



# Exile and Literature in the Prague German Magazine *Die Wahrheit*\*

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## SYNOPSIS

This article shows how the topic of exile and exile literature was presented in the Prague magazine *Die Wahrheit* after Adolf Hitler came to power. Although *Die Wahrheit* was an expressly pro-Czechoslovak magazine, it focused on problematic aspects of the situation of German émigrés in the country, especially writers and other cultural actors. The article follows three interpretive models (Heinrich Heine, the ‘best Germany’, and ‘positive nomadism’), belonging to discursive formations in which the debate on the situation of exiles took place, shaping their self-understanding and ideas about possible solutions. The magazine’s critical attitudes towards the relationship between artistic exile and the Czechoslovak state are revealed on the example of debates about the (non) performance of Ferdinand Bruckner’s drama *Die Rassen* in Prague.

## KLÍČOVÁ SLOVA / KEYWORDS

Německý tisk; exil; Československo; Praha; *Die Wahrheit* / the German press; exile; Czechoslovakia; Prague; *Die Wahrheit*.

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Even before Adolf Hitler came to power, some German literati and cultural activists sought refuge in Czechoslovakia to avoid increasing pressure from the institutions already controlled by the Nazis and the terror of the SA units.<sup>1</sup> Starting in February 1933, however, the stream of refugees increased (even though their total number in

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<sup>1</sup> This applied primarily to many of those born in the Czech lands, for instance Alice Rühle-Gerstel (1894 Prague — 1943 Mexico City) who spent the years 1932–1934 in Prague, including her inner break with the Communist Party. She describes the fates of the expatriates in her novel *Der Umbruch oder Hanna und die Freiheit* (written in 1938, published in 1984); cf. Friedrich (2012).



the country never exceeded 4000<sup>2</sup>), including an auspicious number of artists and intellectuals, such as Theodor Lessing, Oskar Kokoschka, Bertolt Brecht, Oskar Maria Graf, and Hermynia zur Mühlen, as well as Thomas and Heinrich Mann and others. Their names<sup>3</sup> would soon come to characterise the idealised depiction of the Czechoslovak Republic as a safe haven from Nazism and important birthplace of the ‘anti-fascist front’ (Veselý 1983, p. 26–29). However true it may be that German émigrés<sup>4</sup> played a role in the cultural and political life of the Czechoslovak Republic and Central Europe during this period, and in the auxiliary work of various committees and commissions (Čapková — Frankl 2012, p. 100–169), the existing academic literature also highlights the lack of asylum laws and generally uncoordinated state policy on refugees. By virtue of these shortcomings, some émigrés — cultural figures and others who were believed to offer a greater contribution to the economy — received certain privileges, while the bulk of ‘ordinary’ émigrés found themselves in a generally dismal and uncertain situation (Čapková — Frankl 2012).<sup>5</sup> Moreover, the rising anti-Semitism in Czech society (Frankl 2010) had an impact on the situation of Jewish refugees, who made up a significant proportion of the total number.

Some Czechoslovak media organisations were quick to follow the story of the émigrés — and, crucially, sympathise with their perspective —, including the Prague-based German-language magazine *Die Wahrheit* (1921–1938), established by Wilhelm Barta and published by Adalbert Rév starting in 1923.<sup>6</sup> It can be considered one of the most important expressly pro-Czechoslovak German-language periodicals published in Prague, second only to *Prager Presse*. *Die Wahrheit* published articles, surveys, and critical commentaries focusing on national reconciliation in Czechoslovakia and Central Europe, as well as such topics as Jewish culture and identity, the idea of pan-Europeanism, and pacifism. With a certain degree of promotional self-stylisation (and exaggerated claims regarding its uniqueness and mass popularity), the magazine reminded readers of its agenda in a 1925 New Year’s editorial:

*On the rugged ground that political, national, social-dogmatic, and racial specialists are striving to occupy for their more or less dubious special purposes, and in this tumultuous epoch of the process of state building, which is still far from over, this universal, independent magazine has shown a steadfastness and appeal, the reasons*

2 Čapková — Frankl (2012, p. 32) point out that this was only a small portion of the 33,000 German citizens who resided in Czechoslovakia in the 1930s.

3 Later communist Czechoslovakia highlighted the names of communist protégés such as Fritz Erpenbeck, Friedrich Wolf, Willi Bredel and others. This ideological filter is probably most evident in Gertrude Albrecht (1964).

4 In line with most of the period statements in the magazine, the term ‘émigré’ is used herein, even though it is apparent that they were mostly expatriates leaving Germany after having already experienced, or continuing to face, the real threat of persecution by the Nazi regime.

5 On prominent émigrés, cf. Čapková (2018); the case of the Mann brothers is presented by Lange (2021); the situation of visual artists in Czechoslovak exile is dealt with by Rokytová (2013).

6 The magazine was published weekly in the years 1933–1934, later as a decimal and fortnightly.



for which are to be sought entirely outside of the customary journalistic means of promotion. [...]

Die Wahrheit is the only paper in Central Europe that stands for a broad pacifism that is not tied to any platform, while simultaneously striving for domestic and international reconciliation. [...] Die Wahrheit [...] has won over broad swathes of the population of all nationalities with its idea of practical work for peace, and has gained recognition for this activity from all people of sound judgment far beyond the borders of the Czechoslovak Republic. And it will persistently continue to follow this path, aiming at the fruitful conciliation of the interests of all members of this political system, bound together by destiny, without losing sight of the goal, which is called Europe (W 1925, 1: 1).<sup>7</sup>

From 1933, the magazine followed the topic of German émigrés in Czechoslovakia, covering its social and financial aspects, as well as the cultural context and implications for the magazine's own situation. Besides its local contributors, namely Georg Mannheimer, Paul Leppin, Julius Mader, Alfred Fuchs, Arthur Heller, Emanuel Rádl, and others, expatriate journalists and writers, including Justin Steinfeld, Julius Epstein, Grete Livius, Oskar Kokoschka, or Manfred Georg, published their articles and partially assisted on the editorial board. There were also articles by notable German exile figures in other European countries: for instance, Heinrich Mann, Joseph Roth, Helmut Klotz, and Magnus Hirschfeld. Finally, the magazine also focused on the topic of literature in exile from France, Austria, Switzerland, and Holland, in addition to Czechoslovakia. This paper explores several topics related to *literary* exile, which was frequently covered by the magazine and which became an important theme in the public discourse of the time. It will leave aside some highly polemical and expressly political debates concerning editorial choices at the magazine, such as the one in 1933–1934 that followed the publication of articles by (and an interview with) Otto Strasser, leader of the Black Front.

## FIRST VIEWS AND CONFRONTATIONS

The topic of exile — or *emigration*, as the magazine usually referred to it — first appeared in a survey announced on 23 March 1933. In the 8 April issue, contributions by leading representatives of German and Czech intellectual life in Czechoslovakia were published under the title *Die Emigration in der Tschechoslowakei* ('Emigration in Czechoslovakia'). Authors included Franz Bacher, chairman of the syndicate of local German journalists,<sup>8</sup> Otokar Fischer, translator and professor of German studies at

7 For more detailed information on the agenda of the magazine, see Zbytovský (2019a). The articles from *Die Wahrheit* are listed below under the names of their authors. In the study, they are indicated by the W siglum, the year of publication, the issue's number, and the page.

8 Bacher (1884 Prague — 1945 Oświęcim) was the editor of *Deutsche Zeitung Bohemia* and was chairman of the *Reichsgewerkschaft der deutschen Presse*, a syndicate of German press in Bohemia, in 1919–1938. In 1931 he was co-opted as an MP in the Czechoslovak National Assembly, representing the German Labour and Election Association (DAWG).

Charles University, Emanuel Rádl, biology professor and philosopher, Alfred Fuchs, a member of the Government Presidium's press department, and Ludwig Winder, chairman of the German writers' association *Schutzverband der deutschen Schriftsteller in der Tschechoslowakei*. All participants called for support of émigrés from the Third Reich. In his article, Bacher reminded readers of the many examples throughout history of people who were expelled from their native country and rehabilitated by subsequent generations. For those directly involved, he points out, it was even more crucial to resettle in an environment that gave them the strength to stand up to tyrants during the period of exile:

*The countries and cities that take persecuted talents under their wing and give them the opportunity to continue their activity thus earn themselves a place of honour in history. A lot of great and beautiful things have already been created in exile, and the glory of these achievements fell back on those who welcomed the refugees and created the conditions to enable them to continue in their work (W 1933, 7–8: 7).*

In his opinion, it falls on the 'guests' themselves, however, to follow the principle of 'not blithely exposing the host to embarrassing situations' (ibid.), which may perhaps be related to diplomatically problematic political actions and positions.<sup>9</sup>

Fischer expressed his hope that Czechoslovakia would provide a refuge especially for German intellectuals who followed the spiritual tradition of the Weimar classics — 'the Europeanism of Hölderlin, Heine, Nietzsche, the social tradition of Georg Büchner' (ibid.). In return, he expected them to show active loyalty to the state, its Slavic majority, and to the Czech and Slovak language and education. Fuchs's short reply emphasised the need for the broadest acceptance of all who have suffered for democracy — at the very least because a broad democratic offensive is necessary, not only a defensive stance against the Nazis. Winder, on behalf of the Trade-Protection Society of German Authors (*Schutzverband deutscher Schriftsteller*), declared his support for the freedom of literature and offered practical help to everyone who needed it. However, he warned of difficulties that later proved to be substantial for the émigrés in the Czechoslovak Republic:

*But it would be irresponsibly reckless to make any promises to the German Reich writers who are now seeking asylum in Prague, because the prospects for making a living for a writer who settles here as a foreigner are miserable. The newspaper offices are overcrowded, and the film industry for the time being is hardly an option. There is no major German-language publisher in Czechoslovakia (W 1933, 7–8: 8).*

Emanuel Rádl took a similar position but followed it much further. He first expressed his concern that discussion of this topic was premature (he initially doubted whether immigration from Germany to Czechoslovakia would be significant, but it soon

9 The Czechoslovak state especially considered the relationship with communist émigrés precarious, since their anti-democratic agitation could strengthen local radical tendencies and discredit the country in the international context. Cf. Čapková — Frankl (2012, pp. 36–46, 88).



proved to be the case). Yet he also called for unconditional acceptance of the refugees as guests of the Czechoslovak state. Considering the fate of Russian and Italian émigrés in Czechoslovakia as a warning, he then indicated two possible ways in which the situation could viably develop. Either the refugees would return to Germany soon after ‘emotions subside’, or they would ‘become fully assimilated in the new state and simply forget about Germany’ (ibid.). He characterised Czechoslovak culture, policy, and ‘spiritual structure’ in terms of its ‘constructive spirit’ and focus on what was ‘possible and practical’ — wholly different from the German context, where the last generation of intellectuals were forced to take the position of a simple negation or even ‘destructive struggle’ against the nation’s majority: ‘This is why our friends from the German Reich will encounter greater reservations, among the Czechs as well as the Germans of our country, than they might have expected’ (ibid.). Moreover, according to Rádl, the Czechoslovak public (understandably, in his opinion) was not content simply to denounce the Nazis but tried to uncover the reasons for the defeat of ‘progressive forces’ in Germany, and he acknowledges that ‘the majority of the German nation supports the National Socialists’ (ibid.). Though Rádl in no way supported opposition to the refugees, a position typically motivated by nationalist or even anti-Semitic resentment, he openly advocated for *realpolitik* considerations based on the apparently broad support enjoyed by the Nazi regime in Germany at the time. This support undoubtedly strengthened the position of the German state in its pressure to restrict migration or even have the refugees repatriated.<sup>10</sup>

In any case, the magazine was one of the first publications to open the topic of German exile in Czechoslovakia to critical discussion. The ‘outer’ perspective of the local authors prevailed, along with manifestations of the principal sympathies. This was also confirmed in many articles, which soon directly or indirectly described the existential and social plight of the refugees.

In a July 1933 article entitled ‘Vademecum für den Verkehr mit Emigrantent’ (*Vademecum* [handbook] for dealing with emigrants’), an author writing under the pseudonym Alfeus<sup>11</sup> responds to the rising tensions among certain elements of Czechoslovak society vis-à-vis the influx of refugees. For anyone overcome by irrational feelings of anger or annoyance upon meeting an émigré in the street, he recommends making a conscious effort to imagine elementary scenes from the émigré’s life. By temporarily transforming your ‘settled self’ into a ‘nomadic self’, he argues, it should be possible to ‘take a headlong leap from the solid battlement of your calm, safe, bourgeois existence into chaos’ (W 1933, 14: 14) consisting in various persecutions (including a horde of SA-men ransacking your apartment), followed by an insecure existence in exile, and leading eventually to the total loss of identity — the moment when you no longer recognise your own face. The irritable or even hostile atmosphere

<sup>10</sup> For the repatriation of the refugees, see Čapková — Frankl (2012, pp. 62–71).

<sup>11</sup> Alfeus published numerous commentaries in the magazine, as early as 1928, on the political situation in Germany and Czechoslovak-German relations, as well as social critique and literary topics. This pseudonym has not yet been reliably verified; most probably it was the aforementioned Alfred Fuchs (1892–1941), once a staunch supporter of the Czech Jewish movement, and one of the most prominent converts to Catholicism after 1921. He also contributed to *České slovo*, *Tribuna*, *Přítomnost* and other periodicals.

faced by émigrés is also mentioned in the article ‘Emigranten. Was uns eine Emigrantin schreibt’ (‘Emigrants: what one émigré writes to us’) signed F.M.,<sup>12</sup> consisting in a collage of interviews and statements allegedly overheard in the waiting room and dining room of one of Prague’s auxiliary committees.<sup>13</sup> All of them illustrate the existential plight faced by many émigrés, consisting especially in starvation and a basic unwillingness to accept the social role of the unprivileged (as a refugee), along with the tensions, frustrations, and passivity that result from these conditions. This is expressed with a certain irony by one unnamed young refugee:

*‘One should write a book’, a young émigré insisted to his neighbours at the table, ‘the title: “How Should One Behave as an Émigré?” Point one: be modest, but not humble; point two: be cheerful, but not exuberant; point three: dress neither shabbily nor well. Who thinks this book should be written?’ He meets the laughter of a few with satisfaction, calling out: ‘Vote!’ And, when nobody answers: ‘As I always say, émigrés don’t have the slightest sense of initiative.’ (W 1933, 14: 14)*

The discussion on emigration in *Die Wahrheit* was carried out predominantly by émigrés who had settled in France and other countries rather than those who ended up in Bohemia. Just as with other social topics in previous years, *Die Wahrheit* tried to present the views of its foreign correspondents. The second issue of August contained three such articles. Emil Julius Gumbel, a former professor of mathematical statistics from Heidelberg and long-term critic of the Nazi movement who had emigrated to Paris in 1932, contributed with his reflections on ‘Das Kernproblem der Emigration’ (‘The core problem of emigration’). Though he himself was from a prominent Jewish family in Württemberg, he draws attention to the fact that the totalitarian Nazi terror was not just a case of the consistent application of anti-Semitism, but a ‘struggle against the entire class of German workers and all liberal and humanistic traditions of the German culture’ (W 1933, 16: 3). Mere political protest and charitable assistance to German émigrés was not enough to defeat Nazism. It would be necessary to involve the émigrés directly in the ‘work’ of democratic countries, in order to return the benefits they enjoyed by emigrating.

In his article, Hans Wendt<sup>14</sup> focuses on a phenomena of the first stage of the Nazi regime: namely, the idea of ‘émigrés in Germany’ who moved from one part of the country to another to escape persecution or the threat of liquidation, and either anonymously or using counterfeit documents tried to overcome the existential crisis. Some, fleeing persecution for their political vocation, were able to continue with their work. According to Wendt, émigrés in Germany were in a more perilous situa-

12 The same initials were used in the *Prager Presse* by the literary critic Franz Meller.

13 *Die Wahrheit* paid attention to their work relatively often, especially to that of the Demokratische Flüchtlingsfürsorge established in March 1933 by Kurt Grossmann (cf. Becher 1992).

14 This was the pseudonym of the Dresden-based communist writer and musician Helmut Weiß (1913–2000), who by 1933 had succeeded in organising the smuggling of forbidden communist literature from Prague to Germany, but later fled to Russia, where he became the subject of Stalinist persecution and spent the years 1937–1947 in a gulag.



tion than their counterparts in Switzerland or Czechoslovakia, but they were in a better position to organise Germany's internal resistance against the Nazis:

*Eighty thousand people are stuck in concentration camps. Thousands somewhere abroad. The unnoticed third army, which is not written or talked about, should not be forgotten. When the big clean-up comes, the émigrés inside Germany will present Hitler with the bill. This bill is long* (W 1933, 16: 6).

Nazi totalitarianism, tragically, was exceedingly effective at eliminating these 'inner' émigrés, and domestic political resistance generally.<sup>15</sup> After the war, the term 'inner emigration' (*innere Emigration*) was immediately applicable to quite a different phenomenon: the attitude of writers who were critical of the regime but withdrawn from public life, or who skilfully camouflaged their criticism, including such figures as Frank Thieß and Walter von Molo. Paradoxically, it was due to the phenomenon of domestic emigration that the expatriates led by Thomas Mann would end up 'paying the bill' (cf. Weinberg 2020; Grosser 1963).

The French actor Charles Boyer,<sup>16</sup> Thomas Mann's favourite actor and friend, contributed to the magazine by collecting statements by German literati on their experiences as émigrés. In addition to the Mann brothers, Boyer quotes Lion Feuchtwanger and Arnold Zweig, emphasising their positive attitude to France as a country striving for peace. Such an attitude is the result of a clear distancing from Hitler, as well as efforts to overcome the German prejudice towards the French. Boyer apparently saw this as an inspiration for the strengthening of French-American ties and for the clarification of the relationship between American artists and politicians and the Third Reich: 'These are words which would not be unnecessary in the United States — or elsewhere in the world' (W 1933, 16: 6).

The varying political positions and social networks in which these authors moved provided the basis for the diversity of opinions with which *Die Wahrheit* prompted public debate on the topic of exile in Czechoslovakia in 1933. Even though left-wing and Zionist contributions prevailed, we will see how this underlying diversity gave rise to several fruitful polemics.

An apparent milestone in the public debate on German exile in Czechoslovakia in 1933 was the death of the philosopher and journalist Theodor Lessing after his assassination by two local Nazi sympathisers in Mariánské Lázně (cf. Čapková 2003). *Die Wahrheit*, for which Lessing was a regular contributor in the last months of his life, had published an essay by Lessing with the title 'Deutschland und seine Juden' ('Germany and its Jews') in July of that year. It was a Zionist's passionate confession

15 At the beginning of 1934, Julius Epstein in his article *Hoffnung auf Prosperität?* estimated that these 'domestic' émigrés (using the notion of 'innere Emigranten') in Germany numbered 100,000 (W 1934, 1: 5).

16 Charles Boyer (1899–1978) was involved in anti-Nazi journalism after Hitler's seizure of power in Germany, and especially promoted French-American rapprochement. He was awarded an Honorary Oscar Certificate for his involvement in 1943. He was in close contact with many German literati and shortly after the publication of the article in *Die Wahrheit*, he was cast as the lead role in Fritz Lang's first exile film, *Liliom* (1934).



of his affinity for Germany and German culture. The magazine mentioned Lessing's death and published his last text just two days after his passing, 2 September 1933, followed by a number of articles relating to him in subsequent issues. Kurt Gerte, in his emphatic article 'Mörder unter uns!' ('Murderers among us!'), appealed for a worldwide offensive against the Nazis, whose actions could no longer be seen as an internal sovereign state matter, but as an immediate threat: 'World, stand up ... Defend yourself, while there is still time. The plague is at your gates ... The Middle Ages are on the way ... the stakes are already burning ... Who will be next? Rise up, oh world! [...] Send them to hell! There is still time. Tomorrow may be too late' (W 1933, 20: 4). This warning against *realpolitik* cautiousness was in contrast to the dominant reaction to Lessing's murder in Czechoslovakia, which saw it rather as a reason (or perhaps as a pretext) for reducing support for German émigrés. With the approaching winter of 1933/34, which would bring further suffering to the émigrés, there were numerous invectives in the Czech press against keeping foreign citizens in a country whose economy had not yet recovered from a major crisis. At the session of the Foreign Committee in Parliament in November, Foreign Minister Eduard Beneš voiced his opposition to these sentiments, stating that the right of asylum was closely linked to the democratic order of a state whose founding was directly connected to the exile of T. G. Masaryk and others, and that Czechoslovakia would be praised in the future for the support it provided to political refugees (Beneš 1933, p. 2).

Despite its frequent criticisms of the slapdash manner in which the Czechoslovak state dealt with the refugees, *Die Wahrheit* also expressed its appreciation at moments for the state's openness and support. On 28 October 1933, it published an open letter by Grete Livius<sup>17</sup> to President Masaryk which thanks him, on behalf of some 1200 refugees living in Czechoslovakia, for providing safe haven. However, the text also expresses apprehension that matters could change at the demand of some members of the public and press:

*Let our expression of gratitude today be combined with the plea: permit us further to sojourn and to be active in this atmosphere — for the sake of mutual benefit and the mutual exchange of ideas — until once again, for us, too, the hour of return has come. Then we will not forget what the Czech people have done for us!* (W 1933, 27: 3)

However, the discourse on emigration that unfolded in the magazine did not only include commentaries, news, appeals, and expressions of gratitude concerning the real situation of the German émigrés in Czechoslovakia. It also offered various interpretive models and frameworks for the self-understanding of the exiles themselves.

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17 Despite every effort, the author was unable to determine the real identity of this apparent pseudonym. It is apparent that she lived in Berlin before her emigration. She published in *Die Wahrheit* in 1933–1934. Articles entitled *Wiedersehen mit einem reinrassigen Germanen* (W 1933, 13: 7–8), *Emigrant in Prag* (W 1933, 23: 6–7) and *Frau in der Emigration* (W 1933, 25: 10) are examples of her texts published before this letter of thanks.





## MODEL 1: HEINRICH HEINE

In an issue of *Die Wahrheit* dated 15 July featuring several articles on the topic of exile, the editorial board make a remarkable reference to Heinrich Heine as archetypal figure of the German literary exile. Under the title ‘Heine aus dem Exil’ (‘Heine from exile’) — the poet spent the last 25 years of his life as an expatriate in Paris — they quote a passage from Heine’s preface to the first volume of his collected texts, *Der Salon* (‘The salon’; 1834–1836):

*Love of freedom is a dungeon flower, and only in prison does one feel the value of freedom. Thus the German love of the fatherland arises only at the German border, particularly upon the sight from abroad of German misfortune* (W 1933, 14: 9).

As Dieter Schiller (1999) and Hartmut Steinecke (2008, pp. 45–68) have shown, for the literati and journalists in exile in 1933–1945, referring to Heine was a way of applying their own experience to a familiar pattern that made their situation meaningful. At the same time, Heine provided a link between the various exile streams, as he was recognised as an authority by both liberal and left-wing émigrés (Steinecke 2008, p. 46). Moreover, he offered not only an identifying connection with the broader canon of German culture, but also a concept of Germany not limited to the territory of the state. The passage quoted in *Die Wahrheit* is reminiscent of Heine’s well-known quote, ‘We ourselves are Germany’ (W 1933, 14: 9), which, in the context of the anti-Nazi exile, saw numerous variations, the most famous of which was articulated by Thomas Mann upon his arrival to New York on 21 February 1938: ‘Where I am, there is Germany’ (Boes 2019, p. 3). This thesis can therefore be found in Heine’s original version — applied for the first time, as far as the author is aware, to the context of the exile of the Third Reich by *Die Wahrheit*. The magazine would later publish a speech delivered by Max Brod at what was perhaps the most prominent meeting of exiles, the *Internationaler Schriftstellerkongreß zur Verteidigung der Kultur* (‘International Congress of Writers in Defence of Culture’; 21–25 June 1935 in Paris), where Brod characterised Heine as a figure of identification (Brod 1935). After all, the Heinrich Heine Prize, established two years later in Paris, was awarded until 1939 as the most prestigious literary award for German-language exile literature.

Heine, however, was also quoted as a voice warning of the inhospitable nature of exile, a sentiment that could be found in *Die Wahrheit* at a time when it was far from usual in the Czechoslovak press. On 1 August 1933, it published another passage from Heine’s *Salon*, namely from the text ‘Über die französische Bühne — Zweiter Brief’ (‘About the French stage — Second letter’):

*[...] it is precisely the secret curse of exile that we cannot really feel at ease in the atmosphere of foreign lands, that we always stand isolated with the native way of thinking and feeling we have brought with us [...], that we are continuously hurt by moral or rather immoral phenomena, the local population has long since been reconciled even with having lost, by force of habit, every sense for it, like for the natural phenomena of their country ... Alas, the mental climate abroad is as inhospitable for*

*us as the physical one; the latter is even easier to put up with, and, at the most, the body falls sick from it, not the soul!* (W 1933, 15: 14)

Georg Mannheimer, a regular contributor to *Die Wahrheit* and member of its editorial board since 1933, as one of its most influential associates, published an article at the beginning of November 1934 entitled 'Der Distanzdeutsche Heinrich Heine' ('The distant German Heinrich Heine'), in which he elaborates on the new monograph on Heine by Max Brod. In this work, he saw a literal (no longer only fictitious) depiction of the 'distant German' which, for the German-speaking Jews still not in exile, but in general, was developed by Brod in his novel *Die Frau, die nicht enttäuscht* ('The woman who does not disappoint'; 1933):

[...] one should read [in the Heine biography; Š. Z.] about this eternal conflict between mimicry and revolt, between the rule of intellect and the rule of force, between hope and disappointment, between attraction and repulsion, between Hellenism and barbarism — and then confront this demonstrable and proven fate of Heinrich Heine with the fate of any Jewish intellectual of our time! (W 1934, 44: 5)

Heine's fate is seen as tragic, i.e., from a perspective that does not question the primary concept of values — in Mannheimer's case, the values of Zionism, which articulates the substance and the general applicability of Heine's life story in the phrase 'People without a homeland' (W 13, 44: 5). Notwithstanding all of its tragic aspects, exile after 1933 becomes meaningful as a radically escalated confirmation of the general issue of diaspora Jewishness, the solution to which, according to Mannheimer, was to return to one's homeland.

## MODEL 2: THE BEST GERMANY

A different concept of the exile was formulated in the spring of 1934 by Heinrich Mann, who had previously written several exclusive articles for *Die Wahrheit*. In one commentary, Georg Mannheimer quoted his pamphlet *Der Sinn dieser Emigration* ('The meaning of this emigration'), describing it as an attempt to 'provide the incessantly rushed and internally so much divided German emigration with a clearly defined intellectual-historical and European road map' and recommended it to everyone 'still looking for another, better Germany' ('Das gute Buch'/'The good book'; W 1934, 17: 11). At that time Mann was striving to promote closer cooperation and connection amongst German émigrés in various countries, based on which a new conscience of their own character and mission was to emerge. In his text, published in *Die Wahrheit*, he begins by summarising his analysis of the Hitler regime as the rule of the 'inferiors', disguised in a doctrine of racial exclusiveness and leading the country to a new barbarism. His view centres on the rhetorical strategies of disguise, persuasion, and allusions to their own greatness, which was received favourably not only by part of German society (Mann believed that only 25% of Germans supported Hitler) but also from abroad. The task and purpose of the German exile, in his opinion, is to overcome desolation and achieve the joint realisation that:



*It is the voice of its people, who have become silent. And that's what it should be before the whole world. [...] emigration will insist that with it were and are the greatest Germans, and that means in unison: the best Germany. [...] It could not only teach others about Germany, it could also tell them a thing or two about the general deficiencies related to those of Germany. Emigration paid dearly to get to understand relations instead of isolated phenomena. It should, from its truly precious position, reveal and warn (W 1934, 17: 3ff.).*

Heinrich Mann's idea of the new spirit of emigration, which was to persuade the broad public about 'the best of Germany' was never fulfilled, even though the thesis of a 'different' or 'better' Germany became a frequent metaphor (cf. Grebing — Wickert 1994). Political differences and conflicts could not be overcome merely by many émigrés acting in the interest of their host states (which was especially prominent in the case of some who had settled in Moscow) but also due to the fact that the aforementioned experience of various groups tended to further diversify over time, rather than strengthening the values they held in common. One of the factors in this was Jewish identity.

### MODEL 3: POSITIVE NOMADISM

In August 1934, the Austrian writer Joseph Roth raised a debate in *Die Wahrheit* on Jewish identity in relation to exile. He had lived in Germany for 13 years, mostly in Berlin, but on the day of Hitler's appointment as Chancellor (30 January 1933) he had moved with his family to Paris. By 1934, he was writing feuilletons occasionally for the *Prager Tagblatt*, and for *Die Wahrheit's* last issue of August he submitted a controversial — and in many respects peculiar — essay with the title 'Der Segen des ewigen Juden' ('The blessing of the eternal Jew'). While not specifically opposing Heinrich Mann's conception of 'the best Germany', the essay decisively rejects the idea of a 'different' or 'better' Germany — especially for the Jews who had escaped it. He considers it generally futile to defend the German people of that time, arguing that 'Nazism is right in saying it is the only representative of the German people. It is certainly right at this hour. It may no longer be right tomorrow' (W 1934, 35: 4). Roth moreover considers the tendency on the part of German Jews in exile to depict a 'different' Germany, one that is still their rightful homeland, to be pathological. In reality, he argues, they are trying to 'excuse their homeland where they should denounce it in the most explicit terms', and this tendency, paradoxically, makes them the 'accomplices of Germany' (ibid.). The reason for the Jews' enduring allegiance lies in a tendency to assess nations according to their geniuses. The Jews are in fact people of the book: 'They also judge other nations by their books. They saw the Germans as the nation of Lessing, Herder, Goethe.' But they forgot that 'geniuses play almost the same role in Germany as the Jews' (ibid.). The legacy of the geniuses in Germany, however, survives in perverse banalities:

*[...] what, in Germany, has been kept 'most strongly alive' of Schiller as a whole is the Schiller collar, of Nietzsche the misunderstood and misused concept of*

*superhumanity, what has remained of Fichte is the father of gymnastics Jahn, [...] of the reformation the swastika. That's Germany (W 1934, 35: 5).*

According to Roth, the 'better' Germany is a fiction, and identification with Germany is therefore necessarily counter-productive for the Jews. In the countries that have provided them with a refuge, it may even give the impression of 'loyalty to murderers and thieves'. Zionism, on the other hand, offers no better solution, answering only to a temporary 'fashion' lasting one century. The desire to have one's own homeland, according to Roth, is not in accord with the Jews' missionary character ('to spread God's word'): 'This "homecoming" of the Jews may be even more of a tragedy than their dispersion' (W 1934, 35: 5). The solution is to adopt a seemingly less certain position 'between nations', which in fact means freedom. Exile and migration are thus viewed in a clearly positive light:

*Why is everybody so ashamed when accused of actually not having a fatherland? [...] And maybe this is also one of the reasons for anti-Semitism: the jealousy of the prisoners, who detest the free. [...] Legs and feet have been given to man by God, in order to wander the Earth, which is his. Wandering is not a curse but a blessing (W 1934, 35: 5).*

Roth's idea is certainly not as new or marginal as it might seem in the discourse on Jewish identity. In addition to Andreas Kilcher (2010, pp. 280–284), we find a similar perspective in the works of bibliographer and orientalist Moritz Steinschneider<sup>18</sup> who, in his essay 'Die hebräischen Übersetzungen des Mittelalters und die Juden als Dolmetscher' ('The Hebrew translations of the Middle Ages and the Jews as interpreters'; 1893) and in some of his previous writings, defined Jewish literature and culture as a transcultural phenomenon, shaped by the diaspora situation and movement between cultures: 'This passage through so many countries, languages, and matters is a peculiarity, which makes comprehension and evaluation particularly difficult' (Steinschneider 1850, pp. 357ff.). The cultural identity of the Jews therefore stems from the 'exchange and connection between the foreign and that which is perceived as inherited property' (Steinschneider 1893: XIII). It is from this concept that the *topos* of the Jewish community characterised by its multilingualism and special competence for translation and other forms of intermediation between cultures first developed. In 1936, for instance, Prague law historian Guido Kisch formulated his views along these lines in his 'Deutsche Literatur in hebräischer Uebersetzung' ('German literature in Hebrew translation'), without considering them to be in conflict with Zionism.<sup>19</sup>

18 Moritz Steinschneider (1816 Prostějov — 1907 Berlin) belonged to the broad stream of the so-called *Wissenschaft des Judentums*, and is considered the founder of Hebrew bibliography. In his polemic with Ernest Renan he considered to have coined the term 'anti-Semitism'.

19 'The basic attitude, always maintained by the Jewish people through the course of its historic development, to be respectful of knowledge and to despise ignorance, has, since antiquity, destined the Jews to act as cultural mediators in important areas of intellectual life.



In the case of Joseph Roth, this emphasis on the ‘blessing’ of (e)migration is related to a ‘poetics of exile’ (May 2013) that appears throughout his literary work, where the topic of home is always closely linked with exile, or else supplanted altogether by the topic of homelessness and nomadism (*Hotel Savoy*, 1924; *Die Flucht ohne Ende*, 1927; *Hiob*, 1930; *Tarabas*, 1934) and ‘hotel patriotism’ (*Hotelwelt*, 1929). In his famous essay ‘Juden auf Wanderschaft’ (‘The wandering Jews’; 1927, cf. Scheichl 2011) he not only defends Eastern European Jewish migrants against the contempt and stereotypical viewpoints of Western European Jews, but also draws attention to the danger of the Zionist migration to Palestine, namely that they will come to play the role of the colonial ‘Kulturträger’ vis-à-vis the Arabs. The thesis that Jews are not a nation but a supnation (*Übernation*) forms the basis of his arguments in his article ‘Betrachtung an der Klagemauer’ (‘Considerations concerning the Wailing Wall’), published in September 1929. Finally, in his article ‘Die Juden und die Nibelungen’ (‘The Jews and the Nibelungs’), dated July 1934, he criticises the affinity the Jews felt for German culture (and the anti-humanistic nature of German culture; for a comparison of the two texts, see Lunzer-Talos 2011). In his letter to Stefan Zweig of October 1938, he retrospectively applies the notion of positive homelessness to his own life: ‘I have never — even long before the catastrophe — been able to understand furniture or suchlike. I don’t give a damn about furniture. I hate houses’ (Roth 1970, p. 524). That nevertheless does not mean that the article ‘Der Segen des ewigen Juden’ would offer a solution or practical guidance for helping the Jews in emigration — it is apparently a consciously ‘prophetically’ acrimonious and provocative warning and judgment. Given his thorough knowledge of the fates of migrating Jews in recent decades, Roth must undoubtedly have been aware of the paradox posed by his opening thesis.

Responses to Roth’s provocative article were generally dismissive. Georg Mannheimer understood Roth’s idea as the imperative for Jews to take on the mission of cosmopolitanism at the moment it is losing ground throughout the world. He considers life in the diaspora to be a state of ‘permanent mental, spiritual and cultural distress’ (W 1934, 36: 6). While Roth refers to nationalist awareness as a ‘prison’, for Mannheimer, ‘prison’ was in fact the dispersion of the Jews:

*We return to the concept of humanity when we return to our own people [...] We do not see other people as prisoners, but as organically developed communities, who, like us, want to live and to realise themselves within the only higher form of organisation hitherto given to mankind: in a free national community on native soil. [...] And that’s why we — in contrast to Joseph Roth’s noble apology — do not perceive our wandering as a blessing, but as a curse (W 1934, 36: 6).*

Not all responses to Roth’s article, however, aimed to defend Zionism or any other form of Jewish national emancipation. Fritz Jelinek, a writer and entrepreneur from Brno, notes that Jewish émigrés referred to Germany not as a chimera but as a country in whose formation generations of their families had played an important role.

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These people, not gifted with a territory, but with the Holy Scriptures, which were before all others elevated to a “polyglot”, to multilingualism, have become the people of languages’ (Kisch 1936, p. 238).

Most of all, he points out, resentment of Jewish refugees was not determined by their identification with a 'different Germany' but by the anti-Semitism broadly present in all European states, especially in their bureaucratic institutions. In his article 'Der Segen des ewigen Juden am Ziel' ('The blessing of the eternal Jew at the finish line'), Paul Kohn also defends the affinity shared by German Jews for the culture in which they were raised, and at the same time finds no conflict between Zionism and the missionary aspect of Jewishness. He sees Zionism as a means of achieving equality and, moreover, finds Roth's views on the topic outrageous, in light of the forced migration of Jews throughout history:

*But where does anyone who is a free-thinker, democrat, Christian, human being, still dare to stand up and demand that the Jews continue to fulfil their mission in the existence they have been eking out for two thousand years? Have they not yet bled enough, not yet suffered enough? (W 1934, 37: 6)*

The Prague-based Zionist Michael Rosenbaum offers a similar depiction of the history of the diaspora as one of 'dispersion and abandonment' which is manifested by the 'race-shaming' contact between some nationalist-thinking German Jews and the Nazis.<sup>20</sup> He therefore considered 'the return home, purification and renewal' as a precondition for the fulfilment of the Jews' mission, which he, along with Martin Buber, sees in the synthesis of the religious and social aspect of 'the realisation of the Divine in man through the building of a community of true people' (W 1934, 38: 5).

The response written by the social democratic commentator and reviewer Felix Stössinger, who returned from Berlin to his native Prague at the beginning of 1934, is less polemical, though ultimately discordant. He enthusiastically agrees with Roth's view of the 'Germanised' Jews: 'Germanisation is the misfortune of the Jews' (W 1934, 38: 6). The Jews do not owe Germany anything with respect to culture — just the opposite, in fact. Stössinger does not consider Zionism comparable with the aggressive nationalisms of the new era:

*Through it, the Jews should not become a nation in the new, nefarious sense, but human beings. [...] That would lead to the supranational, whereas today scattered Jewry participates in as many nationalisms as there are nations with which it dwells. It is just because of the eternal wandering, that the blessing of real internationalism fails to materialise (W 1934, 38: 6).*

In *Die Wahrheit's* first issue of October 1934, Joseph Roth gave his 'final word' on the whole discussion, 'Jedermann ohne Paß' ('Anyone without a passport'). Here he emphasises the special situation and history of the Jews in Germany who, unlike Jews living elsewhere, never received anything from the host nation. Indeed, they had only obtained citizens' equality in Germany thanks to Napoleon. They are therefore not obliged to show any gratitude to the Germans, which he depicts as a nation character-

<sup>20</sup> *Verband nationaldeutscher Juden*, led by Max Naumann, operated in Germany until 1935. In February 1933 it welcomed Adolf Hitler's accession to power, declaring loyalty to the new regime.



ised by their peculiar ‘roughness, lowness, tastelessness, and ungodliness’ (W 1934, 40: 3). Roth also refines, or in fact corrects, his earlier attitude regarding Zionism; it is not Zionism he is against so much as the tragic self-constraint of the Jews, forced by circumstance into ‘nation’ and ‘homeland’:

*I do not want any fatherlands at all. I do not want to see anything on this Earth other than a single ‘fatherland’ [...] in which everybody, without a passport, without a name, can wander around or stay, just as he likes or as suits his nature* (W 1934, 40: 4).

He points out, however, that many Jews do not follow political Zionism — for them, it does not therefore represent the true ‘solution to the Jewish question’ (ibid.), and neither does the (restricted) assimilation into other national cultures.

The discussion that followed Roth’s article did not seem to indicate any inclination on the part of the others involved to embrace the idea of a Jewish nation, in the sense of modern nationalism. Especially with Stössinger, Rosenbaum, and Kohn, there is an apparent effort to defend Zionism as a movement whose objectives go beyond, or take a direction other than, the definition and autonomous administration of a geographic territory on the part of a national collective. Nor do their responses present a favourable view of Zionism in the environment of the Czech-German and exiled Jewish intelligentsia during the first years of Hitler’s Germany.<sup>21</sup> Such a view seems to be absent altogether in *Die Wahrheit*. This assessment is reinforced by an editorial comment appended to Roth’s final word, which makes no mention of Zionism. Rather, while showing respect to the author, it carefully distances itself from the ‘general condemnation of the German people’ and expresses a conviction that ‘there are also millions of Germans today not tainted by the Prussian-Lutheran-Hitlerian poison’ (W 1934, 40: 4).

## **BRUCKNER’S *DIE RASSEN* (‘THE RACES’) AS AN INDICATOR OF THE SITUATION WITH EXILE LITERATURE IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA**

In the middle of 1933, the character of *Die Wahrheit*’s literary and theatre review content changed. Regular contributors to the critical section *Aus Welt und Buch*, Paul Lepin and Hans Klaus,<sup>22</sup> gradually fell silent, and reviews by the émigré Justin Steinfeld began to appear in a new section under the rubric *Das Theater hat das Wort*. Mean-

<sup>21</sup> Disregarding the fact that Mannheimer, for instance, was already involved in promoting Zionism before World War I (cf. Zbytovský 2019b, pp. 227–240).

<sup>22</sup> In October 1933 Hans Klaus referred to Werfel’s reading of his newly issued novel *Die vierzig Tage des Musa Dagh*, held in Prague’s German cultural association, Urania. Concerning the book, he appreciated the current elaboration on ‘the racial question in all its aberrations [...], this *dernier cri* of dying cultures’ (W 1933, 31: 14), and on the contrary criticised many of Urania’s members who were allegedly ‘saving their strength’ for the next planned appearance of Hans Reimann (who had been criticised for his pragmatic approach to the Nazi regime) and did not come to Werfel’s reading.

while, prose was featured only incidentally, and later appeared in a new section, *Das gute Buch*.<sup>23</sup> The theatre section not only presented the views of émigré or politically involved theatre; it also covered, with some exceptions, what was happening in Prague's German theatres and important events in Czech theatres.<sup>24</sup>

Steinfeld repeatedly wrote about the difficulties faced by German theatres in Prague when mounting production of anti-Hitler plays. What he and others stressed in the magazine, looking at that aspect and the overall situation of German theatre in Czechoslovakia, is best illustrated by a discussion which he opened in early March 1934. Under the title 'Deutsches Theater und Deutsche Gesandtschaft' ('German theatre and Germany's diplomatic mission'), Steinfeld at first describes the situation of German dramatic art in Prague:

*Regardless of the extent to which it has been possible, and taking into account various factors of dependency, to preserve a safe refuge [Zufluchtstätte] of freedom for the German theatrical arts there is still the possibility here to cultivate an art which does not fall under the yoke and bridle of theories hostile to the stage and practices diametrically opposed to art (W 1934, 9: 10).*

The initial perspective is therefore fully based on exile ('safe refuge'), even while it does not relate to the individuals but to dramatic art itself. But Steinfeld's claims, according to the author himself, were never wholly fulfilled, if only for the fact that live theatre is never quite free from societal 'trends'. In the case of the Neues Deutsches Theater (New German Theater), however, he describes a situation — only 'slightly exaggerated' — in which the far from perfect dramaturgy furnished by its management was supplemented with 'auxiliary dramaturgy' by the German Embassy in Prague. He claims that public, as well as unofficial, pressure, had brought about increasingly 'Goebbels-like measures' (*ibid.*), an allegation he substantiates with reference to three recent events. The first was the replacement of a director who was a citizen of the German Reich and had directed a play by an unnamed German author who refused to toe the line. The director allegedly refused to direct the play, stating that he would lose the opportunity to work in Germany (it was in fact Kästner's

23 What is remarkable is Georg Mannheimer's highly positive review of *Der Teufel wildert*, a novel by the well-known Sudeten writer Hans Watzlik. Mannheimer presented it as a proof that 'not everything appearing in publishing houses of the Third Reich is regime-conformist twaddle' (W 1933, 32: 6). He appreciated the Šumava patriot as an excellent writer, able to depict a suggestive atmosphere. However, the novel is sometimes referred to as one of the most farcical books by an author who, in 1931, had received the Czechoslovak state award, but was shortly after to become an official of the Sudeten German Party and later the regional representative of the NSDAP.

24 In November 1933, Julius Mader praised 'the unique spectacle for eyes and ears by the literary clowns', meaning Jiří Voskovec and Jan Werich, and the book issue of the play entitled *The Donkey and His Shadow*, performed by their *Osvobozené divadlo*, and their ability to 'crack their whip over the cruellest fooleries of our days' (W 1933, 29: 13). In dignified remembrance of 50 years of the Czech National Theatre (W 1933, 31: 11–12), he also drew attention to the dramaturgical narrow-mindedness of the mainstream Czech theatre scene and the boycott which was only replaced with a meagre involvement of German drama.





*Pünktchen und Anton*, performed in the weeks before Christmas 1933 under the direction of the Prague German Hanuš/Hans Burger; the premiere was covered by Steinfeld; see W 1933, 36: 13ff., W 1934, 5: 14). The second event happened during a production of Nestroy's farce *Zu ebener Erde und erster Stock* ('On the ground floor and first floor'), to which the director Julius Gellner added several new lines. The actor Hans Götz disagreed with them and had the Embassy issue a statement confirming that he had been compelled to deliver a line about how easily red changes to brown.

The most important case, mentioned by Steinfeld in greater detail, concerned the anti-fascist play *Die Rassen* by the Austrian-German playwright of Jewish origin, Ferdinand Bruckner (born Theodor Tagger). Not long after Hitler seized power, Bruckner left Berlin to take up residence in Paris, and began writing *Die Rassen*, a play unveiling the mechanisms of the Nazis' early persecution of Jews, leading many (even well-educated) people to view the world through the lens of the Nazi racial formula. The play was accepted for the repertory of the Neues Deutsches Theater,<sup>25</sup> only to be withdrawn after a few rehearsals in February. In his article, Steinfeld attributes cancellation of *Die Rassen* to pressure exerted by the German Embassy, which informally prohibited actors with German citizenship from performing in Bruckner's play. Steinfeld adds, 'we will not tolerate any tampering with the repertoire from the side of brown houses' (W 1934, 9: 11), and appeals to the theatre's artistic management subsidised by the Czechoslovak state to allow artists who 'believe they must prioritise nationalistic and fascist considerations over artistic ones' to act elsewhere (meant: in the Third Reich) where 'conditions so barbaric towards art prevail' (ibid.). In response to Steinfeld, Fritz Fleischer published an article in *Die Wahrheit* on 17 March saying that 'Prague today represents the primary German free and liberal theatre stage and, especially in a democratic state like the Czechoslovak Republic, appears also to have the vocation to fulfil a democratic, liberal cultural mission' (W 1934, 11: 8). He asks why the attitudes concerning the Third Reich are different in Prague than those in Zurich, where an intense official protest against the premiere was made by the local German Consul General, yet the play was performed without changes and was a success.

The topic raised by Steinfeld was reintroduced in mid-March by an editorial in the Prague German-language newspaper *Sozialdemokrat*, using the same arguments. Moreover, the topic made its way into the Czech press, and was further developed by a contributor to the Czech revue *Přítomnost* under the pseudonym Visitor. In his look back at the history of German theatre in Prague, the author is generally critical of the predecessors of Paul Eger, now the director, for having paid so little attention to Czech drama as well as plays by German authors from Czechoslovakia.<sup>26</sup> After Eger came to office in 1932, however, this ceased completely, which the author ascribed to

25 Bruckner had originally planned concurrent premieres in Zurich, Prague, and Vienna, but eventually it was performed on 30 November 1933 only in the Schauspielhaus in Zurich. The playwright was also in contact with Czech actors, but Frantisek Goetz, dramaturge at the National Theatre, rejected the play, referring to its political explosiveness and likely problems with state censorship (Schneider 1999, p. 425).

26 It needs to be said that both Mader's aforementioned view concerning the repertory of the Czech National Theatre and this assessment of repertories of German theatres in Prague were justified.

a lack of courage and to a conventional approach to the repertory. On the contrary, he argues, theatre should in fact be 'a scene of home culture' (Visitor 1934a, p. 206) of German and Czech provenance, 'and primarily the scene of democratic orientation, regardless of whether or not it upsets Dr. Goebbels' (ibid.).

Eger's response to this criticism was published on 11 April in *Přítomnost* (Eger 1934), drawing attention to the recent performances of operas by Jaroslav Křička and Hans Krása, the planned staging of dramas by Robert Saudek and Max Brod, and collaboration with the opera of the Czech National Theatre. He also questions the political reasons for changing the director of Kästner's play, as Friedrich Hölzlin, who had been asked to direct the play, stated no such reasons and, most importantly, played the main double role in the play. As regards the case of Bruckner's *Die Rassen*, Eger gives his own account of the circumstances which led to the withdrawal of the play: namely that consideration for the actors' possible engagements in Germany resulted from the uncertainty of state subsidies, which the land administration cut by more than half for 1934, while those from the state were still not at all certain in April. The last straw was the requirement from the Prague Police that the play be staged with the full cast before a commission, which would decide whether it would be permissible or not. The theatre obviously could not take the risk of preparing the play in its entirety only to see it withdrawn.

Eger sent a similar response to *Die Wahrheit*, as Steinfeld mentions in the theatre section on 28 March, interpreting it in a rather unconventional manner: 'The fact that the management of a Prague theatre virtually wants to hold the aegis over a Nazi embassy could easily lead to derailment' (W 1934, 12–13: 18). A letter from a reader signed R.G. in the same issue suggests that actors-émigrés be hired instead of those who, considering their possible engagements in the Reich, might influence the theatre's repertory.

Eger's letter in *Přítomnost* was accompanied by a response from Visitor, who vehemently protests against the reduction of the land and state subsidies, and supplementing his previous objections with the precise numbers on Czechoslovak nationals and foreigners in the opera and drama ensembles of the Neues Deutsches Theater. The suggestive subheading 'Ensemble Made Up of 75.5% Foreigners' indicates a shift towards the protectionist argumentation used by the Czech nationalist press of the time (which *Přítomnost* undoubtedly did not belong to) to strengthen the impression that the local labour market was threatened. According to Visitor, foreigners (half of which were German citizens) were given precedence over Czechoslovak artists 'of the same value'. His main standpoint was that, as early as 1918, the management of the German Theatre had long failed to fulfil its 'obligation to the country and state' (Visitor 1934b, p. 240), meaning that this obligation was systematically left out of the repertory as well. It logically followed that neither the people nor the state showed an interest in theatre that the theatre deserved.

Eger's concerns regarding the possible ban were subsequently confirmed with the only performance of Bruckner's play in Czechoslovakia, namely at the *Jung-jüdische Bühne* in Brno on 12 May 1934, which was banned immediately after the premiere (Schneider 2005, p. 98). The circumstances of the ban were described in greater detail by Friedrich Hofreiter (probably a pseudonym) in *Die Wahrheit*. An employee of the nearby German consulate in Brno visited the première, claims Hofreiter, and subse-





quently filed a protest with the Brno Police headquarters based on his report, stating that the play presented Jews as a distinguished race and Germans as inferior, thereby violating friendly relations between Czechoslovakia and Germany. That the Czechoslovak police chose to ban the play is contrasted by Hofreiter to the actions of their Swiss counterparts when faced with similar protests filed by the consul in Zurich, and to the situation in Paris, where no protest was filed and where doing so would be ineffective anyway. Hofreiter's report thus highlights the unwillingness or inability of the Czechoslovak state institutions to resist similar pressure.

At the beginning of June, with a view to the end of the theatre season, Steinfeld not only severely criticises the penultimate première of the German Theatre — the comic opera *Terzett zu viert* by Leo Lenze ('as the temperature rises the quality of theatre falls') — but also offers a retrospective view of the discussion on Bruckner's *Die Rassen* and similar polemics:

*Theatre must be preserved for the sake of art. Theatre must help art make it through a blatantly materialistic age to reach an age more favourable to art. If you see theatre as a thing in itself and art as something that serves as a backdrop for that thing in itself, then it goes wrong. That's confirmed now. The German theatre in Prague, instead of giving SOS signals from the doldrums, would have to demonstrate its necessity and indispensability by an unusual act. Alarm! Alarm! Culture is in danger!*  
(W 1934, 22: 10)

Judging by the theatre reviews in subsequent volumes of the magazine, from the point of view of *Die Wahrheit*, the Neues Deutsches Theater only partially fulfilled these requirements, and even more frequent appearances by German actor-émigrés in the following years could not make up for its failure (Schneider 1996, p. 50). Far greater appreciation was shown for the productions put on by theatre group *Studio 1934* — established in spring 1934 by the émigrés Hedda Zinner and Fritz Erpenbeck drawing inspiration from the theatre techniques of Emil František Burian's Czech theatre *D 34* — and for the guest performances of Erika Mann's revue *Die Pfeffermühle*.

## CONCLUSION

We are far from knowing which opinions and commentaries expressed in the debates outlined here are more or less in line with the actual situation as it was faced by various demographics and institutions: i.e. the position of émigrés in the Czechoslovakia and elsewhere in Europe, the specific situation of Jewish refugees and their concept of themselves, the attitudes of the Czechoslovak state, and that of diplomatic and cultural institutions in Czechoslovakia towards émigrés and their anti-Nazi creative work. However, we may claim with certainty that *Die Wahrheit* had a considerable influence on the formulation and intermediation of the primary interpretational patterns that helped one to understand the meaning and purpose of exile artists as individual characters, and of exile as a whole (taking 'Heine', 'the best of Germany', and nomadism as examples). At the same time the magazine helped to map out and

describe the circumstances which in Czechoslovakia influenced (or in fact distorted or prevented, as was the case with Bruckner's *Die Rassen*) the way in which exile literature and especially drama reached their audience. As regards the polemic on the dramaturgy of the Neues Deutsches Theater, and the allegations that it was expected to express — or actually expressed — ideas formulated by representatives of Nazi Germany, we find that the views circulated by *Die Wahrheit* helped the public reflect on a comprehensive array of contexts in which these cultural forms existed, thereby uncovering the mechanisms of the 'hybrid' pressure from Germany on politically relevant culture in Czechoslovakia. Even though in many cases *Die Wahrheit* criticised the Czechoslovak government's policy towards the refugees and the relevant state legislation, the main appeal, in the case of Bruckner's play, was aimed at the Neues Deutsches Theater as the key German cultural institution in Czechoslovakia. Its aim was to clarify and strengthen the relationship to the democratic state and the new definition of its own role towards Germany as a great cultural and political entity, and, primarily, to the new definition of its own artistic identity in courageous creative endeavours.

During the first half of 1935, number of articles on the situation of émigrés and exile artists in *Die Wahrheit* decreased, and they appeared only rather scarcely later (there were numerous articles, however, on the topic of the unequal treatment of émigrés seen as prominent, or inconvenient in other respects).<sup>27</sup> The topic thus shifted toward the implicit sphere of the problematic context, which *Die Wahrheit* punctually covered in relationship to specific events. It is possible that the growing phenomenon of politically and existentially motivated emigration from Germany played a role in this, as did the increasing diversity, which gradually made it impossible to grasp exile and exile literature as a whole.

Translated by Hynek Zlatník and Steve Coleman.

<sup>27</sup> In 1935, in addition to articles on Masaryk in exile (Lev Sychrava: T. G. Masaryk als Emigrant [W 1935, 7: 4]) and the special treatment given to prominent émigrés (Sander, Martin-Christian: Prominente Emigranten [W 1935, 14: 9]), a controversy was posted between Felix Langer and Justin Steinfeld about the change in the public's view of emigrants (Langer, Felix: Der entwertete Emigrant [W 1935, 8: 9]; Steinfeld, Justin: Der 'entwertete' Emigrant [W 1935, 9: 9f.]). In the spring of 1937, Manfred Georg warned against the overweening self-esteem of exile literature (Georg, Manfred, 'Von der Aufgabe deutscher Literatur in der Emigration' [W 1937, 11: 8]; on Georg's life and activities in exile, cf. Borrmann 2014).



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