan, but to the newspapers *Dagbladet* and *Verdens Gang*. The student was sentenced to 60 days in prison, while the maximum punishment was two years.²²⁷ The student did not express racial hatred towards Jews but towards people with ‘brown skin’, and he was unanimously condemned in the press. According to an editorial in *Verdens Gang*, many had hoped Article 135a would never have to be used.²²⁸ Another article posed the question: how is it possible that only one person was ever indicted for racial hatred in Norway?²²⁹

3.3.1. DMT’s reaction to Olav Hoaas

High school teacher Olav Hoaas was associated with the fascist youth movement Nasjonal Ungdomsfylking (NUF) which was established in 1968 to revive the cause of the Nazi party in Norway (NS), and he wrote in the neo-Nazi magazine *Folk og Land*.²³⁰ Hoaas openly expressed an antisemitic ideology in independent publications and marginal magazines,²³¹ for example in the pamphlet *Ny nasjonal politikk* (New National Policy) where he proposed concrete discriminatory measures against Jews:

²²⁵ ICERD art. 4. <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/international-convention-elimination-all-forms-racial> [accessed 15.5.2023].

²²⁶ ‘Seks dømt for rasehets på 24 år’ *Aftenposten* 31.1.2001. This paragraph builds on a presentation in Simonsen (2023, forthcoming).

²²⁷ Jan Schjeldrup Mathiesen. ‘60 dagers fengsel for RASEDISKRIMINERING’ *Verdens Gang* 9.3.1976.

²²⁸ ‘Fronten som sprakk Vel fortjent’ *Verdens Gang* 10.3.1976; Arne Foss. ‘Historisk dom om rasediskriminering’ *Dagbladet* 10.3.1976.

²²⁹ Ross Brown. ‘Dagens system mot diskriminering LITE EFFEKTIVT’ and ‘Komite mot rasediskriminering NOE FOR NORGE?’ *Verdens Gang* 12.5.1976.

²³⁰ Mendelsohn (1987) pp. 373, 377.

²³¹ Olav Hoaas. *Tilbake til naturen. Om et samfund som er i pakt med menneskets natur og som er i balanse med naturmiljøet* (independent publishing through Nasjonal Ungdomsfylking, 1971b) p. 4f; Olav Hoaas. *Germanernes fremtid og fortid. Omriss av historiesyn* (independent publishing, 1971a).

Once we have removed all foreign races by deportation or sterilisation, then we will have ensured that people of the kind which, based on experience, is prone to produce spies and agents of foreign powers, are out of the way.²³²

However, it was none of the above that got him in trouble. In summer 1975, Hoaas was first brought to public attention due to two interviews in *Verdens Gang* and *Dagbladet* where he openly described his plans to isolate Jews from the rest of society and expel them from Norway. In one interview he referred to the French Holocaust denier Paul Rassenier saying that the gas chambers were but ‘a political spin’ and admitted that he was promoting these ideas in the classroom as a teacher.²³³ In another interview, Hoaas said ‘there was no evidence’ that the Jews were murdered in the gas chambers. He proposed to deport Norwegian Jews to Israel, or otherwise to segregate them from Norwegians people’s living space, thereby directly applying the *Lebensraum* concept.²³⁴

Hoaas’ statements received large public attention and were rejected in the newspapers throughout that summer, as various news articles called for Hoaas to stand trial in accordance with Article 135a.²³⁵ DMT responded likewise promptly and unequivocally. Leo Eitinger, Kai Feinberg (both Auschwitz survivors), pianist Robert Levin, and lawyer Charles Philipson sent an open letter to the Minister of Church and Education (*Kirke- og utdanningsminister*) where they asserted that Hoaas’ public hateful expressions were punishable according to Article 135a. DMT prioritised banning Hoaas from teaching. In the letter to the Attorney General DMT explained Hoaas’ dissemination of misinformation about the Holocaust made him incompetent to lecture youth as this would lead to the spreading of ignorance and hatred.²³⁶ Two separate issues will hence be compared in my analysis: Hoaas’ legal conviction according to Article 135a, and his banning from teaching in high school. DMT’s open letter to the Attorney General led him to order the District State Attorney to press charges against Hoaas and he stood trial in August 1976.²³⁷ Regarding banning from teaching, the organisation of high school teachers (*Norsk Lektorlag*) likewise released a public statement where it

²³² Olav Hoaas. *Ny nasjonal politikk* (Nasjonal Ungdomsfylking, 1968) p. 20. ‘Når vi har fått fjernet alle fremedættede ved utvisning eller sterilisering, da vil vi ha oppnådd at personer av den type som erfaringsmessig mest er tilbøyelig til å bli spioner og agenter for fremmede makter, er skaffet av veien.’

²³³ Tore Johannessen. ‘Lektor Hoaas slår til før nazi-programmet i TV: “Gasskamrene bare oppspinn”’ *Verdens Gang* 29.6.1975.

²³⁴ Jon O. Egeland. ‘Nazi-ektor granskes av myndighetene: “Hitlers gasskamre har aldri eksistert”’ *Dagbladet* 4.6.1975 According to Oskar Mendelsohn. ‘Atter en gang Hoaas’ *Jødisk Menighetsblad* 1977 Nr. 2, Hoaas underestimated the number of Jewish victims of the Holocaust in the interviews.

²³⁵ ‘Tilfellet Hoaas’ *Arbeiderbladet* 6.6.1975; ‘EN UNGDOMMENS FORFØRER’ *Verdens Gang* 6.6.1975; Helmer H. Bonnevie. ‘Drives det bevisst historieforfalskning?’ *Aftenposten* 6.6.1975. This anecdote is brought by Simonsen (2023, forthcoming).

²³⁶ The letter was quoted in various newspapers: Ailo Gaup. ‘Lektor Hoaas må fjernes’ *Verdens Gang* 5.6.1975.

²³⁷ Mendelsohn (1987) p. 374.

dissociated itself from Hoaas and his historical falsifications.²³⁸ However, the organisation determined that it had no grounds to suspend Hoaas from teaching and hence he received a mere warning.²³⁹

3.3.2. Lektor against lektor:²⁴⁰ Oskar Mendelsohn's reaction to the Hoaas case

Oskar Mendelsohn was a high school teacher like Olav Hoaas, and he was also the editor and main author of DMT's magazine *Jødisk Menighetsblad*. The first volume of Mendelsohn's history book on Jews in Norway *Jødenes historie* was published in 1969, and he reviewed Hoaas' trials in *Jødisk Menighetsblad* while working on the second volume, which focused on the period of the Second World War, and in the postwar period he included the Hoaas case. In June 1975, Mendelsohn submitted a report on neo-Nazism in Norway to the WJC where he conceptualised Hoaas' activism as a turning point in the rise of far-right in the country.²⁴¹ Mendelsohn warned against conspiracy thinking gaining legitimacy in Norway if people like Hoaas were not denounced at first hand. He partnered with Leo Eitinger to represent the community against Hoaas in the trial, which was of unprecedented significance following the vast public engagement in the Hoaas case. Mendelsohn and Eitinger sought to prove Hoaas was promoting anti-Jewish racial hatred through conspiracism and spreading of misinformation about the Holocaust. Eitinger described Hoaas' claims as 'the vilest he had heard' and Mendelsohn recalled what 'exceeded the worst premonitions about what could be said in a court room.'²⁴²

Hoaas was sentenced to 120 days in prison and a fine of 5,000 crowns; a verdict which he defied by accusing the court of acting under 'Jewish influence' and submitting to the "foreign forces" interests.' Hoaas was condemned and ridiculed in the press. Remarkably, perhaps, he was indicted not for Holocaust denial but for perpetuating that Jews should not belong in Norway. Indeed, the verdict acknowledged that Hoaas had denied 'undeniable facts when he call[ed] the Nazi's extermination of Jews and their use of gas chambers during the Second World War a fabrication.'²⁴³ This means that the truth about the Holocaust prevailed. But it

²³⁸ "Gasskamrene har aldri eksistert": Skarp jøde-reaksjon på lektor-uttalelser' *Aftenposten* 5.6.1975.

²³⁹ Oskar Mendelsohn. 'Atter en gang Hoaas' *Jødisk Menighetsblad* 1977 Nr. 2.

²⁴⁰ Lektor is a high school teacher in Norwegian.

²⁴¹ Letter from Oskar Mendelsohn to the World Jewish Congress, 'Neo-Nazism in Norway', 22.6.1975. RA/PA/874/F/L24.

²⁴² Ailo Gaup. 'Lektor Hoaas må fjernes' *Verdens Gang* 5.6.1975; Oskar Mendelsohn. 'Hoaas saken for Hålogaland Lagmannsrett' *Jødisk Menighetsblad* 1976 Nr. 2.

²⁴³ Jon Fjalstad, Arne Lund, Torbjørn Myhren. *Hålogalands Lagmannsrett* (1976), RA/PA874/F/L29. '[benekter] ubestridelige fakta når han betegner nazistenes jødeutryddelse og deres bruk av gasskamre under annen verdenskrig for oppspinn.'

was not only Hoas' conspiracy narratives which DMT fought against. Rather, a central incentive for combatting Nazi antisemitism in the Hoas case was to fight against a rhetoric which rejected Jews from being Norwegian. Neo-Nazism reignited the trauma of the occupation years when Jews were conceived as foreigners, with the reintroduction of the 'Jewish clause' in the Norwegian constitution and were subsequently deprived of their citizenship and deported. It was this experience of exclusion that many of those living in Norway in the 1970s had gone through themselves that made this commitment against Hoas' ideas so crucial to the Jewish community. DMT could not stand by when a vocal actor called into question their belonging to Norway, and their value in Norwegian society. Such an exclusionary thinking in practice would be expressed in its extreme as exclusion of Jews from the protection of the law. This was fundamentally dangerous for Norwegian Jews and had to be fought at all costs. Hoas' antisemitism was the worst manifestation of social rejection in Norway, and he could not be allowed to continue its transmission.

Oskar Mendelsohn reviewed the trial in *Jødisk Menighetsblad* where he maintained that Hoas' statements, made assumingly on behalf of freedom of speech, were thoroughly calculated to express antisemitism and the case should not be conceived as a single standing embarrassment but as indicative of the emergence of Holocaust denial.²⁴⁴ The Jewish case for justice indicated democracy in Norway and concerned all Norwegians. Notably, Mendelsohn distinguished between two elements in Hoas' argumentation: Holocaust denial, and hatred of Norwegian Jews. Albeit the penal code against incitement to racial hatred did not hinder freedom of speech and therefore 'concrete criticism of a certain group of people' was not punishable, Hoas was convicted for explicit, intentional hateful expression and for attempting to harm Norwegian Jews which fell under Article 135a.²⁴⁵ In another article in *Jødisk Menighetsblad*, Mendelsohn compared between Hoas and himself as two teachers and self-acclaimed historians to demonstrate that Hoas had failed in his ethical responsibility to perform and encourage source criticism.²⁴⁶ Moreover, Mendelsohn discerned between the internal (Jewish) and the external (non-Jewish) perspectives over the case, by arguing that non-Jewish people could never fully understand the position of Jews when facing a Nazi. As an example, he quoted from Erik Stokland, the school principal where Hoas was teaching, who said in the trial that Hoas should not be taken seriously. However, Mendelsohn

²⁴⁴ Oskar Mendelsohn. 'Hoas-saken' *Jødisk Menighetsblad* 1976 Nr. 1; 'Leo Eitinger om Hoas: – Uhyggelig ekko av Adolf Hitler' *Dagbladet* 18.8.1976.

²⁴⁵ Ot.prp. nr. 48, Stortingsforhandling 1969–1970 114:4.

²⁴⁶ Oskar Mendelsohn. 'Hoas saken for Hålogaland Lagmannsrett' *Jødisk Menighetsblad* 1976 Nr. 2.

counterargued that Stokland's perspective was limited because he was not the one whom Hoaas was threatening. Thus, he stressed on the one hand the urgency of working in unison to nip antisemitism in the bud, and on the other hand to develop an awareness of the unique situation of Norwegian Jews who were prone to experience hostility and discrimination with the spreading of antisemitic sentiments and conspiracy theories. In the Hoaas case, DMT was explicit throughout against 'antisemitism':

The statements regarding the unfortunate consequences of racial mixing are clearly antisemitic. They target a group of people who have lived in Norway for several generations and indicate a clear mockery. With his statements, he is in favour of tearing down what was founded more than a 100 years ago. They pose a threat to the Jews, and he must be held accountable for his conclusions. [...] That the Jews should leave Norway is without reservation. The statements are all intentional, threatening, and abusive.²⁴⁷

Hoaas' call to exclude Jews from Norway threatened the fundamentals of community and fellowship in a pluralistic society. An argument could be made that it became more possible for DMT to call out explicitly, and declare defensive action, against 'antisemitism' once a law against incitement to racial hatred had been passed, and due to an increasing awareness of the horrors of the Holocaust and Nazi antisemitism three decades after the Second World War. Unlike fear of anti-Jewish discrimination in the Norwegian legal system, Hoaas' antisemitism in 1976 was explicitly Nazi and was unequivocally rejected in court and by the public. Hoaas went to the Court of Appeal which forfeited his financial fine (excluding court expenses) but maintained the imprisonment verdict, and he subsequently appealed to the Supreme Court.²⁴⁸

In February 1977, the Supreme Court found against Hoaas. But DMT's fight was not over. Oskar Mendelsohn proceeded to plead with the Ministry of Church and Education (*Kirke- og utdanningsdepartement*) to ban Hoaas from teaching. As things stood, the Ministry of Justice had not found sufficient grounds to fire Hoaas, since there was no evidence that he taught outside the curriculum.²⁴⁹ Mendelsohn asked: why was Hoaas able to keep his position considering he had been open about his views all along?²⁵⁰ In an article in *Jødisk Menighetsblad*, he brought examples of two teachers from northern Norway, who like Hoaas objected to Article 135a altogether. One teacher from Bodø argued for Hoaas' freedom of speech. Another called against the 'witch hunt' Hoaas was going through and compared his

²⁴⁷ Ibid. 'Utsagnene om raseblandingens uheldige følger er klart antisemittiske. De retter seg mot en menneskegruppe som har bodd i Norge i flere menneskealdre og innebærer en klar forhånelse. Med sine uttalelser går han inn for å rive ned det som er bygd opp for mer enn 100 år siden. De utgjør en trussel mot jødene, og han må tekkes til ansvar for sine slutninger. [...] At jødene skal ut av Norge, er uten forbehold. Uttalelsene er både forsettlig, truende og forhånende.'

²⁴⁸ *Hålogalands Lagmannsrett* (1976) p. 1.

²⁴⁹ Oskar Mendelsohn. 'Hoaassaken for tredje (og siste?) gang' *Jødisk Menighetsblad* 1977 Nr 1.

²⁵⁰ Oskar Mendelsohn. 'Atter en gang Hoaas' *Jødisk Menighetsblad* 1977 Nr. 2.

experience to a *Berufsverbot* (meaning a professional ban).²⁵¹ The latter teacher was himself a writer in the neo-Nazi newspapers *Folk og Land* and *Lov og Rett*.²⁵²

Mendelsohn asserted that the Ministry's reluctance to suspend Hoaas from teaching was contributing to his portrayal as a martyr in the eyes of 'defenders of freedom of speech'. Thus, by bringing forward voices which supported his suspension, like the Nordland district school board (*Nordland Fylkeskolestyre*) and the student council of Hoaas' school, which organised a demonstration to ban him, Mendelsohn showed that Hoaas was wanted out of the classroom.²⁵³ Two years later, in October 1978, the Nordland district school board unanimously decided to ban Olav Hoaas from teaching, and any further attempt on his part to appeal the decision was unsuccessful.²⁵⁴ In her master's thesis on Olav Hoaas' ideology, Ingrid S. Grimstad argues that the Ministry of Church and Education's eventual change of mind regarding Hoaas' employment occurred because Hoaas was unable to keep his ideology out of the classroom. Presumably, sufficient grounds against him eventually culminated.²⁵⁵ This study did not find further response from DMT in the matter or information that provides a definitive answer. What can be said is that Olav Hoaas' indictment according to Article 135a, and his subsequent ban from teaching at a high school, signifies the priority of equality and minority security over the 'freedom of speech' for which he and his supporters argued.

3.4. Concluding remarks

Certain actors in the Jewish community, like Marcus Levin and Leon Jarner, used 'antisemitism' as an overall term meaning anti-Jewish hatred, rooted in Nazism but normalised in daily life. Others – such as DMT, Alfred Leopold, Bernhard Goldberg, and Aksel Scheer – seem to have distinguished between 'antisemitism' and anti-Jewish attitudes. For these actors, 'antisemitism' was an annihilatory, genocidal import from Nazi Germany which Norway could not have developed on its own. They viewed the anti-Jewish attitudes encountered in daily life in Norway as a separate exclusionary phenomenon.

²⁵¹ In the 1970s, teachers with radical Left wing and communist attitudes did not find permanent positions at schools in West Germany, which was heavily criticised in Norway: Aleksander Gallas. 'Precarious Academic Labour in Germany: Termed Contracts and a New *Berufsverbot*', *Global Labour Journal*, 9:1 (2018) pp. 92–102.

²⁵² Oskar Mendelsohn. 'Atter en gang Hoaas' *Jødisk Menighetsblad* 1977 Nr. 2.

²⁵³ Ibid.

²⁵⁴ 'Lektor Hoaas fikk sparken' *Verdens Gang* 21.10.1978; Ingrid S. Grimstad. *Holocaustbenektelse på norsk? En studie av Olav Hoaas sitt ideologiske standpunkt* (unpublished master's thesis, University of Oslo, 2014) pp. 59–64.

²⁵⁵ Grimstad (2014) p. 59.

The Jewish actors examined in subchapter 3.1. acknowledged that Nazi antisemitism had disappeared from above the surface with the liberation. However, antisemitism as irrational hatred did not vanish with the Nazis, and therefore it had the potential to return over time, which made it crucial to nip it in the bud. Particularly, these actors reacted against anti-Jewish discrimination as a form of exclusion. They could not really allude to 'antisemitism' because the court was not apparently being antisemitic. However, the revised verdict and acquittal of people who had committed crimes against Norwegian Jews in the Holocaust were seen as discriminatory against Jewish citizens. There was suspicion that, had the victims been non-Jews, the crimes committed against them would have been met with harsher justice. This led to questions regarding the undervaluing of Jewish citizens by the juridical system.

This also shows that there was an integrationist function in fighting anti-Jewish discrimination in the immediate postwar years. The very understanding of discrimination in the application of the law indicates that if Jews were truly seen as Norwegian, they should not experience discrimination excluding them as a group. By fighting against their exclusion, they asserted their inclusion in the national collective. During a time of rehabilitation challenges, the actors actively demonstrated re-integration in Norwegian society by demonstrating that although they had been excluded and persecuted under foreign Nazi rule, they as Norwegian citizens should always be treated the same in the application of the Norwegian law, with consideration of their unique experience of the Holocaust. The significance of combatting persistent Nazi antisemitism was crucial since its resurgence threatened Norway's liberal and democratic values. Moreover, antisemitism excluded a particular group of Norwegian citizens and the Jewish actors considered it their duty to strategise against this. Shifting perspectives over the Second World War highlighted the responsibility of Norwegian society to maintain democracy and liberal values. This enabled DMT to fulfil a public function in the fight against racism, setting a new standard for Jewish agency.

The chapter conclusively emphasises the power of numbers through self-organisation for the purpose of fighting back, and the power of successful alliance with non-Jewish actors in combatting antisemitism. DMT intervened on behalf of members who were unable to represent themselves by corresponding with the authorities and making community statements in the press. DMT's contribution to the creation of Article 135a against incitement to racial hatred in 1960 established Norway as a pioneer of European postwar legislative anti-racism. Their collaboration with Jewish communities in the neighbouring Scandinavian countries, and with the WJC validated their cause and helped to ensure the security of the community by providing the tools to formulate and promote the bill. Nevertheless, the law

proved limited both in the way that it was constructed and the way it was enforced, and DMT was compelled to step in once again when it became clear that the new penal code was not fulfilling its purpose. In *Jødenes historie*, Oskar Mendelsohn brought the Hoaas case as a prominent example of successful Jewish resistance against Nazi antisemitism.²⁵⁶ DMT prioritised Hoaas' indictment and teaching ban to prevent the resurgence of Nazi antisemitism in Norway, thereby ensuring the public consensus against racial hatred; in this DMT was successful.

²⁵⁶ Mendelsohn (1987) pp. 374–375.

4. Norwegian Jewish reactions to anti-Zionism, 1967–1983

This chapter analyses Norwegian Jewish reactions to antisemitism associated with the emergence of the Norwegian anti-Zionist movement. It examines three cases which triggered Jewish reaction: 1. The denial of Israel's right to exist as a 'bridge of imperialism' by the 'New socialist Left' after the Six Day War in 1967; 2. The establishment of a transnational anti-Zionist movement in the 1970s, manifested particularly in the UN resolution that equated Zionism with racism; and 3. The First Lebanon War in 1982 which contributed to a shift in the political climate in Norway regarding Israel. How did central actors in the Jewish community define antisemitism in relation to anti-Zionism? Which strategies and methods were developed and used in response to antisemitism within the political debate on Israel?

4.1. Jewish reactions to anti-Zionism after the Six Day War, 1967

4.1.1. The 'New Left'

The formation of a radical 'New Left' in the late 1960s marked a new era in the West.²⁵⁷ Galvanised by the ideological and social pressures of the ongoing Cold War and the outbreak of war in Vietnam, a 'countercultural' revolution against 'the establishment' gained momentum in the Western world, with the United States in particular seeing efforts to advance the civil rights movement redouble. Historian Michael Frey defines the 'international peace movement' of the 1960s as one that sought to eradicate war as a point of policy which led to the formation of revolutionary anti-imperialist (pro-peace) and anti-capitalist (anti-materialism) currents.²⁵⁸ At the same time, the 'countercultural revolution' was characterised by protest and the search for new ways of living. Historian Åsmund Borgen Gjerde explains that Maoism gained popularity with the young on the radical Norwegian Left, who viewed it as a liberating anti-racist vehicle. Before 1967, the 'New Left' thought little of Israel within the patterns of global conflict, but after the Six Day War, it conceived Israel as a 'bridgehead of imperialism' in the Middle East. Only from 1969 onwards did the element of solidarity with the Palestinians come to the fore.²⁵⁹

²⁵⁷ Martin Klimke and Joachim Scharloth. '1968 in Europe: An Introduction' in Klimke, Martin, Scharloth, Joachim, eds. *1968 in Europe: A History of Protest and Activism, 1956–1977* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2008) pp. 1–9, pp. 3–9.

²⁵⁸ Michael Frey. 'The International Peace Movement' in Klimke, Martin, Scharloth, Joachim, eds. *1968 in Europe: A History of Protest and Activism, 1956–1977* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2008) pp. 32–44, p. 34.

²⁵⁹ Gjerde (2018) pp. 274–275; Terje Vågstøl. *Den norske solidaritetsrørsla for Palestina, 1967–1986* (unpublished master's thesis, University of Bergen, 2007) pp. 27–30, 42; Hoffmann (2020a) pp. 37–38; also Waage (1996) p. 36. This presentation is inspired by Simonsen (2023, forthcoming).

Many of those who later subscribed to the anti-Zionist movement, including some of the central actors in the solidarity struggle for Palestine were first introduced to Israel by volunteering in the Kibbutz in the 1960s. In his master's thesis in history, Terje Vågstøl describes young Norwegian volunteers seeking the 'Israeli experience' who later grew critical of Israel as a sovereign state in the Middle East.²⁶⁰ In the 1960s, the relationship between Norway and Israel was very strong, largely due to collaboration between the Norwegian and the Israeli Labour parties and the working relationship between the trade unions LO and Histadrut. Many in the Norwegian Left expressed interest in the Kibbutzim and appreciated the pioneering Jewish state for what it was, but later reassessed their stance on Israel and its neighbours and the Palestinian population.

Norway was among Israel's ardent supporters in the immediate postwar years and the Norwegian public largely sympathised with Israel in the Six Day War. The threat posed to the Jewish state by five Arab armies stirred genuine fear that Israel might not survive.²⁶¹ However, its victory against all odds demonstrated its power in the Middle East, and drew attention to the Palestinians – now seen as the new underdog. In October 1967, SUF, the youth organisation of the Socialist People's Party (SF) adopted a resolution that 'Israel in its current form as a bridgehead of imperialism must cease to exist.'²⁶² The resolution determined that Israel was proclaimed as a result of conquest and ethnic cleansing of the Arab population. Israel was accused of initiating the Six Day War through purposeful aggression and of using 'bestial means to carry out its plans.'²⁶³ The resolution linked Israel with US imperialism, claiming that Israel economically depended on the US and was part of a network of 'marionettes' in the postcolonial countries. In fact, the attribution 'as a bridgehead of imperialism' came in as a form of moderation, as did the reservation that the Jewish population in Israel 'should be guaranteed rights to live in the Middle East.'²⁶⁴

Many socialist actors regarded SUF's resolution as 'antisemitic' right away. SF condemned the radical stance that Israel should not exist, foreshadowing the split between

²⁶⁰ Vågstøl (2007) pp. 22, 28.

²⁶¹ Johansen (2008) p. 97.

²⁶² SUF, *Politisk plattform og andre viktige vedtak fra SUFs 4. og 5. Landsmøte* (Oslo: SUF, 1968), p. 13. The resolution is also mentioned in 'Motsetninger' and 'SUF om Midt-Østen' *Orientering* 14.10.1967. 'Staten Israel i sin nåværende form som brohode for imperialismen må opphøre å eksistere.'

²⁶³ *Ibid.* 'Staten Israel har oppstått som et resultat av erobningskriger. [...] Etter krigene har den innfødte arabiske befolkningen blitt drevet ut av de områdene de bebodde. Overfor araberne i Israel blir det først en ren undertrykkelsespolitikk.' 'For å få gjennomført sine planer brukte de alle slags bestialske midler.'

²⁶⁴ K.E.H. 'SF-ungdommen vil avskaffe staten Israel' *Dagbladet* 9.10.1967. Gjerde (2018) p. 297; Hoffmann (2020a) p. 38.

SUF and SF in 1969.²⁶⁵ Author and journalist Sigurd Evensmo, an influential socialist intellectual, warned that the resolution against Israel ‘as a bridgehead of imperialism’ would ‘nourish the primitive antisemitism that still exists in Norway.’²⁶⁶ A writer in *Morgenbladet* regarded the resolution to be ‘a frontal attack’ on Jews who had been subjected to persecution for millennia and considered it ‘antisemitism on the lowest level.’²⁶⁷ It appears that these voices regarded Israel to be crucial for the safety of Jews, and thus arguing against Israel’s existence posed a major threat to Jewish people.

SUF responded by arguing against the editorial board of *Orientering* – SF’s newspaper – that they should not let the memory of the Nazi period affect their judgement of the Jewish state in the present. ‘It makes it understandable that they are occupied with the history of Jewish suffering and rights of the Jews. But now it is time to realise that the roles have changed, and that today it is the Arabs who suffer injustice.’²⁶⁸ SUF objected to association of the Jewish state in the history of persecution of Jews, as it clouded the debate of Israel as a political actor. Nevertheless, in the summer of 1968, several movements of radical Leftist youth united in targeting an event celebrating the 20th anniversary of the proclamation of Israel which took place at the Oslo University aula – presenting a poster depicting Israeli Defence Minister Moshe Dayan as the successor of Hitler.²⁶⁹ This example illustrates that ‘antisemitism’ – understood as the persecution of Jews – and the repurposing of Nazi imagery, could be applied in the discourse to counter arguments on both sides. SUF conceptualised the history of persecution of Jews as a cautionary tale against persecution today but implied an antagonistic interpretation – that Israel had become a persecuting state like Nazi Germany.

4.1.2. ‘Bombed back to the pre-war period’ – community reactions to the emergence of anti-Zionism in Norway

Historian Vibeke K. Banik has researched Norwegian Jewish attitudes towards Israel between 1945–1975. She explains that Israel became a central identity factor for the community earlier than for many other Jewish minorities in Europe. The Jewish state was seen as a pillar of revived Jewish consciousness and pride, as a free state, and as a centre of Jewish culture.²⁷⁰

²⁶⁵ ‘Motsetninger’ *Orientering* 14.10.1967. Gjerde (2018) p. 298.

²⁶⁶ Sigurd Evensmo. ‘På parti med Mao’ *Orientering* 28.10.1967 in Hoffmann (2020a) p. 38.

²⁶⁷ Ulf Gleditsch. ‘Jødehat i dagens SF-regi’ *Morgenbladet* 13.10.1967. ‘En antisemittisme på laveste plan.’

²⁶⁸ Sentralstyret i SUF. ‘SUF og Midt-Østen’ *Orientering* 21.10.1967. ‘Det gjør det forståelig at de fikserer jødernes lidelseshistorie og er opptatt av deres rett. Men nå er det snart på tide å få øyene opp for at rollene har byttet, og at det i dag er araberne som lider urett’ mentioned in Hoffmann (2020a) p. 38.

²⁶⁹ ‘Det israelske folk har vist sin rett til å leve i landet’ *Arbeiderbladet* 8.5.1968; ‘AUF i Oslo tar avstand’ *Vårt Land* 9.5.1968; The demonstration was largely regarded in the newspapers as disturbing and undignified.

²⁷⁰ Banik (2009) pp. 260–265.

However, solidarity with Israel did not mean all Norwegian Jews were Zionist or wanted to make Aliyah (immigration to Israel). In a post-religious era, Zionism in Western countries was seen primarily as the revival of Jewish identity that was not exclusively based on religion.²⁷¹ Considering especially the strong relationship between the two countries, members of DMT could celebrate Israel regardless of where they called their home.²⁷² This attachment to Israel would have been typical of many Jewish communities in the diaspora and was not unique to Norwegian Jews.

Like DMT, the Norwegian Jewish Youth Association (JUF) was not principally a political organisation and did not take a stance regarding Israel. Nevertheless, JUF's yearly reports available in the DMT archive indicate that the association considered the debate on Israel relevant to the Jewish community, and especially to younger members. In late October 1967, JUF invited a representative from SUF to discuss the premises behind the 'violent resolution' that was 'hostile to Israel' in an open debate involving 80 participants. Based on this formulation, JUF had considered the denial of Israel's right to exist a political matter and not in itself a problem of 'antisemitism'. SUF's resolution was hostile towards Israel, and not towards Jews. Yet, the association was active in organising a platform to discuss Israel and the conflict. For example, JUF invited the NRK reporter Olav Øverland to present a film and discuss both sides of the conflict with a further 90 participants.²⁷³ In 1969, JUF organised a debate entitled 'The Middle East conflict – an unsolvable dilemma (for whom?)' which was attended by 100 participants.²⁷⁴ Considering solidarity with Israel in DMT, JUF's engagement in the debate for Israel arguably played a role against anti-Israel hostility that was relevant for community members, who were drawn to the debate.

Still, the archival material does not provide a full picture of the daily atmosphere in the community for individuals who were exposed to anti-Zionist activity in Leftist circles. Being interviewed for this study, Berit Reisel relates her personal experience as a student at the University of Oslo from 1967. Reisel was active at the time in establishing the Nordic Organisation of Jewish Students (NOJS) and headed the branch in Norway of *Studentklubben*. She recalls an abrupt shift of hostility towards her in the brink of the Six Day War. Although NOJS had no pro-Israel agenda, Reisel emphasises that she sensed hatred towards her as a Jew, because she was being associated with the Zionist movement. In reaction, Reisel avoided

²⁷¹ Shlomo Avineri. *The Making of Modern Zionism: Intellectual Origins of the Jewish State* (New York: Basic Books, 1981) pp. 12–13, 56–57.

²⁷² Banik (2009) p. 164. On Norwegian Jewish Aliyah see pp. 181–203.

²⁷³ Annual report 'Rapport for foreningsåret 1967', JMO/DMT/D35.

²⁷⁴ Banik (2009) p. 231.

studying in the common areas, avoided social interactions and ‘kept to herself’ because she felt the numbers were against her. At one point, she concretely feared for her physical safety. ‘We didn’t do anything. We were just scared. And we felt like we were bombed back to the pre-war period.’²⁷⁵

Reisel was critical of Israeli policy regarding the Palestinians, and she participated in an international debate society called ‘The Critical Zionists’ which discussed political issues relating to Israel from a critical and pro-Zionist perspective. She believed that certain arguments in favour of Israel regarding the conflict did a disservice to Israel’s standing in the world, and this was ultimately dangerous for Israel and hence dangerous for the safety of Jews in the diaspora. Her political criticism did not conflate with her support of Israel’s right to exist but sought to communicate what she believed was best for Israel. Therefore, she considered her own engagement in the debate to be part of the fight against antisemitism. Yet, it is important to remember the diversity of voices among Jewish individuals. Alongside the example of Berit Reisel who took an active role for Israel, some were active in the socialist Left. For example, Dag Steinfeld in Bergen was a member of SUF–ml in the 1970s and was active in the Palestine Committee (PalKom).²⁷⁶ Still, his example may not reflect the daily atmosphere in other cities, where DMT was established like Oslo and Trondheim.

Others in DMT were explicit regarding a connection between the denial of Israel’s right to exist, and anti-Jewish hostility. Leo Eitinger was prominent against radical anti-Zionism since 1967 and he arguably provided the foundation for criticising Israel-related antisemitism in the Jewish community. Just as SUF had described the editorial board of *Orientering*, Eitinger really was there ‘when the Nazis ravaged Europe with their persecution of Jews.’²⁷⁷ His commitment to combatting antisemitism was deeply connected to his professional and personal experience, and he provided from his expertise to explain to the public psychological mechanisms behind xenophobia, and contributed key theories regarding ‘othering’, and particularly ‘antisemitism’ at an early stage of the discourse.²⁷⁸

In July 1967 Eitinger responded to the lawyer and Norwegian diplomat Hans Wilhelm Longva in *Dagbladet*, who described the Zionists as ‘a technological and educationally

²⁷⁵ Interview with Berit Reisel, 15.2.2023, Oslo.

²⁷⁶ Dag Steinfeld. *Fedre og sønner. En familiehistorie fra tsarens Russland til den kalde krigen* (Bergen: Vigmostad & Bjørke, 2022).

²⁷⁷ Sentralstyret i SUF. ‘SUF og Midt-Østen’ *Orientering* 21.10.1967. ‘De var alle unge da nazistene herjet Europa med sine jødeforfølgelser’.

²⁷⁸ Hoffmann (2020a) p. 41; ‘About Leo Eitinger’, *University of Oslo* <https://www.uio.no/english/about/facts/awards/human-rights/leo-eitinger/> [accessed 24.3.2023]; Leo Eitinger. *Fremmed i Norge* (Oslo: Cappelen, 1981); Leo Eitinger. *Mennesker blant mennesker. En bok om antisemittisme og fremmedhat* (Oslo: Cappelen, 1985).

superior group of immigrants who colonised an already populated land.’²⁷⁹ Longva argued that while one ought to acknowledge the history of persecution of Jews, one should also be able to compare Auschwitz to refugee camps in Jericho, to understand the low living conditions of the Arab population. He concluded that to be pro–Arab had nothing to do with being antisemitic. To Eitinger, the bottom line was that Israel’s neighboring countries wanted the annihilation of the Jewish state and of Jewish people, and that was ‘antisemitic’. In this political context, he maintained that antisemitism could exist in pro–Arabism. For example, Hitler had collaborated with the Mufti of Jerusalem against Jews. Eitinger argued against comparing between Auschwitz and refugee camps in Jericho because refugee camps could not be compared to a place of mass murder of many thousands of Jews. He did not accuse Longva of being antisemitic but implied that a ‘one sided narration’ of the conflict portrayed the Jewish population disproportionately, in a way that was not helpful for the political debate but potentially harmful for Jewish people.²⁸⁰

Eitinger’s intervention was a political reaction to criticism of Israel, but was it also a reaction to antisemitism? He paid attention to the use of language in detecting antisemitism where it was not apparent. He explained that ‘antisemitism’ was a euphemism for ‘anti–Jewish h a t r e d’ and therefore the term should not be avoided or toned down but used without fear to reveal and eradicate anti–Jewish sentiments even within a political debate.²⁸¹ Here, Eitinger reacted to antisemitism coming from Israel’s neighbours, who called for its annihilation through war. This was first seen as a threat to the Jewish population living in Israel and did not refer to antisemitism in Norway. However, in this example Eitinger raised a principle that there was a connection between political anti–Zionism – through denying Israel’s right to exist, and by applying a Nazi analogy onto the Jewish state – and anti–Jewish hostility. He warned that reiterating those voices in Norway could eventually impact Jews outside Israel.

On another occasion, Eitinger reacted to Jorunn Johnsen, a journalist in *Aftenposten* who, regarding Israel, said Jews ‘only take care of themselves and what’s theirs and aspire to keep

²⁷⁹ Hans Wilhelm Longva. ‘Krigen i Midt–Østen og norske reaksjoner’ *Dagbladet* 15.7.1967. ‘Teknologisk og utdannelsesmessig overlegen immigrantgruppe har kolonisert allerede bebodd land, noe som har ført til at den opprinnelige befolkning i dag i meget stor grad frister en tilværelse under lite menneskelige forhold i leirer i Midt–Østen’. From the 1980s (beyond the scope of this thesis) Longva served as the Norwegian ambassador to Kuwait (1984–1991), Turkey (2001–2006), Azerbaijan (2006), Lebanon and Syria (2006–2008), ‘Hans Wilhelm Longva’ *Store Norske Leksikon* https://snl.no/Hans_Wilhelm_Longva [accessed 25.3.2023].

²⁸⁰ Leo Eitinger. ‘Jøder og arabere’ *Dagbladet* 24.7.1967. ‘En ensidig framstilling av historiske kjensgjerninger.’, ‘De nakne fakta er i all sin enkelhet at araberlederne fremdeles ser som eneste mulige løsning ekstinksjonen, eliminasjonen, utslettelsen av staten Israel.’ and forward.

²⁸¹ Ibid. Spacing in the original.

it this way also in the future [...] because they have rich relatives all over the globe.’²⁸² Eitinger sent a letter to *Aftenposten* where he pointed out Johnsen was consistently targeting ‘the Jews’ where she could address ‘Israel’.²⁸³ He did not accuse her of being antisemitic but stressed the dangerously short path from making remarks about the Jewish population in Israel to using plain anti-Jewish stereotypes. DMT member journalist Mona Levin likewise responded to Johnsen’s ‘hateful attack on Israel.’ She called her out as an agitator for anti-Jewish conspiracies, by asking if she really believed the Jews were all connected and were helping each other with their money?²⁸⁴ Levin concluded that Johnsen was using the political debate as a channel to convey her questionable attitudes towards Israel, in the same way that the press in East Germany was using the conflict to spread antisemitic conspiracies. Like Eitinger, Levin did not accuse Johnsen of being antisemitic, but in defending the Israeli population she recognised a connection between Israelis and Jews, and criticised Johnsen’s attack on ‘Israel’. Eitinger and Levin argued ultimately that a ‘one-sided’ presentation of the debate put Israel out of context and out of proportion, and thus was opening the door to anti-Jewish hostility through traditional anti-Jewish tropes and conspiracies. In this way, their defence of Israel in the press also functioned as defence of Jews.

In 1969, Eitinger warned explicitly that the socialist Left was becoming antisemitic little by little. ‘The entire extreme Left wing of the Socialist camp has swallowed raw this new form of antisemitism which is now called anti-Zionism’, which will ‘increase the threat to the existence of all Jews affected. [...] The socialist Left is latently and unconsciously antisemitic.’²⁸⁵ Eitinger criticised a new book by the Swedish author Staffan Beckman on the conflict, which argued Israel must cease to exist. To this Eitinger responded that calling to liquidate the Jewish state was the same as calling to liquidate two million Israeli citizens. Yet, in the centre of his argument stood the fundamental connection between Israel and Jewish people around the world. He claimed that anti-Zionism posed a direct threat on the safety and standing of Jews regardless of their attachment to Israel. Eitinger considered Beckman to be a representative of the new socialist Left and he claimed that while the socialist Left actively

²⁸² Jorunn Johnsen. ‘Én krig, to folk’ *Aftenposten* 15.6.1967. ‘Hos dem som mesterlig har greid å ta vare på seg og sine og som også vil greie det i fremtiden, blant annet fordi de har rike slektninger overalt på kloden.’

²⁸³ Draft of a letter to *Aftenposten*’s editor regarding Jorunn Johnsen, undated, HL/PA/AKT13/L30. This study has not found a press response by Eitinger to Johansen.

²⁸⁴ Mona Levin. ‘Rike slektninger’ *Aftenposten* 17.6.1967. ‘Er det Jorunn Johnsens «rike slektninger»? Har hun den banale oppfatning at alle jøder i familie med hverandre?’

²⁸⁵ Leo Eitinger. ‘Den ytterste venstre og antisemittisme’ *Aftenposten* 16.10.1969. ‘[...] hele den ytterste venstre fløy i den sosialistiske leir har slukt denne nye form for antisemittisme som nå kalles anti-sionisme rått’, ‘[...] øke truselen mot alle de rammede jøders eksistens’, ‘[...] den venstre-sosialistiske fløy er latent og ubevisst antisemittisk.’

dissociated itself from ‘antisemitism’, anti-Zionism was inherently connected to a discussion about Jews. Eitinger explained that, as was done in Soviet propaganda, the socialist Left in Western countries was using the terminology of ‘Zionists’ instead of ‘Jews’ to express antisemitism in a way that was socially acceptable. In other words, he claimed that the political debate on Zionism functioned as a channel to convey antisemitism, when ‘antisemitism’ was denounced. Eitinger pointed out that the cover of Beckman’s book was not related to the political or military situation in Israel but portrayed a stereotypical image of an ultra-Orthodox Jew, comparing such use of imagery to the Nazi magazine *Der Stürmer*: ‘The Left wing is deeply and unconsciously as antisemitic as Soviet communism, and as antisemitic as it insists that it is anti-Zionist.’²⁸⁶

How were the views of these actors accepted in the community? Considering Leo Eitinger and Mona Levin’s press responses, some would have taken the formation of a new, radical anti-Zionist ideology seriously at an early stage. However, this study has not found evidence in the archives indicating that the DMT leadership considered how to respond to the socialist Left. DMT had a policy not to engage in politics and this appears to be the reason it did not take a collective stance in the emerging debate on Israel. It seems to suggest that anti-Zionist activity in the late 1960s was not considered a pressing threat to the Jewish community, perhaps because those groups were young and marginal in numbers. This study has not found responses of DMT members contradicting or rejecting the arguments of Eitinger and Levin, suggesting that there was no major split in perspectives within the community. JUF as a social branch of DMT appears to have maintained a neutral stance regarding the conflict however it offered a platform for discussion from a position which supported Israel’s right to exist and considered the opposition to this to be perpetration for violence. Taking the example of Berit Reisel, it is possible that some community members perceived anti-Zionist activity as an attack on them as Jews and chose consciously to keep their head down because they felt they were not in a position to defend themselves. Nevertheless, it is difficult to determine how representative this was for the entire community, and particularly for Jewish students.

4.2. Responses to anti-Zionism in the 1970s

The split of SUF from SF was not only rooted in generational differences but came from a crucial conflict in the political ideology, since SUF attempted to steer the party’s youth

²⁸⁶ Ibid. ‘[...] så kan konklusjonen bare være at denne venstre fløy dypt ubevisst er like så antisemittisk som sovjetkommunismen og like så antisemittisk som den påstår å være antisionistisk’.

organisation towards a revolutionary approach. Thus, in 1969 it became SUF–ml: a Marxist–Leninist organisation with Maoist leanings.²⁸⁷ Key figures in SUF–ml were involved in founding the newspaper *Klassekampen* as well as the Workers’ Communist Party (AKP–ml) in 1973. AKP–ml did not participate in elections but gained influence within radical socialist and anti–imperialist movements through its activism. In 1970, the Palestine Committee (PalKom) was founded with the goal of supporting the national liberation struggle of the Palestinian people ‘by fighting US imperialism and the Zionist state of Israel.’²⁸⁸ Later, a second, non–Maoist organisation called Palestine Front (Palfront) split from PalKom.²⁸⁹ While PalKom and Palfront mostly agreed on their methods, such as cooperating with the PLO, fundraising, public engagement, and anti–Israel boycotts, they differed in their ideological orientations. During the 1970s, the debate on Zionism sparked controversy in Norwegian media regarding the relationship between anti–Zionism and antisemitism. Proponents of anti–Zionism rejected a correlation between anti–Zionism and antisemitism, asserting that Zionism was an inherently imperialist and racist movement. They claimed that anti–Zionism was anti–racist and hence could not be antisemitic.²⁹⁰

4.2.1. ‘Too emotionally involved’ – anti–Zionism in the school curricula

In 1970, high school teacher Jan Bjøndal published a booklet on Israel as part of an educational scheme of the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI) for school curriculum.²⁹¹ He described the Zionist aspiration as primarily messianic and referred to Jewish nationalism as ‘the Israeli myth.’²⁹² Bjøndal characterised the Chaluzim (pioneer settlers in Israel) as ‘murderous’, ‘war–torn’ Jews who only want to ‘colonise, work and kill, all with the same joyful zest.’²⁹³ What he defined as the Zionist ideology was a question of values. ‘It is a question of taking what you believe rightfully belongs to you. [...] It is about giving the first blow.’ To Jewish settlers ‘Life is about taking more than you give.’²⁹⁴

²⁸⁷ Gjerde (2018) p. 274f, 298. Johansen (2008) p. 100. This paragraph largely builds on Hoffmann (2020a) p. 39f.

²⁸⁸ ‘Referat fra det konstituerende møte for Palestinakomiteen Norge’ *Fritt Palestina* 1970 Nr. 1 quoted in Vågstøl (2007) p. 35; see Hoffmann (2020a) p. 39.

²⁸⁹ Vågstøl (2007) p. 1.

²⁹⁰ Hoffmann (2020a) p. 39.

²⁹¹ During his career Bjøndal published biographies and school textbooks in history and social sciences particularly on the Middle East. ‘Medarbeidere i EDDA i 1995–årgangen’, *EDDA* 4 (1995) p. 366.

Importantly, this source spells his name ‘Bjørndal’, which might indicate a typo or a mistake on my part.

²⁹² Jan Bjøndal. *Israel – Folk og samtid* (Norsk Utenrikspolitisk Institutt, 1970) p. 18. ‘Den israelske myten.’

²⁹³ *Ibid* pp. 19–20. ‘krigsvante [...] mennekser’. ‘Det er spørsmål om å kolonisere, arbeide og drepe med den samme jublende lyst.’

²⁹⁴ Bjøndal (1970) pp. 19–20. ‘det er spørsmål om å ta det man tror rettelig tilhører seg’. ‘Det er spørsmål om å slå først’. ‘livet er å ta mer enn du gir.’

Eitinger exposed Bjøndal as ‘racist’ because his depiction of Zionism stereotypically portrayed the Jewish population as brutal, aggressive, and expansive, while neglecting to consider various historical factors in Israel’s establishment and the history of persecution of Jews.²⁹⁵ Eitinger warned that schematising and stereotyping distorted the narrative to serve an anti-Jewish agenda.²⁹⁶ Thus, ‘Bjøndal, consciously or unconsciously attempts to portray a new cliché of the “Israeli Jew” thereby making “a new twist on racial hatred.”’²⁹⁷ Eitinger reacted concretely against a one-sided narration of Israel, yet he conceptualised Bjøndal’s use of anti-Jewish stereotypes in modern antisemitic ideas. He argued that Norway made efforts to eradicate the dangerous hatred which resulted in Auschwitz, but Bjøndal’s book was going in the opposite direction.

In a previous news article Bjøndal had maintained the debate on Zionism should be separated from a discussion on antisemitism.²⁹⁸ But Eitinger wanted to show that antisemitism could also infiltrate the political debate on Israel. Similarly to the way he fought to ban neo-Nazi Olav Hoaas from teaching in high school, in this case Eitinger argued that to allow racist content in the curricula contaminated the children and normalised anti-Jewish hatred. In other words, he warned that the defamation of Israel was consequently harmful to Jewish children in schools.²⁹⁹ Eitinger’s response resulted in a positive outcome. The next day, NUPI removed the booklet from their scheme and made an unconditional apology. Bjøndal, on his part, denied the accusations against him and said that Eitinger was too ‘emotionally involved.’³⁰⁰ It is difficult to determine to what extent Bjøndal represented anti-Zionist voices or the radical socialist Left. The latter comment about Eitinger might seem ridiculous on first reading, but it is also a useful reminder of the voices which categorically refused to acknowledge any connection between anti-Zionism and antisemitism. To Bjøndal, the accusation of being racist did not belong in what he considered to be a political lesson on Israel.

4.2.2. ‘Anti–Anti’ – refutations of the Palestine Committee

As this study examines strategies and methods employed by the actors in combatting antisemitism, this chapter questions: to what extent did engagement with the defence of Israel,

²⁹⁵ Leo Eitinger. ‘Nytt rasehat i Norske skoler’ *Arbeiderbladet* 11.2.1971.

²⁹⁶ Ibid. ‘Skjematisering, stereotypisering av «andre»’

²⁹⁷ Ibid. ‘Bjøndal forsøker bevisst eller ubevisst å skape en ny klisje av den «israelske jøde», ‘En ny vri på rasehat maskert på «objektiv kulturutspredning» i norske skoler.’

²⁹⁸ Jan Bjøndal, ‘Den israelske drømmen’ *Arbeiderbladet* 4.2.1971.

²⁹⁹ Leo Eitinger. ‘Nytt rasehat i Norske skoler’ *Arbeiderbladet* 11.2.1971.

³⁰⁰ ‘Jeg er ikke antisemitt’ *Verdens Gang* 12.2.1971; ‘Heftet om ISRAEL trekkes nå tilbake’ *Arbeiderbladet* 12.2.1971.

and the debate concerning its existence, function as a part of the struggle against antisemitism?

In 1974, PalKom published the booklet *Israel: Propaganda – virkelighet* (Israel: Propaganda – Reality) to uncover Zionism as a colonialist movement that was militant and expansive in the Middle East and racist and oppressive towards the Palestinians.³⁰¹ Through the booklet, PalKom sought to show that the Palestinian struggle for liberation and the establishment of a free and democratic Palestine was the only solution for peace.³⁰² NUPI used *Israel: Propaganda – virkelighet* to write an educational school play called ‘Palestine – One Land, Two People’ that was included in the curriculum of 2,500 Norwegian schools.³⁰³

The booklet conveyed that the Zionist movement was falsely trying to portray anti-Zionism as antisemitic, when really, the Zionists were being racist against Palestinians.³⁰⁴ *Israel: Propaganda – virkelighet* supposedly separated between Jews and Zionists. Hence, it argued that anti-Zionists could not be antisemitic, because they were fighting against a movement that was inherently racist. By contrast, the booklet made a claim that Zionists were historically antisemitic. For example, it presented quotes from Theodor Herzl’s book *The Jewish State* that ‘Antisemitism is a movement that is beneficial for the Jewish character,’ and ‘The antisemites will be our most reliable friends.’³⁰⁵

Yet, *Israel: Propaganda – virkelighet* apparently used the terms ‘Zionists’ and ‘Jews’ interchangeably, for example in the argument that the Jews were aspiring for world domination through a base in the Middle East.³⁰⁶ The booklet presented a quote of the WJC president Nathan Goldmann, saying that through control over Palestine ‘the military strategic centre could dominate the entire world.’³⁰⁷ PalKom received questions regarding this and other references. Goldmann denied having said this, and clarified rather that the Middle East was a central location geopolitically, and this made it difficult for Jewish people to establish their state there. However, Jews were not seeking to take over the world through Palestine.³⁰⁸

³⁰¹ *Israel: Propaganda – virkelighet* (Palestine Committee, 1974) p. 4.

³⁰² Forward in *Israel: Propaganda – virkelighet* (1974).

³⁰³ Jan Benjamin Rødner. *Løgnere iblant oss. En analyse av den anti-sionistiske propagandaen* (Oslo: Exodus, 1976) p. 9.

³⁰⁴ *Israel: Propaganda – virkelighet* (1974) p. 5.

³⁰⁵ Ibid. ‘Anti-semittisme er en bevegelse som er nyttig for den jødiske karakter’. ‘Anti-semittene vil bli våre mest pålitelige venner [...]’.

³⁰⁶ Ibid p. 38. ‘Fordi Palestina [...] er selve senteret for politisk makt. Kort sagt: Det militært strategiske senteret for å kunne dominere hele verden.’

³⁰⁷ Ibid p. 38. ‘det militært strategiske senteret for å kunne dominere hele verden.’

³⁰⁸ Johansen (2008) p. 109.

Critics called *Israel: Propaganda – virkelighet* ‘antisemitic’ right away. The actor Knut M. Hansson argued that PalKom was bringing back Nazism to Norway: how did it help to use the term ‘anti-Zionism’ instead of ‘antisemitism’, and to pretend to attack ‘Israel’ and ‘the Zionists’ instead of the Jews, when the content belonged to the traditional antisemitism?³⁰⁹ *Aftenposten* refused to publish PalKom’s response to this, and it appeared in *Klassekampen* instead. PalKom considered the criticism to be a ‘harsh attack on the Palestine Committee and hence on the Palestinians.’ It principally separated between Judaism and Zionism: Judaism was a religion, and Zionism was a belief that Jews constituted a nation. Hence, PalKom argued that the Arabs were the real Semites, whereas European Jews were a foreign occupation power in the Middle East. Furthermore, PalKom applied a Nazi analogy onto Israel, maintaining that just as Norway fought the occupying German regime, fighting Zionist occupation had one solution of a democratic Palestine. But PalKom did not accept the opposite analogy. Namely, it did not recognise Israel within the historical framework of persecution of Jews: ‘It is no longer tenable to play on the suffering of the Jews during the Second World War to defend the aggression of the state of Israel.’³¹⁰

DMT member Jan Benjamin Rødner was a law student at the University of Oslo in the early 1970s. He became concerned about a biased depiction of Israel in the press and in the curricula, and he criticised PalKom regarding their use of sources. For example, Rødner addressed the quotes of Herzl in *Israel: Propaganda – virkelighet*, where Herzl supposedly admitted Zionism was antisemitic. In response, he contextualised that Herzl in 1894 concluded Jews would always be subjected to persecution, and the only solution against antisemitism was a Jewish sovereign state. In Rødner’s explanation it is implicit that Herzl’s quote ‘Combatting antisemitism is pointless and useless’ actually meant it was pointless to combat antisemitism in Europe, and rather it was best to combat antisemitism through pro-Zionist activity.³¹¹ To show that PalKom was wrong in its interpretation, Rødner gave his own explanation that Zionism as a Jewish national movement was the opposite of antisemitism. However, in this he did not directly criticise PalKom’s use of Herzl’s quotes as a source. Rødner explained that by ‘The antisemites will be our most reliable friends, the antisemitic countries our allies’, and ‘We will help them (European politicians) to get rid of the Jews’, Herzl meant antisemitism awakened European Jews to see the injustices they were

³⁰⁹ Knut M. Hansson. ‘Nazismen og antisemittismen er gjenoppstått i vårt land’ *Aftenposten* 21.12.1974.

³¹⁰ Palestinakomiteen i Norge styret. ‘Borgerskapets «ytringsfrihet» i praksis’ *Klassekampen* 19.2.1975. ‘Det er ikke lenger holdbart å spille på jødernes lidelser under siste verdenskrig for å forsvare staten Israels aggresjon.’

³¹¹ Rødner (1976) pp. 40–43, p. 40. ‘Å bekjempe anti-semittisme er hensiktsløs og unyttig.’

experiencing, so that they would work towards creating a state that keeps them safe.³¹² Thus, Herzl's quotes were taken out of context. It may seem like antisemites and Zionists had a common goal – to move the Jews away from Europe (to Israel) – but their motives were opposite.

Rødner identified demonisation of the Zionists in *Israel: Propaganda – virkelighet* in the use of terms denoting evil, like 'terror' and 'torture' to describe the Jewish population. Rødner claimed that PalKom was forming an image of their opponent as a monster and a demon, with the sole purpose of dehumanising the Jews. Thus, they were laying the foundation for antisemitism in its purest and worst form.³¹³ Some of the examples Rødner used could refer to military policy, like 'Jewish terror against British colonial administration'. In this case, some of the resistance movements during the British mandate on Israel were called 'terror organisations' by the British and even by some of the resistance fighters themselves, and this has been debated.³¹⁴ On the other hand, Rødner showed that formulations like 'Jewish tyrants'³¹⁵ referred to Zionists specifically as Jews and portrayed them in a negative light – in which case an interpretation of this would depend on the contexts of the formulation.

Rødner concluded that anti-Zionism and antisemitism were two sides of the same coin, differentiated not in essence but in context. Anti-Zionism was a contemporary channel to exclude and attack Jewish people.³¹⁶ What was the significance of *Løgnere iblant oss* to combatting 'antisemitism' in Norway? Rødner warned that anti-Zionism was a pressing threat to Norwegian Jews. The book's cover illustrated that 'anti-Zionist propaganda' meant a physical threat to Jews. It featured a rifle, red as blood, shooting a bleeding yellow Magen David patch. To Rødner, calling to dismantle the Jewish state meant calling to annihilate Jews, and thus anti-Zionist were laying the ground for physical murder.³¹⁷

Moreover, Rødner identified the application of traditional anti-Jewish tropes referring to anti-Jewish conspiracies and notions of Jewish power and influence as well as Christian references to the Old Testament's 'spirit of revenge', and Nazi-Israel analogies.³¹⁸ He defined

³¹² Ibid. 'Anti-semittene vil bli våre mest pålitelige venner de anti-semittiske land våre allierte', 'Vi skal hjelpe dem (europeiske statsmenn) til å bli kvitt jødene.'

³¹³ Ibid p. 122–123. 'De danner seg altså et bilde av sin motstander som et monster, en demon. Dette bilde har én funksjon: Motstanderen blir umenneskeligjort'. 'de danner et bilde av zionistene, og dermed av jødene, som umennesker. Dermed legger de grunnen for anti-semittismen i sin reneste og verste form.'

³¹⁴ Calder Walton. 'British Intelligence and the Mandate on Palestine: Threats to British National Security immediately after the Second World War', *Intelligence and National Security*, 23:4 (2008) pp. 435–462.

³¹⁵ Rødner (1976) p. 122. 'Arabiske vedhuggere og jødiske overmennesker'

³¹⁶ Ibid p. 124.

³¹⁷ Ibid pp. 123–124.

³¹⁸ Ibid pp. 125–126, 98–108.

a Nazi analogy where Jews and Israel were attacked for being Nazi – for example, in linking Zionism to Nazism, and arguing that Israelis do to the Palestinians what the Nazis did to them. Rødner maintained that Nazi analogies were a means to delegitimise Zionism without consideration of its various factors, and without equally criticising other national movement.³¹⁹

After 1967, critics of the radical Left like Leo Eitinger and Mona Levin reacted against the threat on Israel's very existence. Now, PalKom was criticised for using traditional anti-Jewish tropes within anti-Zionist arguments. Classic antisemitism returned, but it was not the strong and prominent antisemitic agitation which emerged in Western Europe in the 1880s. Those who defended Israel sought to reveal hateful expression within certain formulations as the classic antisemitism that not controversial and was possible to define. But anti-Zionism and antisemitism were not widely understood as overlapping. Surely, combatting anti-Jewish hatred had no inherent political connection with the defence of a state and its actions. The chosen method of combatting antisemitism through defending Israel might not have been understood by everyone, and attracted more limited audience. Historically, Rødner's scholarly confrontation with antisemitism reminds of the defence work of the *Centralverein* in Germany in the 1930s (CV) which published brochures called 'Anti-Anti – Tatsachen zur Judenfrage' against antisemitism. These informed the public about facts regarding Jews and the 'Jewish Question.'³²⁰ It would indicate that Rødner was engaged in classic defence work against antisemitism, which did not convince an antisemite, but provided arguments to the public.

What was ultimately the contribution of *Løgnere iblant oss* to the development of the discourse on antisemitism in Norway? Jan Benjamin Rødner was not on the DMT board but was merely representing himself as an individual. Neither *Israel: Propaganda – virkelighet* nor *Løgnere iblant oss* were largely covered by the press. Was the conflict between PalKom and Rødner a sectarian dispute? Or was it perceived as an important angle in the debate on Israel-related antisemitism? This study has not found in the DMT archive reactions to Rødner's publication, nor press responses by DMT members who supported or denounced it. An article in *Aftenposten* reviewed Rødner's book as credible and thorough, and concluded that he was not wrong in his comparison of anti-Zionism and antisemitism.³²¹ Surprisingly, this study has not found a reaction from PalKom to *Løgnere iblant oss*. Rødner must have

³¹⁹ Ibid pp. 46–55, 67.

³²⁰ 'Der Mythos der Passivität und der Kampf der deutschen Juden gegen Antisemitismus und Nationalsozialismus', *Yad Vashem* [Der Mythos der Passivität und der Kampf der deutschen Juden gegen Antisemitismus und Nationalsozialismus \(yadvashem.org\)](https://www.yadvashem.org/en/der-mythos-der-passivitaet-und-der-kampf-der-deutschen-juden-gegen-antisemitismus-und-nationalsozialismus) [accessed 22.5.2023].

³²¹ Elsa Askeland. 'Den farlige halvløgner' *Aftenposten* 10.11.1976.

noticed it himself, as he advertised his book as ‘The book anti-Zionists dare not talk about.’³²² According to Rødner, PalKom answered by withdrawing all their anti-Zionist content of that sort for a long time.³²³ Nevertheless, during the second half of the 1970s, PalKom’s newspaper *Fritt Palestina* continued to make similar claims originally presented in *Israel: Propaganda – virkelighet*.³²⁴ In the case of *Løgnere iblant oss*, the scandalisation of anti-Zionism was unsuccessful. This would have worked arguably because there was a consensus in the postwar period that antisemitism was illegitimate. Comparably, the scandalisation of anti-Zionism would not have worked in the pre-war period, when there was no such consensus.

Apart from this example, Rødner recognised a need for a political platform to respond to the defamation of Israel. In the 1970s he established the pro-Israel organisation With Israel For Peace (MIFF) as a direct response to PalKom.³²⁵ He maintains: ‘My thinking was always: we, the Norwegian Jews, cannot really do anything on our own, we need to have other people helping us. And that was the underlying basis for everything I did.’³²⁶ MIFF was founded as an independent organisation of DMT to appeal to a wide non-Jewish audience, and not to be discredited due to a Jewish-affiliated Zionist agenda. It was a religiously neutral organisation but was also supported by religious and political leaders associated with Christian Zionism, like former head of the Christian Democratic Party (KfP) Kåre Kristiansen.³²⁷ According to Rødner, the aim was to reframe the fight against antisemitism from a fight of Jewish people, to a struggle concerning Jews and non-Jews alike.³²⁸ By emphasising the solidarity between Jews and non-Jews in combatting antisemitism, MIFF would extend its network and win the support of central allies. Yet, the association of MIFF with certain streams could also affect its popularity among other sectors. Not least, the framing of MIFF as a politicised, non-scholarly organisation could play a role in the willingness of an audience to listen to the arguments and engage in activism.

4.2.3. United Nations Resolution 3379 – Zionism is racism

The second half of the 1970s marks a consolidation of the anti-Zionist movement in the West. In November 1975, the United Nations adopted Resolution 3379 which established that

³²² Advertisement, ‘Løgnere iblant oss’ *Aftenposten* 11.12.1976. ‘Boken anti-sionister ikke tør snakke om’.

³²³ Follow-up email from Jan Benjamin Rødner 28.3.2023 (see appendix).

³²⁴ See ‘Sionismen – del av den fascistiske bevegelsen’ *Fritt Palestina* 1976 Nr. 1; ‘Samarbeidet mellom sionistane og nazistane. 800 000 jødar overlatt til gass-kamra’ *Fritt Palestina* 1977 Nr. 5.

³²⁵ ‘Med ISRAEL for fred. Hvem er vi og hva vil vi?’ *Midt-Østen i fokus* 1975 Nr. 1.

³²⁶ Interview with Jan Benjamin Rødner, 16.2.2023, Oslo.

³²⁷ For example ‘«PLO etablerer seg bak FN-stillingene»’ *Vårt Land* 31.5.1978.

³²⁸ Rødner. (1976) pp. 126–127; Johansen (2008) p. 265.

Zionism was a form of racism.³²⁹ The resolution condemned the ideological basis of Israel's existence as racist, in line with the apartheid regime in South Africa.³³⁰ Such a violation of international law was part of *jus cogens*, meaning legal conventions which all countries must adhere to with no exception.³³¹ As mentioned in chapter 3, this principle was set as part of the decolonisation process in the 1950s–1960s and was codified in the International Convention of 1965 on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD).³³² Norway, as most Western countries, voted against. The Labour-based, pro-Israel organisation Let Israel Live organised a demonstration of c. 2,000 people outside the Saga cinema in Oslo city centre which was met by a counterdemonstration of c. 100 PalKom members. Let Israel Live succeeded in raising over 28,000 NOK to 'support Israel'.³³³

Critics of the resolution marked a dark day in the history of the United Nations.³³⁴ Some argued that the resolution validated anti-Zionist voices in the Norwegian Left. For example, Knut M. Hansson wrote in *Aftenposten*: 'The propaganda lies of antisemitism come up more frequently and they are being carelessly masked.' He compared critics of Israel to *Der Stürmer* because it was 'the same arguments, distortions, prejudices – and naked hatred – in today's debate.'³³⁵ In *Klassekampen*, however, the resolution was commended as 'a new step forward in the Palestinian struggle for their rights.'³³⁶ PalKom sent an open letter to Berge Furre, SV Member of Parliament who rejected the resolution,³³⁷ asserting that the Norwegian Government should take a clear stance against the 'fascist, racist, occupation state of Israel.'³³⁸ Notably, Furre had condemned the resolution because he disagreed that Zionism could be racist, since he thought Jews were a religion and not a race. For the very same reason,

³²⁹ GA/res 3379 (XXX) 10.11.1975.

³³⁰ Torkil Åmland. *Med FN for fred? Den politiske prosessen rundt Generalforsamlingens resolusjon "Sionisme er rasisme" fra 1975* (unpublished master's thesis, University of Bergen, 2005) p. 6.

³³¹ Ibid. Antonio Cassese. *International Law* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001) p. 138f; the resolution was taken back in 1991, see Robert F. Gorman. *Great Debates at the United Nations* (London: Greenwood, 2001) p. 263.

³³² Åmland (2005) p. 6 refers to a resolution signed by the General Assembly on 7.3.1966. I take this is related to the ICERD. Otherwise regarding this reference there may have been a confusion on my part.

³³³ Mendelsohn (1987) pp. 386, 392; Untitled document, RA/PA/874/F/L14; 'Norge kan gjøre enda mer for et utsatt Israel' *Midt-Østen i fokus* 1976 Nr. 1. On Let Israel Live: Vebjørn Selbekk. *Korset & Davidsstjernen* (Kjeller: Genesis, 2013); Waage (1996) pp. 171–173.

³³⁴ 'Forgifting av FN' *Aftenposten* 12.11.1975; 'Svart november' *Verdens Gang* 14.11.1975.

³³⁵ Knut M. Hansson. 'Israel-hets over alle grenser' *Aftenposten* 12.11.1975. 'Antisemittismens propagandaløgnere dukker stadig hyppigere opp og deres maskering blir mere og mere skjødesløs', '[...] alle argumenter, forvrengninger, fordommer – og nakent hat – i dagens debatt.'

³³⁶ 'Israel stadig mer isolert i FN' *Klassekampen* 26.11.1975. 'et nytt skritt fremover i det palestinske kamp for sine rettigheter.'

³³⁷ Johansen (2008) p. 106.

³³⁸ Per Dahl (chairman of PalKom). 'Stør SV sionistane?' *Klassekampen* 26.11.1975.

PalKom had argued Israel should not exist, because it did not acknowledge Jews as a people but regarded them as a religion, which did not justify a nation state.³³⁹

In the beginning of this chapter, it was mentioned that DMT had a policy not to engage in politics and that included the debate on Israel. Indeed, the verity of sources available in the DMT archive suggest the community expressed support of Israel internally, but for the most part reserved public response to concrete cases where DMT believed the boundary had been crossed into community daily life.³⁴⁰ According to Michael Melchior and Jan Benjamin Rødner, the UN resolution was perceived as a matter external to Norway, and did not become the talk of day within the community.³⁴¹ There was an understanding that Norway would never have voted for the resolution, since the Parliament condemned antisemitism and supported Israel's existence. Therefore, it is possible that the resolution was perceived more as a diplomatic crisis, which reflected the growing anti-Zionist movement in Western countries, but which did not promptly affect Norwegian Jews.

Nevertheless, an adequate number of individual responses by DMT members condemned the resolution. The DMT leadership chose on this rare occasion to deviate from the custom and write an open letter to the Norwegian Government against the resolution – signed by the incoming Trustee Kai Feinberg, as well as Imre Hercz and Herman Kahan. Their 'deep concern' regarded something more crucial than the resolution itself. It was not rooted merely in solidarity with Israel:

From extremist positions, both on the Right and on the Left, voices arise seeking in different ways to deprive the Jewish minority in Norway, on the one hand, and the Jewish state in Israel, on the other hand, the right to exist.³⁴²

In their letter to the Government, DMT warned against the resurgence of antisemitism both on the Right and on the Left. By presenting the two issues together, the senders effectively recognised a continuity between neo-Nazi antisemitism which targeted the community in Norway; and Israel-related antisemitism, which some of the actors recognised on the Left.

³³⁹ Trond Linstad. 'FN-resolusjonen om sionisme bidrar til å avlive seiglivet myte' *Aftenposten* 4.12.1975.

³⁴⁰ For example, in 1967, DMT sent a letter to the Norwegian Foreign Ministry and asked that Norway would make efforts to keep the city of Jerusalem united: letter from DMT Oslo and Trondheim to Minister of Foreign Affairs John Lyng, 'Ad: Israel – Jerusalem', 14.7.1967, JMO/DMT/D35.

³⁴¹ Interview with Michael Melchior 10.2.2023 Oslo; Interview with Jan Benjamin Rødner 16.2.2023 Oslo.

³⁴² Letter from DMT Oslo and DMT Trondheim to the Norwegian Government, signed H. Kahan, I. Hercz, A. Selikowitz. K. Feinberg, 'Åpent brev til den norske regjering fra Det Mosaiske Trossamfund, Oslo og Det Mosaiske Trossamfund, Trondheim', 28.10.1975, JMO/DMT/D40; Confirmation of receipt and forward to the Foreign Ministry from Kjell Kristensen, Prime Minister's office, to Det Mosaiske Trossamfund in Oslo and Trondheim, untitled, 31.10.1975, JMO/DMT/L40; Letter from S. Demborg, DMT to Prime Minister Trygve Bratteli, untitled, 29.10.1975, JMO/DMT/L40. 'Fra ekstremistisk hold, både til høyre og venstre, har det reist seg stemmer som på ulike måter vil frata den jødiske minoriteten i Norge på den ene siden og den jødiske stat i Israel på den annen, retten til å eksistere.'

Notably, Right wing antisemites also developed anti-Zionist ideas. ‘Zionism’ could be associated with ‘globalist’ influence’ and ‘Jewish power’ on the extreme right, agitating for Jewish domination conspiracies.³⁴³ In this way, linking for example between US imperialism and Israel in the Middle East as a Jewish state, served a conspiratorial rhetoric which framed the Jews as a collective opponent. DMT described the connection between the two types of antisemitism through the memory of the persecution of Jews from the occupation years. Then, Norwegian Jews had realised the consequences of being scapegoated and labelled as a group unworthy to live with other people and other nations. The DMT leadership took seriously the larger implications of such a resolution on Jewish communities in the diaspora. It was a global scale resolution which delegitimised the Jewish national movement and the only Jewish state.

As Leo Eitinger and Mona Levin maintained in 1967, DMT established the premise that denying the Jewish people’s indisputable and historical right to live in a free and democratic state of their own, describing this right as racism, fulfilled a sole purpose of laying the ground for persecution of Jews and thus meant a physical threat to their existence.³⁴⁴ DMT defined explicitly the resolution as part of a ‘further spreading of antisemitic tendencies, which have no place in a democratic society, and which are a serious life threat to the Jews.’³⁴⁵ The DMT leadership knew that Norway would never have voted for the resolution and this did not reflect the majority’s opinion in Norway. Perhaps this was precisely the reason DMT asserted a collective stance in an open plea to the Norwegian authorities, to ensure that Norway continues to be a safe place for Jewish people who have an attachment to the Jewish state.

DMT publicised its letter to the Government before the resolution was adopted in the UN, in an attempt to recruit Norway to impact other countries against it. At the same time, the Nansen Committee against the persecution of Jews – who’s Vice Chairman was Leo Eitinger – called the Norwegian Government and Parliament to undertake concrete measures against the resurgent open and covert antisemitism, evident in the Norwegian public opinion both on the Right and on the Left.³⁴⁶ Moreover, the committee reacted against the distribution of ‘propaganda content with clear racist overtones’ in school curricula. Thus, it linked between anti-Zionist content distributed in Norway, and the UN resolution all under the umbrella of

³⁴³ On this see Simonsen (2020a) pp. 1–23; examples prior to 1967 are discussed Simonsen (2019) pp. 19–21.

³⁴⁴ ‘Åpent brev til den norske regjering’ 28.10.1975, JMO/DMT/D40. ‘FN-resolusjonen som vil frata jødene deres ubestridelige og historiske rett til å leve i en egen fri og demokratisk stat og som betegner denne rett som rasisme, har som eneste formål å legge grunnlag for videre forfølgelser av jøder og ødeleggelse av deres fysiske eksistens.’

³⁴⁵ Ibid. ‘en videre spredning av antisemittiske tendenser som er uverdige et demokratisk samfund og en alvorlig og livsfarlig trusel for oss.’

³⁴⁶ ‘Nansenkomiteenadvarer mot ny antisemittisme’ *Verdens Gang* 30.10.1975; ‘Propagandafremstøt med RASISTISKE overtoner i skolen’ *Vårt Land* 30.10.1975.

anti-Jewish hatred, making the resolution relevant to the Norwegian Jewish community. The Nansen Committee intervened as a humanitarian organisation, explicitly and categorically against a type of persecution of Jews. It emphasised that this intervention was separate from support or criticism of Israel. Members of the Nansen Committee could be critical towards the conflict; however, they stressed that the boundary was crossed in the persecution of Jews and racist expression. Both DMT and the Nansen Committee understood that a state and its actions should be separate from a discussion on antisemitism but asserted the boundary where there was a suspicion that political argumentation had a hostile impact on the safety of Jewish people outside Israel.

Individual press responses by DMT members focused on defining Zionism – and what Zionism was not – to reveal the hostile and discriminatory aspects of labelling the Jewish national movement as racist. Charles Philipson, who had sat on the board of DMT for many years, suggested that the labelling of Zionism as racism in the UN was a deliberate strategy of the Arab countries against the Jewish people, which he meant was a hypocritical misuse of a long history of persecution of Jews.³⁴⁷ He ‘had no doubt’ that anti-Zionism was antisemitic. Hence, he defined the resolution together with Nazi antisemitism. On the extreme Right, neo-Olav Hoaas was calling to concentrate Norwegian Jews away from society and banish them to Israel or a secluded reserve within Norway. Likewise, Philipson claimed that the UN was calling against Israel’s existence leaving Jewish people helpless. Eitinger compared the resurgence of anti-Zionism to antisemitism during the days of Hitler. He argued that the resolution did not seem harmful, however it was ‘nothing but a step towards the Jewish people’s physical destruction.’³⁴⁸ To Philipson and Eitinger, the resolution echoed the voice of Nazism and meant a concrete, physical threat on the continuation of the Jewish people in and outside Israel.

DMT and the Nansen Committee warned that the resolution reached all the way to threaten the small Jewish community in Norway. As discussed in chapter 3, 1975 was also the year in which Olav Hoaas broke on the news, resulting in efforts of the Jewish community to combat neo-Nazism in Norway. While DMT members could go to the police regarding racial discrimination – and reach all the way to the Ministry of Justice – the situation was not so simple regarding Israel-related antisemitism. There was no consensus, and hence no legislation, against this type of anti-Jewish hostility. Yet, considering DMT and the Nansen

³⁴⁷ Charles Philipson. ‘Jeg – en rasist’ *Aftenposten* 13.11.1975.

³⁴⁸ Leo Eitinger. ‘Forberedelse til folkedrap’ *Aftenposten* 28.11.1975 ‘ikke kan oppfattes som noe annet enn et skritt i retning av det jødiske folks fysiske ødeleggelse.’

Committee's message to the Government and Parliament prior to the resolution's adoption in the UN, it seems that the issue could have been raised as a pressing matter under their capacity, in line with a familiar type of antisemitism against which there were practical measures in place.

Those who identified antisemitism within anti-Zionism acknowledged that criticism of Israel was not in itself antisemitic. Yet, there was tension regarding the boundaries between legitimate and illegitimate criticism of Israel. In 1977, central actors in DMT reacted in the press against violent demonstrations of Leftist activists, to boycott Israeli guest-lecturers at the University of Oslo and at the University of Trondheim. They protested against a cultural exchange between Norway and Israel. In *Jødenes historie*, Oskar Mendelsohn defines these demonstrations as antisemitic, because the activists called anti-Jewish statements and burnt the Israeli flag.³⁴⁹ Calls to 'Free Palestine' were shouted against 'Let Israel live'. The Norwegian Foreign Ministry, as well as the University of Oslo's Student Union, and the University of Trondheim's interim board, all apologised for the riots. However, the Student Union National Board (*Landsstyret for Norsk Studentunion*) stated that the cause of the demonstrations – to boycott Norway's collaboration with a racist country – was understandable.³⁵⁰ According to an article in *Jødisk Menighetsblad*, the organisers of the demonstrations eventually found themselves under compulsion to be interviewed by NRK, since the demonstrations were publicly perceived as anti-Jewish. The author, presumably Oskar Mendelsohn, maintained that it was a criminal offense to spread racist propaganda and carry out racist actions in Norway, and thus the interviewer in NRK claimed the demonstrators had broken Norwegian law.³⁵¹ While the demonstration was meant to pressure against a collaboration between Norway and Israel, *Jødisk Menighetsblad* interpreted their actions as racist and thus hostile against Jewish people, and not only Israeli citizens.

Rita Paltiel, wife of Holocaust survivor Julius Paltiel, argued in *Adresseavisen* that there was no difference whatsoever between anti-Zionism and antisemitism.³⁵² The article in *Jødisk Menighetsblad* contained a quote of the journalist Otto Johansen, who warned it was only a

³⁴⁹ 'Rasisme – antisjonisme – antisemittisme' *Jødisk Menighetsblad* 1977 Nr. 3; Mendelsohn (1987) p. 396.

³⁵⁰ 'Student mobbet Israel professor' *Adresseavisen* 13.9.1977; Mendelsohn (1987) p. 396.

³⁵¹ 'Rasisme – antisjonisme – antisemittisme' *Jødisk Menighetsblad* 1977 Nr. 3. Underscore in the original. Oskar Mendelsohn was the editor and main author of *Jødisk Menighetsblad*. According to Leif Arne Mendelsohn, one can assume that when the author's name is not mentioned, the article is most likely an editorial; Vågstøl (2007) pp. 98–99 mentions that the organisers of the demonstrations were indeed arrested; 'Studentene kan bli anmeldt' *Adresseavisen* 15.9.1977; 'Ingen straff mot ansatte!' *Klassekampen* 10.10.1977.

³⁵² Rita Paltiel. 'Bjellands historietime' *Adresseavisen* 4.10.1977.

matter of time until all Jewish, and not only Israeli culture, would be burnt at the stake.³⁵³ Leo Eitinger compared Leftist extremists and SS students in Nazi Germany. He warned that the anti-Jewish hostility felt at the demonstrations should not be seen as single standing but as a systematic tendency. He claimed that Jewish students were being harassed on campus without anyone reacting, thus: ‘a tragic alliance between Right and Left wing fascism has been forged against Judaism.’³⁵⁴ Eitinger was among the first in DMT to recognise the denial of Israel’s right to exist as hostile towards Jews. To him in 1977 there was no longer a question regarding the connection between antisemitism on the Right and on the Left. Perhaps the physical hostility evident at the demonstrations, in the form of burning the Israeli flag featuring a Magen David, the symbol of Judaism, and the violent slogans shouted during the riot, created the association with violent groups and indicated that a political protest had gone out of control. According to Eitinger, members of the community were feeling unsafe, regardless of their political views. Jan Benjamin Rødner, who participated in student debates on the matter, released a statement on behalf of MIFF in *Dagen*:

The time is over when Jews were forced to participate in debates on the terms of their enemies. Zionism also means that the Jewish people no longer have to put up with the treatment today’s antisemites intend for them.³⁵⁵

Rødner, too, referred to Jews and Zionists in the same context, because he acknowledged that the political situation on campus may have made Jewish students feel unsafe. To these actors, the matter no longer revolved around a political debate. This did not mean a potential threat, but a concrete, physical harm to Norwegian Jews. DMT released a statement: ‘For us, Norwegian Jews, this form of anti-Israeli demonstrations consequently feels antisemitic.’³⁵⁶ Here DMT intervened in a political matter because there was a threat to the safety of its members. The statement did not explicate whether the concern was the violence at the demonstrations or the principle of boycotting Israel. In any case, an argument could be made that in 1977, several members of DMT saw this manifestation of anti-Zionism as antisemitic. One year later, Eitinger reiterated this when he called anti-Zionism ‘pure antisemitism’.³⁵⁷ In

³⁵³ Otto Johansen. ‘Jødene som syndebukker’ *Aftenposten* 4.10.1977 quoted in ‘Rasisme – antisionisme – antisemittisme’ *Jødisk Menighetsblad* 1977 Nr. 3.

³⁵⁴ Leo Eitinger. ‘Kjenner igjen antisemittismen fra 1930-årene’ *Vårt Land* 21.9.1977. ‘det er jo oppstått en tragisk allianse mellom høyre- og venstrefascisme mot jødedommen, som vi ser med bekymring.’

³⁵⁵ ‘Med Israel For Fred’ *Dagen* 17.10.1977. ‘Det er slutt på den tiden da jøder ble tvunget til å delta i debatter på sine fienders premisser. Zionisme er nemlig også dette at det jødiske folk ikke lenger behøver finne seg i den behandling de ønskes utsatt for av dagens antisemitter.’

³⁵⁶ The statement was published in the major newspapers. ‘Aksjonene på universitetet’ *Adresseavisen* 8.10.1977. ‘For oss norske jøder vil denne form for antiisraelske demonstrasjoner i sin konsekvens føles som anti-semittisk.’

³⁵⁷ Leo Eitinger. ‘Stadig flere jøder må søke psykiatrisk hjelp’ *Adresseavisen* 26.8.1978.

an article in *Vårt Land* he reported a growing feeling of anxiety among Norwegian Jews due to the condemnation of Israel as racist: ‘We cannot say that Jews in general feel fear in Norway. But the absolute safety we felt before 1967 is no longer present.’³⁵⁸

4.3. Responses to anti-Zionism after the First Lebanon War, 1982

In 1978 Israel invaded Lebanon which resulted in a prolonged military presence inside Lebanese territory. The First Lebanon War in summer 1982 was heavily criticised both in Israel and internationally and contributed to the consolidation of an anti-Israeli political climate in the West. Israel was seen more than before as an occupation power which exceeded its limits. The public reacted vehemently to the massacres in Sabra and Shatila – where Christian phalanges allied with Israel murdered hundreds of Palestinian civilians,³⁵⁹ in what was planned as an evacuation of the camps as part of the Israel Defence Force’s (IDF)’s advance into Lebanon. The Israeli State Commission of Inquire Kahan found Israel partially responsible since the IDF could have reacted sooner once it had become aware of the escalation and recommended the Israeli Minister of Defence Ariel Sharon be dismissed.³⁶⁰ Nevertheless, Israel was perceived to have had a central role in the massacres and was accused of war crimes. Zionism was more widely defined as an illegitimate movement since it was perceived as a framework for violation of human rights. Anti-Zionist ideas which were previously reserved to the radical circles could now be expressed in the major, liberal newspapers, and adopted in the central democratic parties. Anti-Zionism moved away from the margins and became the dominant stream.³⁶¹

4.3.1. Criticism of Israel or anti-Jewish hatred? Community press reactions, summer 1982

From June 1982, several members of DMT responded in the press against Nazi-Israel analogies, and traditional anti-Jewish tropes through the metaphor ‘eye for an eye, tooth for tooth’. This phrase was taken from Biblical law and appeared first in the Old Testament. In Christian tradition, ‘eye for an eye, tooth for tooth’ would be used to stereotypically portray Judaism within the Old Testament’s ‘spirit of revenge’ and describe the Jews as primitive and brutal, as if the call for revenge was ingrained in their culture. However, the original meaning

³⁵⁸ Leo Eitinger. ‘Vi føler ikke lenger samme trygghet i Norge’ *Vårt Land* 29.8.1978. ‘Vi kan ikke si at jøder generelt føler frykt i Norge. Men den absolutte trygghet vi følte før 1967, er ikke lenger til stede.’

³⁵⁹ The number of civilians killed in Sabra and Shatila is contested. Ze’ev Schiff, Ehud Ya’ari. *Israel’s Lebanon War* (London: George Allan & Unwin, 1985) p. 282f.

³⁶⁰ Yitzhak Kahan, Aharon Barak, Yona Efrat. *Final Report: The Commission of Inquiry into the Events at the Refugee Camps in Beirut* (1983), file no. ISA-NA-KahanCommissionBeirut-001n5b5.

³⁶¹ Johansen (2008) pp. 126, 133–134.

was the opposite. The law limited action upon revenge and regulated that punishment should be proportionate to the crime committed. I.e., ‘no more’ than an eye for an eye, and tooth for tooth. Thus, the law introduced a certain right of reimbursement. Since literal eyes and teeth could not be taken, it led to a practice of financial compensation.

The newspaper *Arbeiderbladet* published a caricature of Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin with an eccentric nose, wearing Moshe Dayan’s eye patch, and carrying a spear skewered with eyes and teeth. The caption read: ‘eye for an eye, tooth for tooth’. The author maintained ‘it is no longer “an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth” [...] but rather ten or a hundred of Palestinian teeth for every Israeli tooth.’³⁶² *Dagbladet* depicted a caricature of Jesus as a Palestinian crucified with the caption ‘Lebanon’. Jesus’ hand was nailed to the cross with a Magen David hidden behind another cross – possibly alluding to Israel hiding behind the Christian phalanges in Sabra and Shatila.³⁶³ Other news items applied a Nazi analogy onto Israel. For example, *Klassekampen* presented a caricature of Begin as an SS officer with a Hitler moustache, holding a bloody bayonet with the caption ‘Beirut’.³⁶⁴ The magazine *Ny Tid* described rumours that the IDF was burn-stamping identification numbers on the skin of Palestinians, and was using gas against them like the Nazis did. Therefore, this author concluded that ‘the Jewish state had become a terrible tool for barbaric violence.’³⁶⁵ The political scientist and Palestine supporter Nils Butenschøn wrote in *Dagbladet* that the Zionists would seek to solve the conflict with an *Endlösung* (Final Solution) to the Palestinians.³⁶⁶

Such news articles were addressed in an editorial press review of *Jødisk Menighetsblad*, which analysed the portrayal of Israel as an aggressor. The editor stated that Norwegian Jews were experiencing antisemitism: ‘The story of Jesus’ suffering and crucifixion has been used against Jews.’ The editor claimed it was now precisely the same antisemitism of the ‘Swastika Epidemic’ of 1960.³⁶⁷ Thus, according to *Nordlandsposten*, people were admitting openly that they regretted Hitler did not ‘finish the job’.³⁶⁸ In this review, the editor included voices in the press which criticised Israeli policy in the Lebanon War. He argued that supporters of Israel were now bound to disappointment in the Israeli Government. However, he set a clear

³⁶² ‘Israels overgrep’ *Arbeiderbladet* 8.6.1982. ‘Det er ikke lenger «øye for øye, tann for tann» som synes å gjelde, men heller ti eller hundre palestinske tenner for hver israelsk tann.’

³⁶³ Untitled caricature, *Dagbladet* 17.9.1982.

³⁶⁴ Untitled caricature, *Klassekampen* 23.9.1982.

³⁶⁵ ‘Anerkjenn PLO!’ *Ny Tid* 23.6.1982.

³⁶⁶ Nils Butenschøn. ‘Det tapte korstog’ *Dagbladet* 8.7.1982.

³⁶⁷ ‘Israel og Libanon-krigen i avisens omtale’ *Jødisk Menighetsblad* 1982 Nr. 2, p. 47. ‘Jesu lidelseshistorie og korsfestelse er blitt brukt mot jøder.’

³⁶⁸ *Ibid* pp. 47–48, referring to ‘Antisemittismen opp av kjelleren’ *Nordlandsposten* 17.7.1982.

boundary between legitimate criticism of Israel, and hateful expression towards Jews.³⁶⁹ This review of press material reminds of scholarly confrontation with antisemitism, in the way that the editor of explains to the readers the situation regarding antisemitism in Norway. While, as mentioned previously, the Jewish community in Norway largely defined itself as Zionist, community members criticised Israeli policy and the IDF like anyone else. The purpose of this article was to find and explain the boundary between legitimate criticism of Israel and illegitimate antisemitism, enabling the political debate. On the one hand, the editor opposed to labeling every criticism of Israel as antisemitic. On the other hand, anti-Zionism was discussed in relation to antisemitism, since it was argued that both were a threat to the Jewish state.³⁷⁰

The tension around Israel prompted terror attacks on Jewish targets in other Western countries. Between 1980–1981 synagogues in Paris, Vienna, and Antwerp were bombed, and in the latter city a Palestinian terrorist threw a grenade at 40 Jewish children.³⁷¹ In the summer of 1982, this tendency continued.³⁷² In light of the escalation, DMT increased the security around the community building in Oslo.³⁷³ Being interviewed by *Vårt Land*, Charles Philipson said that if things had digressed in this manner earlier, he would have left Norway.³⁷⁴ DMT Trustee Kai Feinberg, on the other hand, attempted to assure that the Jewish community did not fear anti-Jewish terror in Norway. He admitted nonetheless that antisemitism existed in Norway and some Jews were being harassed.³⁷⁵ The student rabbi of the community Michael Melchior said that there was no doubt Norwegian Jews felt unsafe. He said that Jewish children were being bullied at school and their parents were receiving threats. He maintained: ‘Under the guise of being against Israel, they come up with clear antisemitic views.’³⁷⁶

Voices in DMT expressed a concern that anti-Israel hostility had gotten out of control – community members were being attacked because they were being associated with Israel. It appears that these individuals separated between the political debate, and a discussion about Jews, by maintaining that Jewish people were not responsible for Israel’s actions. Therefore, criticism of Israel must not contain anti-Jewish references which increase the feeling of

³⁶⁹ Ibid p. 45 referring to Jahn Otto Johansen. ‘Et jødisk dilemma’ *Dagbladet* 11.8.1982.

³⁷⁰ An example of this down in p. 46.

³⁷¹ Bachner (1999) p. 376.

³⁷² ‘Terror-aksjon mot jødisk restaurant’ *Vårt Land* 10.8.1982.

³⁷³ Morten Aasbø. ‘Frykter terror’ *Verdens Gang* 11.8.1982.

³⁷⁴ ‘Vanskeligere å være jøde i Norge’ *Vårt Land* 10.8.1982.

³⁷⁵ ‘Frykt også blant norske jøder’ *Dagbladet* 11.8.1982.

³⁷⁶ Moten Aasbø. ‘Frykter terror’ *Verdens Gang* 11.8.1982. ‘Under dekke av å være motstandere av staten Israel, kommer de med klart antisemittiske synspunkter.’; ‘Antisemittismen er økende, men bør ikke dramatiseres’ *Dagen* 27.8.1982 featuring Michael Melchior.

unsafety among the members. On the other hand, unlike proponents of anti-Zionism, these voices in DMT recognised ‘clear antisemitic views’ in certain political arguments against Israel and insisted that these should be discussed, because they inevitably comprised a part of the discussion.

4.3.2. The counter-hearing on Lebanon, October 1982

In September 1982, the massacres in Sabra and Shatila created a world turmoil and were rejected in Israel and in the West – Zionists and anti-Zionists alike. MIFF released a statement denouncing the events as ‘among the most serious terror conducts in the postwar period.’³⁷⁷ An article entitled ‘Israel’s Vietnam’ published in MIFF’s magazine *Midt-Østen i fokus* warned about the negative consequences for Israel’s reputation as a result of the Lebanon War, and its impact on the Jewish diaspora.³⁷⁸ From late September, it became clear to Michael Melchior that Palestine Front (Palfont) were planning to organise an international hearing on Lebanon in Oslo, aimed at investigating Israel’s war crimes and its violations of international law.³⁷⁹ This initiative sought to replicate a similar hearing, which had taken place that summer in Cyprus, and had received limited media coverage.³⁸⁰ These hearings were organised by civil society, following a model that had been employed by the Left since the 1960s, for example in the Russell-Sartre Tribunal in 1966, which focused on the US’ international war crimes in Vietnam.³⁸¹ Palfont’s international hearing on Lebanon in Oslo attracted the participation of Amnesty International, received partial support from UN international commissions, and garnered backing from pro-Palestinian organisations. The gathering assembled c. 50 witnesses who testified about Israel’s war crimes in Lebanon, specifically addressing the invasion, the atrocities committed in Sabra and Shatila, and a polemic regarding the IDF’s mistreatment of prisoners in Lebanon.³⁸² Israel was boycotted from that hearing.³⁸³

³⁷⁷ ‘Pressemelding’ *Midt-Østen i fokus* 1982 Nr. 4. ‘En av de alvorligste terrorhandlinger i etterkrigshistorien og må sees på med den største avsky.’

³⁷⁸ ‘Israels Vietnam’ *Midt-Østen i fokus* 1982 Nr. 4.

³⁷⁹ ; ‘Internasjonal høring om Libanon-krigen’ *Klassekampen* 7.10.1982; interviews with Michael Melchior 5.2.2023, 10.2.2023, Oslo.

³⁸⁰ ‘Internasjonal høring om Libanon-krigen’ *Klassekampen* 7.10.1982; ‘Et israelsk motsvar’ *Midt-Østen i fokus* 1982 Nr. 5.

³⁸¹ Daniele Archibugi, Alice Pease. *Crime and Global Justice: The Dynamics of International Punishment* (Cambridge: Polity, 2018) pp. 187–202.

³⁸² ‘50 vitner om Israels krigføring’ *Klassekampen* 29.10.1982.

³⁸³ ‘Internasjonal høring om Libanon-krigen’ *Klassekampen* 7.10.1982. Leo Eitinger was Amnesty International’s representative in Norway. He was not invited to the hearing: Leo Eitinger. ‘Libanon-krigen og fangemishandlingen’ *Aftenposten* 31.8.1983; ‘Et israelsk motsvar’ *Midt-Østen i fokus* 1982 Nr. 5.

Being interviewed for this study, Michael Melchior describes that he became concerned about the public implications of such a hearing taking place in Norway. He himself criticised the Israeli Government regarding the war and Sabra and Shatila. However, he considered certain formulations within criticism of Israel, for example Nazi–Israel analogies, to be ‘clearly antisemitic’.³⁸⁴ Thus, Melchior was among the organisers of a counter–hearing on Lebanon which was to be held in Oslo few days before Palfont’s hearing.³⁸⁵ The organisers sought to create a public platform to discuss the Lebanon War in a way that was not recognised as hostile towards Jews. Therefore, Melchior explains that he deliberately invited experts to the hearing who were critical towards Israeli policy, to demonstrate the difference between criticism of a state and its actions, and what many in the community considered to be hostile towards Jews: the denial of Israel’s right to exist, and traditional anti–Jewish tropes within anti–Zionist arguments.

In the public front, the organisers of the hearing invited to Oslo experts in Middle East history and international law, diplomats, and military veterans for a series of open press conferences. The panellists were to inform the public of the situation in Lebanon in a ‘balanced perspective.’³⁸⁶ These included: the lawyer of international law Dov Shefi, Colonel Zvi Elpeleg, Major in reserved duty and professor of Middle East history Clinton Baily, the judge Armand Vandeplas, the senior journalist of Jerusalem Post David Landau – who openly criticised Begin – and Emri Ron, Labour Member of Parliament in the Israeli Knesset.³⁸⁷ In the diplomatic front, the speakers met with Norwegian politicians and representatives of LO to discuss practical measures in international collaboration against anti–Israeli defamation. Among the Governmental representatives were the International Secretary of LO, the State Secretary in the Prime Minister’s office, the Committee of Foreign Affairs, and the Foreign Office State Secretary.³⁸⁸ It appears that the crucial purpose behind the counter–hearing was to reframe the fight against antisemitism, from a concern of Jewish people to a fight that belonged to society as a whole. By allying with influential actors in the Norwegian Government and LO against the defamation of Israel, understood by the organisers as a channel to convey anti–Jewish attitudes, the counter–hearing would be validated as an inclusive initiative which promotes the ‘freedom of speech’.

³⁸⁴ Interviews with Michael Melchior 5.2.2023, 10.2.2023, Oslo.

³⁸⁵ Both Michael Melchior and Jan Benjamin Rødner from MIFF claim to have led the planning and execution of the counter–hearing on Lebanon in 1982. This study acknowledges both were involved in the initiative.

³⁸⁶ Interviews with Michael Melchior 5.2.2023, 10.2.2023, Oslo.

³⁸⁷ ‘Et Israelsk motsvar’ *Midt–Østen i fokus* 1982 Nr. 5. Emri Ron is not mentioned in the article, but Michael Melchior claims in his interview that he had invited him to speak in the counter–hearing.

³⁸⁸ ‘Et Israelsk motsvar’ *Midt–Østen i fokus* 1982 Nr. 5.

Nevertheless, both Michael Melchior, and Jan Benjamin Rødner – Chairman of MIFF which was among the organisers of the counter–hearing – were disappointed of the outcome. Particularly, due to an incident in the final press conference which Rødner meant shifted the entire focus off course. On the last press conference day, Harald Stanghelle, journalist of *Arbeiderbladet*, targeted the panellist former UNIFIL soldier Kåre Thunheim by insinuating that he had been a spy for Israel and was dismissed with dishonor, and that the evidence he presented in the hearing were false.³⁸⁹ Rødner claims that Stanghelle succeeded in discrediting the counter–hearing, because the major newspapers covered the event to a little extent, with an almost exclusive focus on the ‘Stanghelle incident’ and how he was taken out by the security. According to Rødner, only later Stanghelle’s accusations were refuted.³⁹⁰ It appears that the counter–hearing was covered by the major newspapers, albeit with a focus on the ‘Stanghelle incident’. *Klassekampen* called the counter–hearing a ‘fiasco’ and criticised it for including mainly Israeli speakers who were biased in their interpretation of the war. Indeed, Stanghelle’s intervention resulted in most of the journalists leaving conference, and this concluded the event.³⁹¹ The Norwegian News Agency (NTB) described the ‘Stanghelle incident’ as a failure of MIFF to present truthful witnesses.³⁹² Melchior and Rødner agree that the counter–hearing did not label Palfont’s hearing as antisemitic but primarily as biased against Israel. Rødner explains that to label Palfont as antisemitic would have been counter–productive because it would have been perceived as an attack on supports of the Palestinians.³⁹³ Thus, an argument could be made that the conflation between defending Israel and combatting antisemitism contributed to the limited resonance among the Norwegian public. The following final section of this chapter examines an attempt by the Nansen Committee to take the concept of a ‘hearing’ one step further – and to label anti–Zionism explicitly as antisemitic.

4.3.3. The International Hearing on Antisemitism in Oslo, June 1983

In June 1983, on the anniversary of the First Lebanon War, the Nansen Committee against the persecution of Jews hosted an International Hearing on Antisemitism in Oslo. The primary

³⁸⁹ ‘Vitnet var agent?’ *Arbeiderbladet* 1.11.1982; ‘Tillitsmann “israelsk agent”’ *Dagen* 3.11.1982. ‘Var han agent for Mossad?’ *Klassekampen* 1.11.1982.

³⁹⁰ ‘Brev fra formannen’ *Midt–Østen i fokus* 1982 Nr. 5; interview with Jan Benjamin Rødner 16.2.2023 Oslo. This study presents the ‘Stanghelle incident’ as an example of the outcome of the counter–hearing and does not investigate this matter further.

³⁹¹ ‘Var han agent for Mossad?’ *Klassekampen* 1.11.1982.

³⁹² In ‘Vitnet var agent?’ *Arbeiderbladet* 1.11.1982.

³⁹³ Interviews with Michael Melchior 5.2.2023, 10.2.2023, Oslo; interview with Jan Benjamin Rødner 16.2.2023 Oslo.

objective was to define, describe, and explain what constituted antisemitism, and how antisemitism was manifested in the postwar period.³⁹⁴ To facilitate a substantive discussion on the global challenges posed by antisemitism, the organisers brought together esteemed experts from Israel, the United States, and Europe, along with diplomats, religious leaders, journalists, and crucially, the chairpersons of the Norwegian Parliament. Leo Eitinger, Vice Chairman of the Nansen Committee, emerged as the main intellectual driving force behind the hearing. Among the speakers were Yehuda Bauer (Jerusalem), Reinhard Rürup (Berlin), the philosopher Bernhard–Henry Lévy (France), Chief Rabbi of the British Commonwealth Immanuel Jakobovitz, and the author and President of the US Holocaust Memorial Council Elie Wiesel.³⁹⁵ A message of support was conveyed to the hearing by Nobel Peace Prize laureate Willy Brandt, President of the Socialist International, and former Federal Chancellor of West Germany. The hearing was supported by the Norwegian Foreign Ministry and the US Holocaust Memorial Council.³⁹⁶ By garnering the participation and support of these leading figures, the actors effectively collaborated to formulate a collective response to antisemitism.

The hearing was the first of its kind globally to propose a definition of antisemitism and address the connection between anti–Zionism and antisemitism. It concluded with the Oslo Declaration, which called against the resurgent antisemitism both in its old disguise and in its new forms.³⁹⁷ The traditional, vulgar stereotypes of antisemitism were being applied onto the Jewish state. Thus, to perpetrate against Israel as the Jewish homeland and a sovereign state was considered a threat to Jews and was defined as antisemitic. Moreover, the Oslo Declaration addressed the challenges of social exclusion experienced by Jewish communities in the diaspora through their connection to Israel. ‘When Jews are deprived of their right to choose nationhood’ – when Jews were being targeted in their local community in connection with the Jewish state, and when their identity was being challenged because of the Jewish state – then they were being confronted with antisemitism.³⁹⁸ The Oslo Declaration separated between Jewish solidarity with Israel and the political debate on Zionism, with the emphasis that Jews were not responsible for a state and its actions. The Oslo Declaration established the boundary between political debate and hateful expression where these two notions met – when political argumentation against Israel threatened Jews as Jews.

³⁹⁴ ‘Den internasjonale høring i Oslo om antisemittismen’ *Jødisk menighetsblad* 1983 Nr. 2; Egil Nansen’s press statement, untitled, undated, RA/PA874/F/L24.

³⁹⁵ A presentation of the International Hearing on Antisemitism in Oslo in Hoffmann (2020a) p. 40f.

³⁹⁶ ‘Den internasjonale høring i Oslo om antisemittismen’ *Jødisk menighetsblad* 1983 Nr. 2. Eitinger was Elie Wiesel’s close friend and the two collaborated in numerous humanitarian initiatives throughout the years.

³⁹⁷ *Ibid* pp. 4–5.

³⁹⁸ *Ibid* p. 4.

The Oslo Declaration was signed by all parties of the Norwegian Parliament. Thus, the hearing revived the mission to combat anti-Jewish hatred, however the experts offered different interpretations to the situation and did not reach a conclusive answer regarding the definitions and boundaries of antisemitism. Some, like Yehuda Bauer, Per Ahlmark, and Bernhard-Henry Lévy, defined anti-Zionism as the contemporary form of anti-Jewish hatred, among other notions of antisemitism.³⁹⁹ Others, like Immanuel Jakobovitz and Reinhard Rürup, recognised different manifestations of social exclusion and ‘othering’ rooted in anti-Jewish hatred, but these were not all defined as ‘antisemitism’. Immanuel Jakobovitz acknowledged that the labelling of anti-Zionism as antisemitism could be seen as a weaponisation of ‘antisemitism’ against anti-Zionists. Yet, he argued that Israel’s very existence contributed significantly to two principal sources of anti-Jewish propaganda, namely Soviet communism and Muslim nationalism.⁴⁰⁰ Was the hearing successful in forming a new consensus regarding the connection between anti-Zionism and antisemitism?

The hearing emphasised the collective responsibility in combatting antisemitism, defined as a threat ‘to all mankind which professed the values and ideas of humanism, democracy and peace in freedom.’⁴⁰¹ In his concluding speech, Elie Wiesel maintained that Jews should take ownership of their experience, and they should be listened to when they recognise antisemitism.⁴⁰² Evidently here, perhaps the strongest tool at the disposal of Jews combatting antisemitism was the power of alliance with non-Jewish actors. Jews were the direct victim of antisemitism; however, it had a negative effect on society as a whole.⁴⁰³ Antisemitism needed to be reframed as something that opposed the values of a democratic society and thus be seen as a concrete threat to the entire free world. The hearing addressed both the evident, and the *unconscious* antisemitism as a fundamental anti-Jewish sentiment, which a democratic society must eradicate from the root.

Leo Eitinger concluded positively that the hearing drew international attention to an all-important issue. However, he was critical towards the way the hearing had shifted its focus from the core – the significance of combatting antisemitism in all forms in the entire free world – to minor questions which missed the essence.⁴⁰⁴ While the hearing took up the new

³⁹⁹ Lévy’s contribution is not included in the volume but mentioned in Paul Bjerke. ‘Israel-lobby om anti-sionisme’ *Klassekampen* 25.7.1983, and in ‘Den internasjonale høring i Oslo om antisemittismen’ *Jødisk menighetsblad* 1983 Nr. 2 pp. 21–22.

⁴⁰⁰ Eitinger (1984) pp. 91–97.

⁴⁰¹ *Ibid* p. 4.

⁴⁰² *Ibid* pp. 136–140.

⁴⁰³ Leo Eitinger, ed. *The Antisemitism in Our Time. A Threat against Us All: Proceedings of the First International Hearing on Antisemitism, Oslo 7.–8. June 1983* (Oslo: The Nansen Committee, 1984) p. 19.

⁴⁰⁴ Leo Eitinger, ‘Hatet var høringens tema’ *Aftenposten* 16.6.1983.

manifestation of antisemitism within anti-Zionism, Eitinger indicated that people were mostly interested in exploring the boundary between legitimate criticism of Israel and hate-speech. It directed the discussion rather to what was allowed and not allowed to say in the political debate, and distracted from the common responsibility to combat anti-Jewish hatred.

It appears that the hearing revealed a deep division within the Norwegian public view on antisemitism. It failed to promote a wide understanding that anti-Zionism was a form of antisemitism and became controversial among those who opposed it. PalKom, especially through *Klassekampen*, had mobilised against the hearing. It regarded the hearing's labelling of anti-Zionism as antisemitism to be a weaponisation of 'antisemitism' and a pollution of an important political debate.⁴⁰⁵ Therefore, PalKom invited to Norway the Jewish-Palestinian activist Ilan Halevy – among the very few Jews in the PLO – to give a series of interviews against the hearing.⁴⁰⁶ Halevy explained that anti-Zionism was purely political, in solidarity with the Palestinians. On the other hand, he argued that Zionism as a Jewish movement pretended to act on behalf of all Jews – so anyone who opposed to Zionism was being dismissed as an 'antisemite'. Both the organisers of the hearing on antisemitism and proponents of anti-Zionism agreed, from their own perspective, that the notion of 'antisemitism' was explosive. Since antisemitism was necessarily illegitimate, it could be weaponised to delegitimise either side.

Shortly before the international hearing during the spring of 1983, Leo Eitinger had been interviewed for NRK's TV program *Dagsrevyen* where he described three reasons for today's antisemitism.⁴⁰⁷ Regarding antisemitism on the socialist Left, he argued that while the debate on Israel in itself was not antisemitic, it functioned as a legitimate channel to express latent antisemitic attitudes. Yet, proponents of anti-Zionism were no different from Eitinger in that they likewise denounced antisemitism. After all, *Klassekampen* raised the flag as the most politically active newspaper against racism – including antisemitism.⁴⁰⁸ Finn Sjøe, a senior editor in *Klassekampen*, rejected Eitinger's accusations and accused him back of using 'an ugly ploy' by applying the notion of 'antisemitism' onto anti-Zionism.⁴⁰⁹ Trond Linstad from PalKom argued that the hearing on antisemitism had failed at investigating the roots of antisemitism, and instead became a politicised platform for a pro-Israel agenda. He regretted that the hearing had hindered from the debate and contributed rather to a confusion around

⁴⁰⁵ Finn Sjøe. 'Eitingers løgn' *Klassekampen* 27.5.1983.

⁴⁰⁶ Hoffmann (2020a) pp. 45–46.

⁴⁰⁷ Interview with Leo Eitinger, *Dagsrevyen* NRK 25.5.1983 (NRK's archive).

⁴⁰⁸ Hoffmann (2020a) p. 44.

⁴⁰⁹ Finn Sjøe. 'Ideologisk forurensning' *Klassekampen* 27.5.1983.

antisemitism.⁴¹⁰ In an article in *Aftenposten* titled ‘Questions after an Anti-Jewish hearing’, Ebba Wergeland from PalKom followed this argument and suggested that the hearing had missed on the opportunity to take up antisemitism in Norwegian history. She claimed that it promoted the Zionist cause for ‘a ghetto colony’ ‘on behalf of the Jews’.⁴¹¹ Wergeland’s argument is illustrative of how, despite the hearing’s proposition, antisemitism could still be defined exclusively within the framework of racist ideology and the Second World War. In this case, the premises of the International Hearing on Antisemitism were not accepted because Israel was fundamentally considered an illegitimate state, and hence Zionism should not be assessed as a legitimate endeavour. In this view, anti-Zionism was differentiated from a discussion about Jews.

On the other hand, the premises of the hearing were received positively in the Jewish community. An editorial review in *Jødisk Menighetsblad* highlighted the urgency to form alliances with non-Jewish actors to eradicate antisemitism, understood as ‘a danger to a civilised, humane, and cultural society.’⁴¹² The editor reiterated the idea that antisemitism rooted in an irrational hatred towards ‘the other’ led to a polarisation within society pushing minority groups to the margins. Echoing Elie Wiesel’s concluding speech, he maintained that the struggle against antisemitism had an utmost significance to the continuation of humanity in a contemporary world.⁴¹³ In this way, the efforts to combat antisemitism served as a means to promote diversity and pluralism. The organisers and participants of the International Hearing on Antisemitism in Oslo challenged the status quo of a predominantly homogenous society where minority groups struggled to assert their agency. The struggle against antisemitism focused on minority and civil rights, extending beyond the rights of Jews and ultimately promoting the liberal of a democratic society.

4.4. Concluding remarks

Members of DMT were actively engaged in the debate on Israel since 1967, primarily expressing support for Israel as part of Zionist solidarity. However, the emergence of an anti-Zionist movement in Norway prompted some individuals to respond to anti-Jewish sentiment embedded within legitimate criticism of Israel. While criticism of the Israeli Government and its policies in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict was acknowledged as valid, there was an objection to the denial of Israel’s right to exist as a Jewish state. This denial was viewed as

⁴¹⁰ Trond Linstad. ‘Sionisme er rasisme’ *Dagbladet* 16.6.1983.

⁴¹¹ Ebba Wergeland. ‘Spørsmål etter en antijødisk høring’ *Aftenposten* 20.6.1983.

⁴¹² ‘Den internasjonale høring i Oslo om antisemittismen’ *Jødisk menighetsblad* 1983 Nr. 2 p. 7.

⁴¹³ *Ibid* p. 6.

antisemitic, as it undermined the Jewish people's right to nationhood and their ancestral homeland. Leo Eitinger, as early as June 1967, recognised anti-Zionism as a practical threat to Jews in Israel and the diaspora, as the existence of Israel played a crucial role in the security of Jewish communities worldwide. In the 1970s, some members of DMT began to observe traditional anti-Jewish tropes being applied onto 'the Zionists' in political discourse. These tropes could involve anti-Jewish conspiracies, perceptions of Jewish power and influence, and analogies between Israel and Nazi Germany. These individuals, like Michael Melchior and Jan Benjamin Rødner, argued that a one-sided narrative of the conflict was biased against Israel and distorted 'the facts' to serve an anti-Jewish agenda.

The central question of this chapter has been the extent to which engagement in defending Israel and debating its existence contributed to the fight against antisemitism. While there was consensus in the 1960s that Nazi anti-Jewish ideology constituted antisemitism, the rise of an anti-Zionist movement in Norway which challenged Israel's right to exist led to controversy over the definitions and boundaries of 'antisemitism'. Proponents of Zionism highlighted the historical persecution of Jews as the context for the establishment of the Jewish state, while anti-Zionist actors categorically denied a connection between anti-Zionism and antisemitism. They viewed accusations of antisemitism as an attempt to suppress legitimate opinions regarding the Palestinians and obstruct an important political debate. In 1983, the Oslo Declaration on antisemitism, designed by the Nansen Committee in the International Hearing on Antisemitism, identified anti-Zionism as the primary form of antisemitism in the postwar period. However, the hearing failed to establish a new consensus regarding the definitions and boundaries of antisemitism. Some factions, as observed in reactions of PalKom and *Klassekampen*, still considered 'antisemitism' exclusively within the framework of traditional persecution of Jews and the Second World War, and consequently separated between anti-Zionism and antisemitism.

The actions of individuals opposing anti-Zionism does not represent the entire Jewish community. Nevertheless, since this study has not found evidence indicating that DMT members rejected these actors, it can be inferred that they were accepted to a certain extent within the Jewish community. Albeit this study focuses on the historical evidence of discourse and highlights more vocal participants, such as Leo Eitinger, Michael Melchior, and Jan Benjamin Rødner, it should be noted that they were not on the board of DMT. While Melchior served as the community's rabbi, his political views were his own representation. According to the informants themselves, their activities received support from community members, indicating acceptance if there was no significant division within the community. Ultimately,

the relationship between pro-Zionist activity and combatting antisemitism remains inconclusive, suggesting that the chosen method of pro-Zionist activity might have attracted a more limited audience. This is surely not the final word in research on Israel-related antisemitism in postwar Norway. Some of the actors, like MIFF, were not researched in detail and their latest history was not taken up in this chapter. Hopefully, future research can continue to explore new aspects of this discourse.

5. Conclusions

This study has analysed Jewish reactions to antisemitism between 1945–1983. It asked:

- *How did central actors in the Norwegian Jewish community define ‘antisemitism’ between 1945–1983?*
- *Which strategies and methods were developed and used by community members to combat antisemitism?*

The research has focused on selected case studies and the activity of central individual actors against antisemitism in DMT. The findings of the study are therefore not representative of the Norwegian Jewish community, and they do not always include information on how members of the community supported or criticised the activity of these actors. This chapter addresses the research questions considering particularly to what extent the findings would be helpful for understanding the development and motives for combatting antisemitism in postwar Norway.

Definitions

While ‘antisemitism’ was used as an overall term for anti-Jewish hatred, there had been no consensus on the definitions and boundaries of antisemitism. In liberated Norway, the Holocaust was unequivocally rejected as the most gruesome manifestation of anti-Jewish hatred. As discussed in chapter 3, some actors, like the DMT leadership in their statement regarding a verdict made in the National Legal Purge, as well as certain individual community members differentiated between ‘antisemitism’ and latent anti-Jewish sentiment. For these individuals, the former was synonymous with the scandalous policy of persecution and the annihilation of Jews brought to Norway by the Nazis; this was an un-Norwegian phenomenon. The latter, meanwhile, was rooted in irrational hatred which was seen as universal and could thus emerge among the Norwegian population. Particularly, the actors reacted against anti-Jewish discrimination as a form of exclusion. Those who spoke out against the verdicts of Wilhelm Wagner and Knut Rød largely did not frame their experience as ‘antisemitism’ in postwar Norway. Rather, the verdicts were perceived as discriminatory against Norwegian Jews (‘forskjellsbehandling’) because there was a suspicion that the crimes committed against Jews would be taken more seriously by the court and the public, if the victims were non-Jews, leading the actors to ask whether the juridical system undervalued Jewish citizens.

These examples indicate an integrationist function in combatting anti-Jewish discrimination after 1945. If Jews were truly seen as Norwegian, they should not experience

discrimination that excludes them as a group. By combatting social exclusion and othering, the actors asserted their inclusion in the national collective. The significance of combatting Nazi antisemitism became crucial since the resurgence of antisemitism threatened Norway's liberal and democratic values. Antisemitism was a form of exclusion of a particular group of Norwegian citizens, and the DMT leadership considered it a duty to strategise against it, as reflected in their contribution to the creation of Article 135a against incitement to racial hatred. This redirected the spotlight on society's responsibility to maintain democracy and liberal values in Norway, which enabled DMT to fulfil a public function in the fight against racism.

While within the contextual framework of the Holocaust Nazi antisemitism was possible to define, the concept of Israel-related hostility from 1967 was contested as there was no consensus in Norwegian society that anti-Zionism was connected to antisemitism. DMT could collaborate with the authorities against anti-Jewish harassment but there was no legislation defining and addressing antisemitism manifested within anti-Zionism. The actors examined in chapter 4 did not act on behalf of the Jewish community but represented mainly themselves. Certain individuals like Leo Eitingер, Michael Melchior, and Jan Benjamin Rødner were sensitive to elements in anti-Zionist argumentation contesting Israel's right to exist as they recognised a continuity from traditional antisemitism in the debate on Israel. One element which Leo Eitingер addressed in 1967 was the denial of Israel's right to exist, because Israel was perceived to be crucial for the physical safety of Jewish people in the diaspora. In the 1970s, Eitingер, Melchior, Rødner and others identified traditional anti-Jewish tropes within anti-Zionist expressions such as Nazi-Israel analogies, and imagery relating to Jewish money and power, and Christian references to the Old Testament's 'spirit of revenge' and the analogy of Jews as killers of Christ. There was an understanding that criticism of Israel was legitimate, and freedom of speech should be protected, but not references which were offensive to Jews and could result in anti-Jewish hostility.

Strategies and methods

The findings from this study suggest that actors in the Jewish community developed and used multifaceted strategies and methods to combat antisemitism after 1945. The study ultimately emphasises the power of many in self-organisation of those affected for the purpose of fighting back, and the power of successful alliance with non-Jewish actors in combatting antisemitism. DMT was able to intervene on behalf of members who found themselves unable to represent themselves in front of the authorities and found power in the collective. After the

‘Swastika Epidemic’ in 1960, DMT contributed to the creation of a legislation against incitement to racial hatred in Norway. While the law acknowledged the interconnectedness of discrimination and hostility towards Jews, it had certain limitations. For example, it narrowly defined what constituted a convictable offense, focusing largely on explicit threats against Jewish individuals as an ethnic group. This made it difficult to address more nuanced forms of antisemitism manifested in everyday life and latently. The law was not formulated specifically against antisemitism which made it difficult to address this phenomenon in a comprehensive way. Nonetheless, it represented an important step in detecting and combatting antisemitism in Norway.

Chapter 4 has asked, to what extent did engagement with the defence of Israel, and the debate concerning its existence, function as a part of the struggle against antisemitism? Eitinger, Melchior, and Rødner considered anti-Zionism to be a contemporary form of antisemitism and therefore defending Israel would have been a way to address it. Their methods against anti-Zionism were sometimes similar to those successfully applied in the fight against ‘antisemitism’. For example, Eitinger presented psychological theories on xenophobia and its implications on the perception and treatment of Jews in the context of the political debate on Israel. Rødner confronted the Palestine Committee in writing, through his publications, to refute misrepresentations and to ‘unmask’ their anti-Zionist claims as false and consequently as dangerous to Jewish people. Nevertheless, the continuity which these actors recognised between traditional antisemitism and anti-Zionism was not a consensus. They were criticised for involving two separate discussions and by accusing anti-Zionists of being antisemitic, they were criticised for polluting an important political debate. Revealing and explaining those elements which they thought belonged to traditional antisemitism was a strategy to validate their cause as something that Norwegian society would be able to grasp. Nevertheless, as seen in the example of the International Hearing on Antisemitism in Oslo in 1983, the attempt failed to create an understanding of that continuity among the general public and specifically among proponents of anti-Zionism, and the boundaries of ‘antisemitism’ remained contested. The scandalisation of anti-Zionism was apparently not successful. This would have worked mainly considering that there was a consensus in the postwar period that antisemitism was illegitimate. In comparison, such an attempt would not have been possible in the pre-war period when there was no such consensus.

The fight against antisemitism was not solely a concern for Jews but a global concern that required collaboration across diverse political actors. This collaborative approach was a key to reframing the issue of antisemitism from a historical one, within the framework of

persecution of Jews and the Holocaust, to a contemporary one concerned with defending democracy and humanistic and democratic values. This made the fight against antisemitism relevant to anyone who prioritised these values and proved to be potentially the most effective way to engage a wide range of non-Jewish actors in this effort. By fostering a shared commitment to combatting antisemitism in all its forms, the entire free world would become an ally against antisemitism. The integrationist function of combatting antisemitism also represented an attempt of actors in the Jewish community to influence Norwegian society into becoming more diverse and pluralistic, in preparation for becoming a multicultural society. The motivation to combat antisemitism indicates that the actors did not want to accept that Norway was a majority-driven country and wanted to assert themselves as valuable citizens and an integral part of the Norwegian mosaic. In combatting antisemitism, they fought for minority rights and civil rights. However, in combatting hostility and discrimination in Norway they actually fought beyond their own rights, for a democratic society.

Further research

This thesis has hopefully contributed to the study of contemporary antisemitism in Norway and Norwegian Jewish history. While this study provides historical insights into Jewish defensive action against antisemitism, it is important to consider the limitations of our understanding of such responses. What about instances where Norwegian Jews remained 'silent' in the face of prejudice and discrimination? How to investigate the complexities of reaction as a form of resistance or acquiescence? A fruitful avenue for further research would be to examine the nuances of a 'low-profile tradition' among Norwegian Jews, to deepen an understanding of Jewish experiences in Norway and the wider implications for combatting antisemitism. Future research could expand the focus from self-defensive action to the permutations of integration among Norwegian Jews in postwar Norway, including the impact of antisemitism. The study has hopefully made it possible to conduct a comparison between Jewish reactions to antisemitism in Norway and elsewhere. Further research could moreover examine the ways in which different minority groups had navigated such challenges in the Norwegian context. The study invites future researchers to explore beyond Jewish *responses against* antisemitism, and explore *reactions to* antisemitism, and the broader social and cultural contexts in which these reactions occurred.

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S–3138–32 Landssvikarkivet, Bergen politikammer

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1.2. Qualitative interviews

List of informants⁴¹⁴

<u>Name</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Location</u>
Irene Levin	28.9.2022	Oslo
Leif Arne Mendelsohn	29.9.2022	Oslo
Michael Melchior	5.2.2023, 10.2.2023	Oslo
Berit Reisel	15.2.2023	Oslo
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⁴¹⁵ The letter Å functions as ‘aa’, the letter Ø functions as ‘oe’, and the letter Æ functions as ‘ae’.

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Appendix

1. Interview guide

Interviews took place in Norwegian and English (the interview guide is published in English). These are the general questions the informants were asked. The interviews were semi-structured, meaning that they followed an interview guide but revolved around each informant's own activity. That is, not all informants were asked all questions, and some informants were asked specific questions which do not appear below. Overarchingly, each informant was asked how they reacted to incidents which they had defined as antisemitic, and subsequently, what was the outcome of their response.

Motives for reaction against anti-Jewish discrimination and exclusion in the immediate postwar years⁴¹⁶

How did your parents' generation perceive antisemitism in the postwar period?

Findings from the research suggest that community members reacted against 'nedvurdering' of Jews, but the term 'antisemitism' was used seldom. What were you told regarding this?

How did your family, and members of the Jewish community, react to the verdicts of Nazis and Norwegian collaborators in the National Legal Purge (*Rettsoppgjøret*)?⁴¹⁷

What was the outcome of their reaction?

Was there a 'low-profile tradition' in the Jewish community in reaction to antisemitism?

How did your family feel about those in the Jewish community who were open and explicit about social exclusion and otherness in the immediate postwar years?

Reactions to the emergence of an anti-Zionist movement in the socialist Left after 1967

How did you experience the emergence of an anti-Zionist movement among the socialist Left after the Six Day War? How did you react?

How did this reflect in the daily atmosphere at DMT? Did DMT take seriously the emergence of an anti-Zionist movement among the radical Leftist youth in the late 1960s?⁴¹⁸

⁴¹⁶ This was primarily relevant for Irene Levin and Leif Arne Mendelsohn.

⁴¹⁷ The informants discussed specifically the cases of Wilhelm Wagner, Knut Rød, and the Feldmann case. They referred to their family's attitudes towards and reaction to these cases.

⁴¹⁸ The informants were asked what they knew of anti-Zionist activity taken up in this study, for example SUF-ml's resolution from 1967.

Did youth organisations associated with DMT take a pro-Israel stance? Did DMT or other groups engage in the debate on Israel in the late 1960s?⁴¹⁹

Reactions to the consolidation of an anti-Zionist movement in Norway during the 1970s

How did you define ‘anti-Zionism’? What would have been the connection between anti-Zionism and antisemitism?

What would have been the connection between fighting for Israel and combatting antisemitism?

In what way did JUF and other youth associations affiliated with DMT⁴²⁰ fulfil the role of a Zionist movement in Norway?

How did JUF and other youth associations collaborate? What were JUF’s strategies against antisemitism in Norway?

What did you make of the generational shift when it came to fighting antisemitism and defending Israel from the late 1960s? As an anti-Zionist movement was prominent among circles of radical Leftist youth, did the younger Jewish generation take action against anti-Zionism?

Reactions to UN resolution 3379 which equated Zionism to racism, November 1975⁴²¹

What would have been the implications of the UN resolution which equated Zionism to racism, on the Norwegian Jewish community, and on Jews?

How central was the UN resolution in public debate in Norway? How did the public react to it?

How did DMT react to the resolution? What were the motives to react, and which strategies and methods were developed and used?

How did this reflect in the daily atmosphere in DMT?

⁴¹⁹ The informants were asked specifically about the associations in which they were involved, for example Jan Benjamin Rødner in JUF and Berit Reisel in *Studentklubben*. All informants were active members of DMT and were able to comment on the activity of these organisations fighting against antisemitism and defending Israel with or without a connection to DMT.

⁴²⁰ This question was asked regarding JUF and other associations of the younger generation affiliated with DMT, like *Studentklubben*, or those which engaged in pro-Zionist activity like MIFF. MIFF stated that its target audience was students and the younger generation.

⁴²¹ This was primarily relevant for Michael Melchior and Jan Benjamin Rødner.

The formation and function of MIFF⁴²²

What prompted MIFF's establishment? Why was there a need to found MIFF?⁴²³

What was the relationship between combatting antisemitism and fighting for Israel?

Did MIFF have a purpose of combatting antisemitism in Norway?

Which strategies and methods were employed by MIFF working towards its objectives?

What was the significance of founding MIFF as a non-Jewish organisation?

Did MIFF contribute to the feeling of safety among the Norwegian Jewish community?

Reactions to the First Lebanon War, summer 1982⁴²⁴

What was your strategy in public reaction against anti-Zionism after the First Lebanon War?

What was important for you to bring across?

The counter-hearing on Lebanon in Oslo, October 1982

Did the counter-hearing label Palfront's hearing on Lebanon as antisemitic? How was this received by the public?

What were the purposes and objectives of the counter-hearing?

Which strategies and methods were employed in the counter-hearing working towards its objectives?

What was the outcome of the counter-hearing?

How was the counter-hearing received by the Jewish community?

The International Hearing on Antisemitism in Oslo, June 1983

What were the purposes of the hearing?

Which strategies and methods were employed in the hearing working towards its objectives?

What was the outcome of the hearing?

⁴²² This was primarily relevant for Jan Benjamin Rødner.

⁴²³ Jan Benjamin Rødner was specifically asked what the purpose was of establishing MIFF while he was involved in JUF and engaged in Zionist activity.

⁴²⁴ This was primarily relevant for Michael Melchior and Jan Benjamin Rødner.

What was the support of the hearing? Did anyone try to hinder the hearing, or express resistance against it?

How was the hearing and the Oslo Declaration received by the Jewish community? How did the community react to the hearing? Was the hearing central in the community's daily atmosphere? Did the hearing contribute to the feeling of safety among community members?

2. Transcript extracts

Interview with Irene Levin, 28.9.2022, Oslo

Irene Levin (b. 1943) is professor emerita in social sciences at Oslo Metropolitan University and a member of the Norwegian Jewish community. Her academic career is placed mainly within pragmatism, family sociology and social work. However, in recent years she has published on the Second World War and Holocaust in Norway. One of her contributions is the concept of silence in the postwar period, on the individual as well as the macro level.⁴²⁵ She is the author of *Vi snakket ikke om Holocaust. Mor og jeg og tausheten* (We never spoke about the Holocaust: Mother, I, and the Silence; Gyldendal forlag 2020).

Based on what you were told by your family and what you found in your research, how did you analyse the complex situation of the returning Jews in the immediate postwar years? Particularly, how did they react to the verdicts of German Nazis and Norwegian collaborators who were tried in the National Legal Purge (Rettsoppgjøret)?

‘There was ambiguity within the situation when they came back. The ambiguity had to do with a question about what type of Jews they were now. That is how I analyse it today. They saw themselves as Norwegians, but did society at large see them as that? They loved Norway and Norwegians whom they knew. I would say that they idealised Norway and Norwegians. They wanted so much to become Norwegians and they had done everything right. It was not intentionally in the sense that they did it in order *to* achieve something more than being citizens in this country. It was not linear. They learned the language, the very important Norwegian norms of love of nature and outdoor life became theirs, and they adjusted their names for the majority to be easier to pronounce. Then they were arrested by the Norwegian State Police. How to understand that? They explained the war the way it was done by the majority population, and it was a war between the Germans and Norwegian Nazis on one side, and the *Jøssinger* [Byname for Norwegians who opposed the German occupation] on the other.⁴²⁶ That was a dichotomised way to view what had happened and it did not include all the ambiguous sides of the situation. In addition to all of this came their sorrow, mourning og savn.

When they [Norwegian Jews] came back, they did not return as heroes. And the rest of Norwegians in Sweden did return as heroes, they had won the war. They were arrested because of something they had done, and the Norwegian Jews were arrested for something

⁴²⁵ Irene Levin. ‘Taushetens tale’, *Nytt Norsk Tidsskrift*, 4 (2001) pp. 371–182; Kopperud and Levin (2010).

⁴²⁶ ‘Jøssing’, *Store Norske Leksikon* <https://snl.no/jøssing> [accessed 26.4.2023].

they were. They were in sorrow, mourning, they were left with the question whether they had done everything right. Even though they had survived, they had all kinds of questions. And they had to get on with their life. They did not blame the Norwegian majority society; it didn't occur to them. They had to continue everyday life.

Even though there was antisemitism long before the war, and the Jewish community learned how to deal with that. They had kept themselves from the majority population except those they could trust. They used humour, the famous Jewish humour, to manage. But that again emphasised a division between 'we' and 'them'.

After the war, they found that their houses were stolen, their loved ones were lost. I don't think they knew how to make sense of that. I remember once when I was little, we sat at the dinner table, and we had guests, and someone said, "but it was the Norwegians who arrested the Jews", and someone answered «Jaja, vi får dem ikke tilbake allikevel.» It was not a theme afterwards. No one said, 'what do you mean?' It was a beginning of a conversation. There was a silence regarding what had happened, which does not mean that the experience from the war was not present, it was just not talked about. It was absent in the concrete conversation, but still present.

But they followed what was going on in the newspapers. [Referring to the immediate postwar period] When the injustice became too obvious, some voiced their opinions, and I expanded on this in my book, in my analysis of Bernhard Goldberg's reaction to the legal case against Wilhelm Wagner. And Aksel Scheer, my uncle, published his response following the Feldmann case.⁴²⁷

How did your parents feel about those in the Jewish community who were open and explicit about those feelings of not being included in society in the immediate postwar years?

'The Jews didn't write in the newspapers.'

What about Bernhard Goldberg?

'But that was a one-time experience, and she [Irene's mother] didn't talk about it. I was also very little when it happened. But the other one who wrote was my uncle. Of course they loved it.'

Did your mother talk about Wagner?

⁴²⁷ Levin's analysis of Bernhard Goldberg's article 'Er vi norske jøder allikevel av mindre verdi?' *Dagbladet* 12.5.1947 and Aksel Scheer's press response 'Epilog til Feldmann-saken' *Dagbladet* 5.9.1947 are in Levin (2021) pp. 156–159. On Goldberg, Scheer, and other Jewish responses to major trials in the National Legal Purge 1945–1948 in this thesis see chapter 3.

‘No, never. But she said: «Det er så urettferdig. Hvorfor skulle jeg bli arrestert, hvorfor skulle faren min bli arrestert?» So, when Goldberg writes in the newspaper and says, this would not have happened if it was farmers from Hedemark, that is to say: we are like farmers from Hedemark.’

In your view of the situation, when did members of the community react openly against anti-Jewish behaviour?

‘The Jews had more than enough, managing everyday life, and they had a good life. They didn’t have any problem being a Jew in Norway. They kept their rituals as well as being a member of the Norwegian majority at large.’

But what about the instances where members of the Jewish community interpreted the situation as a reminder that they were different from the rest and that they were not being included? Any experience of anti-Jewish behaviour?

‘Then it was a particular example of that. When that woman said til moren min «skal du inni den jødebutikken?» they [her family] laughed. They knew their worth, but they were not surprised if that was not as the majority saw it. So, what did they do? Continued with their life but did not complain. And you can say that it has worked. Today they are fully integrated in the society. What would my mother say to all this: the Jews will always be blamed, that’s how it is. That is part of the Jewish destiny.’

Interview with Leif Arne Mendelsohn, 29.9.2022, Oslo

Leif Arne Mendelsohn (b. 1947) is a Norwegian engineer and a member of the Norwegian Jewish community. He is the son of Oskar Mendelsohn, who was a central figure in DMT and the author of *Jødenes historie i Norge gjennom 300 år* (the Jewish people's history in Norway through 300 years; 1969 and 1986, Universitetsforlag); a reference work of Norwegian Jewish history. The interview with Leif Arne Mendelsohn took place in Norwegian and English. The following extract is entirely translated from Norwegian – the term 'forskjellsbehandling', translated in this thesis as discrimination, is left in the original to demonstrate the use of particular terminology by the informant when he talks about the reaction of Oskar Mendelsohn and DMT to the Feldmann case.

In my research I learned that your father and mother were rescued across the border to Sweden by Peder Pedersen and Håkon Løvestad, Home Front men who were later tried for the killing of the Jewish couple Jacob and Rakel Sonja Feldmann, and for the embezzlement of their property. Do you know if this is correct? What did your father think about their acquittal of murder? What were you told regarding how members in the community leadership perceived the verdict?

'Yes, that is correct, they were there. My father was well aware of the injustice that was made in the Feldmann case. He thought indeed that it was very strange that they were not convicted for it, and that they should have been. And others in DMT felt the same, and they talked about it. It was a very difficult situation. They [Pedersen and Løvestad] were guilty. This is what my father told me in person. He also didn't like the way that the new film portrayed the case, and he wrote about it in *Jødisk Menighetsblad*, but that was later when the debate broke decades later.⁴²⁸ He thought that it did not properly address the moral dilemma of acquitting the people from who murdered them [the Feldmanns]'

But Oskar did not convey this in his book. Why?

'I think it is because it was a history book, and he did not want to get into the political issues. He did express this side of the debate through other existing works, through articles and people who said these things openly. But he was otherwise very open and explicit about what he thought on the matter.'

What was your father concerned about? What were members of the Jewish community bothered by, according to what they told you?

⁴²⁸ Film: *Flukten over grensen* by Bente Erichsen, 1987 (VHS); Oskar Mendelsohn. 'Filmen om Feldmann-saken' *Jødisk Menighetsblad* 1987 Nr. 1.

‘I think, the murder of the couple Feldmann was maybe not seen as antisemitic, but the acquittal of the people who killed them, that was seen as a form of forskjellsbehandling. They were only accused of theft. It was discrimination against Jews, and they [Oskar Mendelsohn and his peers in the Jewish community leadership] thought that the court would not have acquitted the murderers if it had been non-Jews who were the victim in the case.’

Why was it not perceived as antisemitism?

‘It was a very confusing situation at the time for the Jews. I think it is because the Norwegians, the court, were not perceived in the same way as what the Nazis did during the war; that was antisemitism. They [Norwegians] were the opposite. Antisemitism was the genocide of Jews, the Holocaust. This was an injustice at court. It was discrimination. They were very angry and felt that they were being excluded and treated differently as Jews in Norway, but they did not consider it to be antisemitism in this way.’

Interviews with Michael Melchior, 5.2.2023, 10.2.2023, Oslo

Michael Melchior was the Student Rabbi of Norway from 1975, the (ordained) Rabbi of Norway from 1980, and in 1999 received the title of Chief Rabbi of Norway and has been serving as such ever since. Melchior became a party leader in the Israeli Knesset starting in the 1990s. The interviews with Melchior took place in Norwegian, English, Hebrew, and Danish. The following extract is standardised into English, and the translated passages are marked below.

Interview 5.2.2023

[Regarding the reactions in the Jewish community to anti-Zionism in the socialist Left during the 1970s, translated from Hebrew]:

‘He [Jan Benjamin Rødner] started MIFF. And the community was very happy about it, but it was not on behalf of the Jewish community. [...] I was the community’s rabbi so obviously everyone thought that it was the opinion of the community, but I expressed my own opinions. I represented myself. And when I was more critical towards Israel, there were those in the community who found it less convenient.’

[Melchior’s reaction to anti-Zionism in the First Lebanon War in 1982, translated from Hebrew]:

‘In October 1982 they made a public trial against Israel. And I knew it was going to be awful. Simple. So, I did a different kind of trial. Then suddenly, we got an equal amount of time in the press. And by doing that I already neutralised the hatred against Israel because we got equal time, and we interviewed the people I [brought] in the same scope. To me, what was important was the attention in the press, back then we didn’t have many channels for communication so I had to get 50% of the attention in the press, and that I got – more than 50.’

Interview 10.2.2023

What would have been the implications of UN resolution 3379 on antisemitism in Norway, and the Norwegian Jewish community? How did the community react to the resolution? How did DMT prioritise this?

‘It’s not necessarily that the resolution had but the whole concept of Zionism being the source of evil, which was part of the concept for this resolution, was something which had an influence in those circles.’

Did the resolution affect the use of traditional anti-Jewish tropes and imagery in the Norwegian public? (‘Eye for an eye, tooth for tooth’)

‘They used these expressions the whole time. They used them, not understanding how the Jewish interpretation of this has been.’

Did the counter–hearing on Lebanon label the Palestine Front’s international hearing on Lebanon as antisemitic?

‘I don’t think so. There were aspects [in] the wording, which was used during the process in 1982 during the war which were clearly over the red line of antisemitism. The comparisons between Beirut and Warsaw ghetto, the antisemitic drawings which were clearly in *Der Stürmer* style, which were in various newspapers in Norway, the comparisons of the Israeli army to the armies of the Nazis, concentration camps similarities, were clearly antisemitic. This was even before Sabra and Shatila. Again, protest against that [Israeli policy in the war in Lebanon] is an argument which can be made. Very strong argument, I was also against, it’s not the issue. The issue is when you go over the red line then it becomes antisemitic. And that’s what happened here, with no real reaction, or anybody against crossing that red light. This amongst others led to that we organised the first ever international hearing on antisemitism in 1983 [...] and the Oslo Declaration. I think it was the first time globally that the concept of ‘the new antisemitism’ and the old [...] that 20–30 years after that became common language.’

What about the diplomatic front of the counter–hearing on Lebanon, apart from the public front in the press conferences – the experts which were invited to speak in the counter–hearing, their diplomatic work with central political actors which was not all covered by the press? Did it make an impact?

‘I think it did something in the eyes of the public. It somehow helped to balance the negativity which had been.’

How did the Norwegian Jewish community react to the hearings of 1982 and 1983?

‘I think they were very supportive. I think it was very positively received in the Jewish community. Total support.’

Did the 1983 hearing achieve the goals which were set?

‘The goal was to combat antisemitism. And I can’t say that it achieved the goal. I think one of the main purposes, and it is why it was important it was the Nansen Committee who did this. [...] For me it’s very crucial in combatting antisemitism that it’s not Jews who are in the front of this. When you combat antisemitism, I think it is a misunderstanding that Jews should be the ones who combat antisemitism.’

Interview with Berit Reisel, 15.2.2023, Oslo

Berit Reisel (b. 1945) is a clinical psychologist and a member of the Norwegian Jewish community. In 1967, as a student at the University of Oslo, she co-established the Nordic Association of Jewish Students (NOJS) and headed its branch in Norway *Studentklubben*. She participated in an international debate social called ‘the Critical Zionists’ which discussed political issues relating to Israel from a critical and a pro-Zionist perspective. She has also been an active member of the Norwegian Jewish Youth Association (JUF).

[Reisel’s experience of anti-Zionism as a student in Oslo during the Six Day War in 1967]:
‘Then from one day to the other. When I said “Hi!” – no response. And when I entered the room, everybody stopped talking. It thought, weird. And from one second to the other, I was perceived as a representative of the enemy.’

But you said nothing about Israel?

‘No, it was just me. They knew I was Jewish; I was walking around with a Magen David, and it was known that I was part of the Jewish student union.’

Did the Jewish student union have any pro-Israel agenda?

‘No, not at all. It had nothing to do with what we said or did, it was just a perception of the enemy, and what that meant and what it represents. And I was responsible of course for the wars, and for the lives of the Palestinians, like I had murdered Jesus kind of. It was the same kind of thing again. And all these antisemitic things, it has nothing to do with us, but it is the way we are described and portrayed.’

In 1967 onwards, was it a brand-new challenge for you? [experiencing hostility in anti-Zionism]

‘Yeah. I didn’t expect it. And suddenly it was there in my mind: my mother had told me that when her parents came to Norway, they told their kids, or they have been told by their parents, you cannot trust the others. [...]’

But then what did you do? How did you react to this hostility?

‘No what I did was I pulled back. I didn’t go to the library to read, I didn’t go to the cafeteria, I was reading in my student room, and I was closer than ever to my Jewish colleagues across the borders. And this was what happened for all of us. We faced the same problem in all these countries, and we tried to talk, but it was no use. We were 2–3 people [in Oslo] and they were hundreds. We all pulled back.’

[Regarding criticism of Israel in the international debate society ‘the Critical Zionists’]:

‘I was critical very early on to Israel’s dealing with the Palestinians. We could foresee that if you are not dealing with this, it is an issue that is going to grow. And you need to deal with it now. Because now you have the attitudes from the world that is on your side, and the damage isn’t that bad that it cannot be restored. If you do something now it will be the best thing for Israel. I [was] caring deeply about the survival of Israel as a country. And as a Jewish country. But we didn’t do anything, we just discussed and helped each other to survive.’

[Reisel’s daily experience of anti-Zionism as a Jewish student in the early 1970s]:

‘It was painful to be out in the society in my part of the world as a student daily because of two groups that were kind of intertwined, that was the Palestine Committee, and AKP–ml. SUF was mild, and AKP was aggressive.’

Did Studentklubben react to the anti-Zionist resolutions in the late 1960s?

‘No, we didn’t do anything. We were just scared. And we felt like we were bombed back to pre-war period time.’

Were you concretely fearing for your physical safety?

‘I think I was at one point. It was scary times. And very unpleasant. I was very careful with whom I mingled, and basically, I kept to myself and to my closest friends that I trusted.’

Did you consider what you were saying?

‘Yeah, absolutely. And to whom I said what, and it was a really bad time. I hated it.’

Interview with Jan Benjamin Rødner, 16.2.2023, Oslo

Jan Benjamin Rødner (b. 1948) is a Norwegian lawyer and a member of the Norwegian Jewish community. He has been active in education and advocacy for Israel since the 1970s. In 1978, he established the organisation Med Israel For Fred (MIFF) which has organised events and campaigns to raise awareness about Israel's history and culture as well as to counter anti-Israel propaganda in the media and public discourse.

From 1973 you were the Chairman of the Norwegian Jewish Youth Association (JUF). As a student in the early 1970s, you were also independently active in education and advocacy for Israel, and you were an active member of the Jewish community in Oslo (DMT). What was JUF's function in relation to DMT, particularly its role in addressing issues of antisemitism in Norway, and the discursive engagement with the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict?

'When I was the Chairman of JUF, I don't remember, it wasn't for a very long time, a few years. I looked at how many Jews are we.'

In Norway?

'Exactly. We're talking about the Norwegian scene. And I thought, there is nothing we can do about this, if we are relying just on Jews. We are too few. Most of us have enough to do with our daily life. We are still trying to recover from the losses we have had from the Second World War.'

But what was the difference between JUF and DMT in that sense?

'JUF is an independent youth organisation inside the DMT, from 7 to 70. And that meant that we couldn't do much about this. On the Norwegian scene we had to do something about that.'

In the late 1960s, did the Jewish community take anti-Zionism in the socialist Left seriously?

'No, not really.'

Did they demonstrate or do anything?

'No, not that I can remember. The pressure against Israel was felt in *Studentersamfunnet* [The Norwegian Students' Association]. And it was on the agenda all the time. And I spoke up in the meetings. And after one meeting a student pointed at me and said: 'Rødner er en sionist.' And he didn't have to say anything more. That meant that everything I said is nonsense and that they don't have to take it into consideration. That was what it meant. So, what I did was

that I made this *Midt-Østen konflikten* [The Middle East conflict; a book from 1974].⁴²⁹ I would have done it a little bit differently today, but it is amazing how much of it is still true up to this day.’

1974–1975 was also the time when MIFF’s magazine Midt-Østen i fokus started to come out. What was your contribution to the formation of magazine? Were you the editor?

‘I was definitely not the main contributor, and I was never the editor.’

How did this initiative come to be?

‘Back in the day in *Studentersamfunnet* people sat at their tables, and they sold different materials, and I sat down with that booklet [*Midt-Østen konflikten*]. Slowly, more people got interested. And then two students came and said, we want to make a magazine. Can we use your caption, Med Israel For Fred? So, they started the magazine. That was in 1975. Then people subscribe, and then you have a list of names, and then there are people you can invite to an organisation. My thinking was always: we, the Norwegian Jews are too few, cannot really do anything on our own, we need to have other people helping us, and that was the underlying basis for everything I did. So, when these students came, it was Godsent.’

You are member of the Jewish community, but you fight politically for Israel. How did that work together? Was MIFF meant to protect Jews in Norway? Was it meant to combat antisemitism or to protect Israel?

‘I don’t really see any antagonism between the two. If you support Israel, you support Jews, also in the diaspora, and the other way around.’

Did MIFF contribute to the feeling of safety among the Norwegian Jewish community?

‘When I think about all the reactions we have gotten, from community members, from Jews in general, I think yes. I think that it gives them the feeling that they have an organisation that has affiliations all over the country, supporting Israel, which for DMT is important, because DMT is a Zionist community, after all.’

In my research I learned that DMT had a policy not to engage in politics. Is that correct?

What was the reason for that?

‘Yes, that is true. Because we as Norwegian Jews should not be held responsible for what Israel is doing. We want to support Israel, but we don’t want to be liable for what Israel does. They 100% support Israel, but they just don’t want the fuss. Because putting your head out, you’re risking it being chopped off. And when you feel a hostile atmosphere at your place of

⁴²⁹ Rødner, Jan Benjamin. *Midt-Østen konflikten* (independent publishing, 1974).

birth, you will be more hesitant in what you're saying and doing. But many of those are very grateful for what MIFF is doing. They feel supported.'

How did you define 'anti-Zionism'? What would have been the connection between anti-Zionism and antisemitism?

'It's very difficult to differentiate. If you don't accept the thought of the Jews being a people, having the right of national aspirations, then to be against that, that is basic anti-Zionism, but you can find it on different levels. We had this discussion in DMT. And I for a long time said: It's very interesting and good that you're working against antisemitism in Norway. But it doesn't help us. Because it doesn't get to the core of the problem in Norway. The problem in Norway is what is coming from the Middle East. That is the problem. So if we want to defend the Jews in Norway, we have to defend Israel, – we have to see where the real source of antisemitism comes from. And it is on another level. It used to be different. It used to be an individual thing. It is the individual Jew we shall hate; they are terrible they have it in their blood, whatever you can imagine about the Jews, they think that about Jews. It was not like that anymore. Now it is taken up on a national level. It's Israel – but underneath, all this lays in hatred towards Jews. But you don't address it if you go for pure antisemitism. And this is why I said: we are using a lot of money every year to fight 'antisemitism' in Norway of 1940. That's not the problem.'

Speaking of anti-Zionism in 'the international level', in 1975, what would have been the implications of the UN resolution, where Zionism was equated with racism, on Jews in Norway? And how did the resolution affect the daily atmosphere in the community?

'It was never really a matter for the Norwegian society, not in that sense. That was something that happened in the UN, but never had an impact here.'

*During the 1970s you directly confronted members of the Palestine Committee in the debate on anti-Zionism in Norway. In 1976, you published *Løgnere iblant oss (Liars among us)* where you challenged PalKom's anti-Zionist arguments. What made you write this book?*

'I read through it [*Israel: Propaganda – Virkelighet*] and I asked, can this be true? I went through them, all the statements where they had a source. And I went to the sources, visited myself the Wiener Library in London. I wrote to the Congress Library, the Nobel institute, and so forth. And there was not one statement that was true. It was all manipulated in one way or another. That was quite amazing. And they would give out leaflets with "facts" about Israel. And then I gave out my book. In these arguments against Israel – there are no facts. Only

statements, accusations, they didn't do it in Palestine Committee and not in the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.'

And that was your own initiative?

'My own. Private initiative. Actually, with economic support from the community. This was Kai Feinberg then in charge. [...]

How did PalKom react to what you published: Midt-Østen konflikten, and Løgnere iblant oss?

[Follow-up email 28.3.2023]: 'They "answered" by withdrawing all that kind of propaganda and fake documentation for a long time. And by silence. You may draw your own conclusions.'

I would like to ask you about the counter-hearing on Lebanon in autumn 1982. In Midt-Østen i fokus it is described as an initiative of MIFF? What were the purposes of the counter-hearing?

'Yes. And it was terrible. We took many of the same issues [as Palestine Front in the parallel international hearing on Lebanon in autumn 1982] to counter. Stanghelle claimed that he [Kåre Thunheim] was arrested by the UN forces because he tried to smuggle information to Israel, and pictures, and that he was let go in dishonour. We actually got the proof that what Stanghelle had insinuated was pure lie. And I still have the documentation for that, and I got that from the papers from the military services.'

And what did this incident do to the counter-hearing?

'Were shocked. He torpedoed the whole thing. It was terrible. We never recovered.'

Did the counter-hearing on Lebanon label Palestine Front's hearing on Lebanon as antisemitic?

'No. To label the hearing like that I think it would have been counterproductive. Because when you say that, then the people whom you are attacking will say [gesture of surprise]. Because most people in Norway would not think of themselves as antisemitic. I'm for the Palestinians. I'm for human rights.'

Was combatting anti-Jewish hatred an objective of the counter-hearing?

'No. I think it's a very difficult balance. When can you say it is antisemitic? The purpose of the counter-hearing was to counter the other hearing, to counter the harshest allegations about Israel.'

Was the Jewish community supportive of the counter-hearing in 1982?

'Absolutely.'

As Zionists or as Jews?

‘I think both. Because we do understand the impact. The connection between the two, absolutely. And whatever happens against Israel is very easily translated into hatred against Jews.’