

François Guesnet
 University College London
 f.guesnet@ucl.ac.uk

The Narcissism of Small Differences? Reflections on Jewish Studies and Jewish Area Studies. The case of radical anti-Jewish attitudes in Poland and Romania in the early 19th c.

I understand the task of this contribution to inquire where, in the field of Jewish Studies, new areas of investigation might be identified. I will focus on the area of Jewish-non-Jewish relations in the transition from the old regime to the 19th century, and contend that by taking the eastern European context seriously, by looking more closely at the encounter between Jews and non-Jews in Poland, and adding a comparative consideration of the Romanian case, we may gain important insights into the shifting ideas about inter-ethnic relations in this period in general, and about radical anti-Jewish attitudes, more specifically.¹ I hope to demonstrate that this perspective holds considerable potential in re-assessing the periodization of Jew-hatred and antisemitism in the different European regions.² Rather than assume a simple parallelism of ideological and political trends, such a perspective proposes to take seriously the different experience of inter-ethnic cohabitation in these regions. It is my hypothesis that a thread of radical anti-Jewish policy, and of radical intellectual challenges to the status quo of inter-ethnic cohabitation, emerged in eastern central and eastern Europe before the central European antisemitic movement in the narrower meaning of the term, i.e. a movement which assumed biological, essential differences between human races and the need to defend those races which were superior, but still threatened by the presence of Jewish presence.

¹ The abstract of this contribution proposed to also include Hungary. The ongoing limitations in library access due to the pandemic made it impossible to integrate this perspective.

² The existing research literature on anti-Jewish attitudes in Poland and Romania usually, and with good reason, focuses on the 2nd half of the 19th c and later periods. The earlier decades of the century are usually covered in summary assessments, at times emphasising that more could be said, see e.g. Andrzej Żbikowski: *Dzieje Żydów w Polsce. Ideologia antysemityczna, 1848-1914. Wybór tekstów źródłowych* (Warszawa: Żydowski Instytut Historyczny, 1994), 17 or more recently Maciej Moszyński, *Antysemityzm w Królestwie Polskim. Narodziny nowoczesnej ideologii antyżydowskiej 1864-1914* (Poznań, Instytut Historii UAM, 2017). In contrast, Alina Cała emphasises the significant impact of romantic thinking of exclusionary discourses, a perspective this paper supports as well, Alina Cała: *Jew. The Eternal Enemy? The History of Antisemitism in Poland* (Berlin: Peter Lang Verlag, 2018, *Polish Żyd - wróg odwieczny?* Warsaw 2012), 50.

This perspective does is less a challenge to - outstanding - earlier scholarship which, for example, asked 'when nationalism began to hate', and quite rightfully argued that until the 2nd half of the 19th c, an inclusive narrative dominated the political discourse e.g. in Poland, or, to use the Gramscian term, was 'culturally hegemonic'.³ It rather asks about the non-hegemonic discourse which would formulate radical positions in the sense of denying the right of Jews to exist in regions where they had lived and formed part of the social, economic and political fabric since literally hundreds of years. It furthermore proposes to understand such positions not as left-overs of a bygone feudal era, but as the result of forward-thinking, political conceptualisations, inspired by a new ideas about state and society, and aiming at implementing new policies by new means.⁴ It argues that an important element of this new, radical political thinking was inspired by romantic ideas of the nation as an organic whole, with the state as an instrument to implement the aspirations of this nation. Representatives of such radical positions derived political legitimacy from the purported needs of this nation. For the purpose of this paper, I define challenges to the legitimacy of the very presence of Jews in a given territory as a marker of radicalism, and requests of expulsions, or the comprehensive removal of the Jewish populace as an objective of administrative measures, as marker of such political radicalism. I will argue in conclusion that such positions came to the fore even under the most extreme of circumstances, and were formulated as political proposals during World War Two and the Holocaust, and after.

1) Early 19th c Polish debates

In contrast to central or western Europe, wholesale expulsions of Jews were comparatively rare occurrences in the early modern period in eastern central Europe. Around 1800, around ninety Polish towns were entitled to *de jure* refuse Jews the right to settle on the basis of

³ Brian Porter: *When Nationalism Began to Hate. Imagining Modern Politics in Nineteenth-Century Poland* (New York, Oxford: Oxford UP, 2000), 15-42.

⁴ I have argued elsewhere that the expulsions of the Crypto-Protestants from Salzburg in 1732 and of the Jews from Prague in 1744 are examples of such new, radical policies based on an absolutist idea of the prerogatives of the state - these might be considered precursors of the positions this paper discusses, cf. F.Guesnet: "Negotiating Under Duress: The Expulsion of Salzburg Protestants (1732) and the Jews of Prague (1744)," in idem, Cécile Laborde, Lois Lee (eds.): *Negotiating Religion. Cross-disciplinary perspectives* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2017).

privileges *de non tolerandis Judaeis*, these were however difficult to implement on the ground. Jews would either reside in the so-called *jurydiki* of the nobility, spaces exempt from municipal jurisdiction, or they would establish communities in suburban territory. In the 17th c., and especially after refugees from those territories affected by the Cossack Uprising of 1648 would escape to western parts of the Commonwealth (and further), the nobility would on a regular basis request the expulsion of Jews from specific territories.⁵ Wholesale expulsions of Jews were most often requested by the nobility at the Mazovian dietines for the territory of the duchy. As Adam Kaźmierczyk observed, the radicalism of these requests has to be gauged in relation to the small nobility's recognition of its own inability to implement these resolutions, and probably had above all 'the aim to extort higher tax payments'.⁶

After the partitions, the nobility viewed the presence of the Jews much more critically, not in the least due to the dramatic shifts in the political and socio-economic position of this constituency. As has been argued by J. Hensel, A. Eisenbach and others, especially the small nobility now found itself competing with their former Jewish leaseholders for income from their rural estates, and grew fond of the idea of restricting Jewish residence and economic endeavours.⁷ The consequence were frequent calls for restricting Jewish residence in rural areas, and calls for expulsions from such areas, as well as from market places.⁸ These calls were particularly frequent in the first years after the Congress of Vienna, the period after Napoleon's defeat when parts of the Polish elites considered tsar Alexander I as legitimate ruler in the Polish lands, and "assumed the permanency of constitutionalism" and were

⁵ Adam Kaźmierczyk, 'Problem ekspulsji Żydów w uchwałach sejmikowych w 2. połowie XVII wieku', in: K. Matwijowski (ed.): *Z historii ludności żydowskiej w Polsce i na Śląsku* (Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego, 1994), 63-70.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 69.

⁷ Cf. Artur Eisenbach, *Wielka Emigracja wobec kwestji żydowskiej, 1832-1849* (Warszawa: PWN, 1976), 50-95; Jürgen Hensel, *Polnische Adelsnation und jüdische Vermittler, 1815-1830* (=Forschungen zur Osteuropäischen Geschichte 31 (1983)); Glenn Dynner, *Yankel's Tavern: Jews, Liquor, and Life in the Kingdom of Poland* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2014), has offered evidence of some persistent features of the liquor-producing and -selling alliance between nobility and Jews into the 19th c., see however also Eli Lederhendler, "Classless: on the social status of Jews in Russia and Eastern Europe in the Late Nineteenth Century," in: *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 50 (2008) 2, 509-534.

⁸ Eisenbach, *Wielka Emigracja*, 56-58.

hopeful for a unification of the Kingdom of Poland with Lithuanian lands, now part of the new Russian western provinces.⁹

Among the more liberal voices was Wincenty Krasiński (1782-1858), father of the famous author Zygmunt Krasiński.¹⁰ In his 'Aperçu sur les Juifs', Wincenty Krasiński proposes a sort of indigenisation of the Jews of Poland, a legal status equal to other Polish subjects, the freedom to pursue productive livelihoods with the notable exception of the production and sale of alcohol and tavern-keeping. His proposals to restrict rabbinical adjudication were in line with the policies of all three partitioning powers in the Polish lands. The most outlandish claim in this pamphlet was the assumption that "all the Jews in the former Polish lands are subjects of one chief, who in turn is dependent of the supreme head, residing in Asia, and whose title is 'prince of slavery'".¹¹ Krasiński's overall constructive approach seems all the more significant as he functioned as the marshal of Senate of the first Sejm of the Kingdom of Poland in 1818, addressing tsar Alexander I. in this role.¹²

A remarkable rebuttal of this overall conciliatory voice was published anonymously as 'A Way for the Jews, Or, Sure Methods to Make Honest People and Good Citizens of Them' that same year, and it deserves a closer look.¹³ Taking aim at the 'Aperçu sur les Juifs', this pamphlet defined the Jews as a weight on the country and its people. It challenged the assumptions about the chances of cultural reform or changes to the exterior appearances of the Jews. "Shaved or not shaved, any government which aims at making of them something else than Jews, will face difficulties impossible to overcome." The author suggests that there is only one way

⁹ Piotr Wandycz, *The Lands of Partitioned Poland, 1795-1918* (Seattle, Wash., London: University of Washington Press, 1974, 3d ed. 1993), 75-91, especially 82-87.

¹⁰ Cała, *Wróg odwieczny?*, 226-227.

¹¹ *Aperçu sur les Juifs de Pologne par un officier Général polonais, Nonce à la Diète*. Paris: Gide fils, 1818, 28. Available on Polona.pl.

¹² *Mowa miana przy odebraniu łaski marszałkowskiej w izbie senatorskiej 27 Marca 1818*. Available on Polona.pl.

¹³ *Sposób na Żydów, czyli środki niezawodne zrobienia z nich ludzi uczciwych i dobrych obywateli*, Warszawa 1818; see also Cała, *Wróg odwieczny?*, 227. The author, Gerard Maurycy Witowski (1787-1837) would publish only a small number of ephemera beyond this pamphlet.

to liberate us from this detrimental and ever growing influence of the Jews. The answer: The same which in natural [i.e.: medical, FG] surgery is applied to diseased extremities which cannot be healed, but used for so to speak political surgery - namely *separation* [in italics in the original, Pol. *odosóbenie*].¹⁴

The experience of eight centuries, and more specifically the past fifty years – i.e. the period since the beginning of the partitions of Poland – had taught the futility of attempts to reform, hence the question arose how the well-being of three million Christian Poles, guaranteed by the constitution of the Kingdom of Poland, would be preserved. Should it be sacrificed for the well-being of three-hundred thousand Jews?, the author asks, rhetorically.

The separation, in order to achieve the proposed objective, should end any physical contact [Pol. *przerwać wszelki wewnętrzny związek*] between the two nations, and be implemented by the means of *emigration* (11) [italics in the original].

The process of relocation which the author describes in the following pages corresponds to mass deportation for which the Jews were supposed to pay themselves: Jews would have to hand over their assets to the government, which in turn would ensure the passage of the Jews and their relocation in the depths of the Russian Empire, where they would found a *gubernia*, or province of their own (12).¹⁵ Destitute Jews would have to borrow the necessary funds for their own deportation from wealthier co-religionists (15). In the following, the author continues to invoke metaphores equating the nation with a body to describe the consequences of these measures:

The Kingdom of Poland, as all bodies which undergo a violent operation, would first be weakened and ill. Smaller villages may well disappear right away from the estates. The entire small trade would disappear for some time. The treasury would loose around ten per cent of contributors, and the country a significant share of its

¹⁴ Ibid., 9-10. In the following, references to page numbers in the pamphlet are added in parenthesis.

¹⁵ Cała, *Wróg odwieczny?*, 227, reminds her readers that a very similar project was proposed in 1934 by the *Obóz Narodowy-Radykalny* (ONR, or National-Radical Camp, a Polish fascist party). This obviously also resonates with the deportation of Jews during the Holocaust funded in part by assets extorted from disenfranchised Jews under Nazi rule in Germany and in occupied Europe ahead of their deportation and murder.

financial assets. But how much happier would the country be, having gotten rid forever of the cancer which relentlessly exhausted its chest! The first consequence of this *amputation* [italics in the original] would be a growth in population (18).

The author concluded his call for a deportation of the entire Jewish population in the Polish lands with further descriptions of the happy state the country would be in, and emphasised that the matter was of the highest relevance, against using a corporeal metaphor: “The Jewish issue is so important, that its relevance surpasses all other principal national matters, as it touches upon the very heart of the nation (21).”¹⁶

The radicalism of this ‘Sposób na Żydów’ was challenged by another anonymous pamphlet ‘A Voice of the Israelites’.¹⁷ Its author, Karol Surowiecki (1750-1824), a conservative Catholic author hiding behind an alleged Jewish identity (which in itself is quite remarkable), identified Witowski's project to remove the Jews from the Polish lands as a product of a misled enlightenment. Surowiecki emphasised the rootedness of the Jews in Poland: “Who has eyes to see will recognise that a Jew born in Poland is a Jew, just as a Jew born in Germany is German, in Italy is Italian, and in France is French”.¹⁸ In a critique of this challenge to Witowski's deportation phantasia, Stanisław Potocki agreed with Surowiecki's overall assessment concerning the Jews' moral depravity and their overall negative impact, but also pointed to their essential role in trade, and that they would not be easily replaced.¹⁹ It is noteworthy in the context of our argument that the author identified not their religion, but “apalling and antisocial prejudices” [Pol. *okropne i antysocyalne przesądy*] of the Jews as reason why their presence was such an issue. He took up the unusual notion of “antisocial” characteristics of the Jews again annex entitled “Proof of the antisocial content of Jewish writings” [Pol. *Dowody antysocyalnej nauki ksiąg żydowskich*].

These and many other views about the status of the Jews in the new, emerging Polish state under Russian control were voiced in the early years of the Kingdom of Poland. Most would agree on several core problems due to the Jews' presence, such as their detrimental

¹⁶ “Materya żydów jest tak dalece ważna, że przechodzi ważnością swoją naykardynalniejsze prawa krajowe, bo ona godzi prosto do serca narodu.”

¹⁷ *Głos ludu izraelskiego*, Warsaw 1818. Available on Polona.pl.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 22.

¹⁹ Stanisław Potocki, *Żyd nie Żyd*. no year, 1818 or 1819 (see reference to publication of Oct 1818, p 20), 16, annex 32 ff. Available on Polona.pl.

economic role, their separateness, their too far-reaching autonomy, their animosity towards Christians, and their overall moral depravity.²⁰ A leading figure such as Andrzej Zamoyski would note in a diary in 1834 that the “deeply rooted association of the Jews should cause the concern of the government” and that “I personally would prefer if there would not be any Jews in the country”.²¹ Witowski's radical proposal of a complete, forced removal however struck a new cord. It reflects an important shift in perspective and emphasis away from a religious and moral argument to an argument about the harmfulness of the Jews to society understood as an entity to be protected - a notion which already resonates in Potocki's contribution to the debate.

Another new argument appeared in this context, namely a historical argument establishing a divergence of interests between the needs of the nation as a whole, and the motivations of former political elites who would have invited the Jews to the Polish (and Lithuanian) lands, with the intention to fill their own coffers, but without consideration of the nation. It seems particularly promising to trace the emergence and the use of this trope, which to my knowledge has not been undertaken in any systematic way.²² It carries particular relevance as it offers a historical and quasi legal argument challenging the very presence of the Jews. The first appearance I am aware of is the report by the Commission for the Reorganisation of Towns (*Komisya do Uregulowania Miast*) of 1815 which states that the “Israelites are not natural residents of our lands, they are immigrants, foreigners, aliens” and that the privileges they had received from kings and princes were bought “for cash” (Pol. *za gotowe pieniądze*).²³ This simplistic and misleading assessment implicates these elites in a transaction which was guided by greed as much as it was treacherous, as they were willing to sacrifice well-being of the nation to the parasitic presence of the Jews.²⁴

²⁰ See for example Ludwik Janowski: *O żydach i judaizmie, czyli wykrycie zasad moralnych, tudzież rozumowania Izraelitów*, Siedlce 1820, 28-29. Available on Polona.pl.

²¹ Quoted after Eisenbach, *Wielka Emigracja*, 51.

²² I mention this dimension in Guesnet (ed.), *Der Fremde als Nachbar. Polnische Positionen zur jüdischen Präsenz. Texte seit 1800* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 2009), 34-35.

²³ Quoted after Eisenbach, *Wielka Emigracja*, 52. Among the authors of the memorandum was prince Adam Czartoryski.

²⁴ A more complex account about the various motives to invite Jews to the Polish and Lithuanian lands had been published only a few years earlier by Tadeusz Czacki (1765-1813): *Rozprawa o Żydach i Karaitach* (Wilno 1807), see e.g. 37-43, 47-57.

The historian Henryk Schmitt developed this argument in a treatise published in 1859 against a proposal to offer equal rights to the Jews of Galicia.²⁵ Schmitt introduced the history of the Jewish settlement in the Polish lands by stating that the Jews “restlessly roamed western Europe, expelled from one place to the other, and earning their livelihoods of repugnant slave trade.” When settling in the Polish lands in larger numbers, they needed the approval of the princes, but “the Jews gained more from the rights which Bolesław [the Pious, in 1264] offered them than the society [Pol. społeczeństwo] among which they settled.” Schmitt emphasised that it was not this society which had granted these rights: “to the contrary, the Jews had negotiated these rights unbeknownst by and against the will of the society with the prince, and thus stood in confrontation with it.” Schmitt concluded that because of these circumstances, the society could also revoke these privileges. Significantly moving from the past tense to the present tense, the author argued that

if the society objects, the Jews cannot claim any rights, even not on the basis of the most generous privilege, as one can challenge this privilege because while upholding the rights of some, it undermines the rights of the population which has equal standing, or is even more relevant.

Schmitt concluded this historical-legal argument with the observation that “if those privileged are the cause of an infringement of the rights guaranteed in these privileges”, this infringement would not represent “an infringement of natural rights” - thus, refusing equal rights would be legitimate if the Jews in Galicia. Thus, Schmitt reversed cause and effect of withholding equal rights to Jews. Schmitt's historical and legal argument certainly appears as more sophisticated than Witowski's deportation plan, but it is as radical in questioning the legitimacy of the very presence of the Jews, in invoking the superiority of the claims of the majority. Several common threads appear in this small selection of arguments against the presence of the Jews: the contrasting of the assumed needs or wishes of the majority and its well-being, weighed against those of the Jewish minority, the fundamental challenge to the Jewish presence, either by proposing forced deportation, or challenging its legal legitimacy, based on the assumption of the fundamental incompatibility of Jews and non-Jews. The

²⁵ Henryk Schmitt, *Rzut oka na nowy projekt bezwarunkowego równouprawnienia Żydów oraz odpowiedź na zarzuty, z którymi dzisiejsi ich obrońcy przeciw narodowi polskiemu występują* (Lwów: Wilde, 1859), all following quotes 14-17.

invocation of the recent notion of 'society' by Schmitt seems particularly significant in this context. Also, none of the sources presented here invoke religious grounds or incompatibilities, another indication that long before the emergence of racist stereotyping in the contemporary understanding, innovative and radical historical, economic and legal arguments were developed to justify proposals to exclude the Jews.

2) Decapitating the Jews: Implications of a Metaphore

The task of this very brief outline of a much more complex debate around the legal, social and political status of the Jewish populace in an emerging new state, the Kingdom of Poland, including a radical (and cruel) proposal to remove all the Jews is not to point fingers at an inherent or essential 'Polish antisemitism'. To the contrary. It is an attempt to disentangle a variety of viewpoints and assessments, and also to propose to historicise certain discourses, and thus to 'provincialise' Polish antisemitism as part of a wider landscape of views and ideologies. As mentioned before, I also argue in favour of antedating the emergence of radical anti-Jewish positions, even if they were marginal. Not only did they have an impact, more importantly, they are indicative of what could be thought, politically. Provincialising Polish antisemitism also means to look for resonances in other contexts, to attempt to identify inspirations. One such inspiration, I would like to argue in the following, was the romantic idea of the state as an organic whole, proposed by German philosophers around 1800, and explicitly politicised in the context of the anti-Napoleonic mobilisation. For our purposes, the most relevant representatives seem to be Johann Gottlieb Fichte (1762-1812) and also Adam Müller (1779-1829).

In 1793, the young Fichte²⁶ famously expressed his strong misgivings about the the emancipation of the Jews in France in the following words:

²⁶ For the following reflection on Fichte and his reception, see Alexander Aichele: 'Ending Individuality: The Mission of a Nation in Fichte's Addresses to the German Nation', in: David James, Günter Zöller (eds.): *The Cambridge Companion to Fichte* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016) 248-272; Hans-Joachim Becker: *Fichtes Idee der Nation und das Judentum: den vergessenen Generationen der jüdischen Fichte-Rezeption* (Amsterdam et al.: Rodopi, 2000); Walter Grab: 'Fichtes Judenfeindschaft', in: *Zs. für Religions- und Geistesgeschichte* 44,1 (1992), 70-75. For the peculiar history of the Zionist reading of nationalist ideals in Fichte see the highly instructive analysis of Manfred Voigt: 'Nur weil wir Fichte hatten, verstanden wir das Judentum'. Die zionistische Fichte-Rezeption zwischen

I don't see any other means to confer citizens' rights to the Jews, but to cut all their heads off in the night and to replace them with others, with no Jewish idea whatsoever inside them. And to protect us from them, I don't see any other means, but to conquer their promised land and send them all there.²⁷

The anti-Jewish impetus of this anti-revolutionary statement by Fichte of 1793 is as important as the metaphore it uses, placing the Jews “beyond the pale of human love”, as Sven-Erik Rose put it in his comparison of Jewish and non-Jewish enlightened thinking phantasising about ending traditional Jewish thinking.²⁸ It was the later fame of the philosopher Fichte, and of Fichte, the hugely influential author of the “Addresses to the German Nation” (*Reden an die Deutsche Nation*) of 1808, mobilising the German public in pursuit of an ideal and non-French nation, which helped turning this quote and its author in an all-time favourite of antisemitic propaganda.²⁹ With the *Addresses*, Fichte developed the programme of a unified and coherent German nation which achieved its own spiritual perfection.³⁰ Fichte understood it as a political intervention, and practical application of his own philosophy.³¹ In it, he overcame the early modern or enlightened contractual models, such as Hobbes' ‘covenant’ or Rousseau's *contrat social* (Rousseau). The state is no longer the “smallest common denominator of egocentric limitations”, but becomes the instrument of pure and unconditional national will.³² Less well known, but inspired by Fichte was Adam Müller (1779-1829) who achieved considerable appreciation and influence as a pioneer of

Idealismus und Antisemitismus, in idem: *Zwischen Antisemitismus und deutsch-jüdischer Symbiose. Aufsätze und Vorträge* (Würzburg: Königshausen und Neumann, 2013) 9-45

²⁷ Quoted after Voigts, *Zionistische Fichte-Rezeption*, 9.

²⁸ Sven-Erik Rose, ‘Lazarus Bendavid's and J.G. Fichte's Kantian Fantasies of Jewish Decapitation in 1793’, in: *Jewish Social Studies* N.S. 13,3 (2007), 73-102, here 92, fn.45.

²⁹ About the role of Fichte in the context of antisemitic mobilisation see Rainer Erb, Werner Bergmann: *Die Nachtseite der Judenemanzipation. Der Widerstand gegen die Integration der Juden in Deutschland* (Berlin: Metropol, 1989), 175 ff.

³⁰ Alexander Aichele: ‘Ending Individuality: The Mission of a Nation in Fichte's Addresses to the German Nation’, in: David James, Günter Zöller (eds.): *The Cambridge Companion to Fichte* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016) 248-272.

³¹ Alexander Aichele, ‘Einführung’, in Johann Gottlieb Fichte: *Reden an die deutsche Nation* (Hamburg, Felix Meiner, 2008), VII-LXXXIX, here XXII.

³² Ursula Baumann: “Frühnationalismus und Freiheit. Fichtes Berliner Perspektiven einer deutschen Republik.” In: Ursula Baumann (Hg.): *Fichte in Berlin. Spekulative Ansätze einer Philosophie der Praxis* (Hannover: Wehrhahn, 2006), 177-197, here 180. See also Otto von Guericke: *Das Wesen der menschlichen Verbände. Rektoratsrede 1902* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1954), 13.

German national thinking after World War One.³³ As a conservative opponent of all proposals of political emancipation, he also opposed the emancipation of the Jews.³⁴ He proposed to understand the state not as based on contracts or as a mechanism, but, following Fichte, as the expression of the national will, and more importantly, also as an organism.³⁵

I would suggest there are clear indications that these expressions of early German nationalism, which unfailingly comprise anti-Jewish positions, a new understanding of the state as the tool of a greater, spiritual nation, as briefly referred to here, and the remarkable project of a forced removal of the Jewish population from the Polish lands are part and parcel of a wider ideological trend. Marginal, as I certainly concede, but still: extant. The history of the cross-fertilizations between these trends remains to be investigated and analysed. Fichte had few, but significant readers among the Polish elite, Antoni Henryk Radziwiłł (1775-1833), the governor (*namiestnik*) of the Grand Duchy of Poznań after 1815 among them.³⁶ Another possible representative of such cross-fertilizations is Pavel Ivanovich Pestel' (1793-1826), executed as one of the leading figures of the Decembrist, staging an anti-tsarist coup in December 1825.³⁷ Pestel spent his study years of 1805-1809 in Dresden, and it is highly likely that he became aware of Fichte's *Addresses* and their huge echo. As member of the anti-tsarist opposition, he also drafted "the most developed Decembrist treatment of the Jews".³⁸ Their cohesiveness, the legal power of the rabbinate and their belief in the divine promise of domination over all other nations made the Jews "one of the obstacles to the attainment of a progressive state" and "led inevitably to the fundamental

³³ Karsten Holste: 'Ungleichheit als Bedingung von Freiheit. Konservative Politik, romantisches Freiheitsideal und die Publizistik Adam Heinrich Müllers um 1810' in: Michael Dreyer, Klaus Ries (eds.): *Romantik und Freiheit. Wechselspiele zwischen Ästhetik und Politik* (Heidelberg: Winter, 2014), 137-156, here 140.

³⁴ Idem, "Romantische Nationalökonomie". *Adam Müllers Kritik an Adam Smith im Rahmen seiner politisch-ästhetischen Theorie*. MA Dissertation, Martin-Luther-Universität Halle-Wittenberg, 2000.

³⁵ Walther Kozik: *Adam Müllers "Elemente der Staatskunst". Ein früher institutionenökonomischer Ansatz* (Marburg: Metropolis 2018), 93-106.

³⁶ Hans-Joachim Becker: *Fichtes Idee der Nation und das Judentum: den vergessenen Generationen der jüdischen Fichte-Rezeption* (Amsterdam et al.: Rodopi, 2000).

³⁷ Eisenbach, *Wielka Emigracja*, 214.

³⁸ Klier, John Doyle, *Russia Gathers Her Jews: The Origins of the 'Jewish Question' in Russia* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1986), all quotes 186 f.

aspects of Jewish life in Russia: dishonesty, exploitation, and alienation". As solution, Pestel' suggested a new concordat between the Jewish rabbis and leaders and the government, or alternatively, their "expulsion en masse from Russia, preferably into Asia Minor, where they could build an independent state" - a direct parallel to, and maybe echo of, Witowski's proposal, as future research may well establish.

As the examples cited above have demonstrated, attitudes and policy proposals concerning the status and treatment of Jewish populations in early 19th c. included radically exclusionary proposals. From the metaphorical decapitation to forced migration, to challenges to the very legal and political legitimacy to their presence, proposals concerning the 'Jewish questions' established a connection between state policies and a containment or exclusion of the Jews. An underlying dimension, I argued, was newly understanding of the essence of the commonwealth as not based in a social contract, but as an organic entity loaden with a historic mission. As the example of the proposal by the Decembrist Pestel' shows, such an understanding is not necessarily bound up in conservative or reactionary attitudes.

It however usually was, as my last example demonstrates. Just a few years after the failed Decembrists' coup, the Peace of Andrianople between the victorious Tsarist Empire and the High Porte of 1829 offered Russia control over the Danubian Principalities of Valachia and Moldavia. Recognizing the *de jure* supremacy of the Ottoman Empire, the Russian foreign minister count Charles of Nesselrode (1780-1862) moved swiftly to establish tight administrative control over a socially divided, multi-ethnic, and war-torn territory.³⁹ The envoy to the Principalities was Pavel Kiselev (1788-1862), an "imperial pragmatist" who would later be in charge of developing the Russian policies towards the Jewish population in the Empire, directed a highly efficient effort of establishing political control in the principalities. Central elements of this state-building effort was the successful drafting of a unifying constitutional basis for the two sovereign territories, the introduction of a more

³⁹ The following short discussion of the first legislative steps of the Russian administration in the Danubian Principalities follows Joseph Berkowitz, *La question des Israélites en Roumanie. Étude de son histoire et des divers problèmes de droit qu'elle soulève*, Thèse pour le doctorat (Paris: Jouve et Cie, 1923), a highly partisan (anti-Russian) analysis, but to date the most comprehensive treatment of the Jewish dimension of these measures.

efficient administration, and control over internal political frictions.⁴⁰ The outcome of this effort were the Romanian *Reglements Organiques* of 1831/32. They are of interest in our context for several reasons. First of all their qualification as 'organic regulations', hiding an otherwise obvious case of imperial expansion behind a notion of a quasi nature-given legislative body, leading to a new political creature, and reflecting contemporary notions of the essence and centrality of the state as a political body.⁴¹ Secondly, this purported organic character of the new administration in the principalities obscured the fact that the constitution of the principalities introduced new and highly problematic legal definitions for the local Jewish population which would be the very origin of the many decades of conflict around the legal status of the Jews.⁴² It is relevant that from a point of view of defining 'the Jewish problem', Kisilev was very close to Pestel's notions. As his 1835 'On the Ordering of the Jewish Nation in Russia' would demonstrate, he identified the cultural isolation of the Jews, their alleged sense of superiority, the supremacy of the kahal as point of departure for his policies of *zblizhenie* (rapprochement) and *zliyanie* (merger) through abolition kahal and introduction of state-sponsored schools.⁴³ His attempt to differentiate between 'productive' and 'non-productive' Jews (the *razryad*) was directly inspired by the Prussian carrot-and stick *Provisional Ordinance* of 1833.⁴⁴ Thirdly, the *Organic Regulations*, took one step which seems significant in the context of this paper's argument. Article 94 of chapter III not only

⁴⁰ Dietmar Müller, *Staatsbürger auf Widerruf. Juden und Muslime als Alteritätspartner im rumänischen und serbischen Nationscode Ethnonationale Staatsbürgerschaftskonzepte, 1878-1941* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2005), 30. See Ana-Marie Schlupp: *Wallachai. Zur Herausbildung eines literarischen Topos* (Bielefeld: Transcript-Verlag, 2019), 192-198, for the overall positive reception of the *Organic Regulations* across Europe.

⁴¹ Andrej Parfenovich Sablotskii-Desiatovskii: *Graf P.D. Kiselev i ego vremia. Materialy dlia istorii imperatorov Aleksandra I, Nikolaia I i Aleksandra II* (St Peterburg: Stasiulevich, 1882), vol. I, 348-356, relates the complete control of Nesselrode over the legislative process, and the close cooperation between the foreign minister and Kiselev.

⁴² Iulia Onac, 'In der rumänischen Antisemiten-Citadelle'. *Zur Entstehung des politischen Antisemitismus in Rumänien 1878-1914* = Studien zum Antisemitismus in Europa, Bd. 13 (Berlin: Metropol, 2017), 33, unfortunately not discussing the original legal framework of Romanian exclusionary policies in the 2nd half of the 19th c.

⁴³ Polonsky, *Jews in Poland and Russia*, vol.I, 364, based on earlier, well-known works of Michael Stanislawski and John D. Klier.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 384. See also Michael Schulz, *The Prussian Partition, 1815-1914*, in: F.Guesnet, J.Tomaszewski (eds.): *Sources on Jewish Self-Government in the Polish Lands from Its Inception to the Present* (Leiden, Boston, Mass., Brill Academic Publishers, forthcoming 2021), 215-220.

defined the Jews as an inherently harmful community,⁴⁵ but also conferred them the status as a coherent 'Jewish nation'.⁴⁶ and tasked the state administration to establish a commission which would establish the exact status of each individual Jew in the principalities, and to "eliminate [i.e. expel] those who would be unable to demonstrate to have a useful profession, and to ensure that such individuals will not enter Moldavia [the same article was introduced to Valachia, F.G.]."⁴⁷ In contrast to the previous complex legal status of the local Jewish population, comprised of privileged Jews (*Juifs chrysovelites*) and Jews who were under the protection of a neighbouring empire (the *Juifs seditzi*), the Organic Regulations established a precarious situation for all Jews who now depended on the rulings of a commission controlled by the representative of the Russian Empire.⁴⁸ While the realities on the ground precluded the implementation of large-scale expulsions of Jews, establishing the possibility on the basis of constitutional legislation would be at the root of the later, well-known confrontations around the legal status of Jews in Romania, and their exclusion from this emerging new state.

3) Conclusion: Echoes of radical anti-Jewish attitudes during World War Two and the Holocaust

This paper has argued that in order to fully understand the dynamic of exclusionary discourses aimed at the Jewish population in eastern central and eastern Europe, one has to take into account the transformations of political discourse in the early 19th century. Moving beyond the models of contractual relationships in a given society, and away from

⁴⁵ "Il est incontestable que les Juifs, qui se sont repandus en Moldavie et dont le nombre augmente journellement, vivent, pour la plupart, aux depens des indigenes et exploitent presque toutes les ressources au detriment des progres de l'industrie et de la prosperite publique", quoted after Berkowitz, *La question des Israëlites*, 131.

⁴⁶ Ibid. 142-144. See the unsurprising congratulations on this legislation in a Nazi period assessment of the Romanian 'Jewish question' in Hans Schuster: *Die Judenfrage in Rumänien* (Leipzig: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1939), 75.

⁴⁷ "Pour obvier, autant que possible, a cet inconvenient, la meme commission consignera dans le tableau de recensement la condition de chaque juif, afin que ceux qui n'auraient point un etat et qui, sans exercer aucun metier utile, vivraient sans aveu soient elimines et que de pareils individus ne puissent plus entrer en Moldavie", *ibid.*

⁴⁸ Ibid., 79-84, 157. For the new precariousness of Jewish life in the Danubian Principalities see also E.[liahu] Schwarzfeld: 'The Jews of Roumania from the Earliest Times to the Present Day', in: *The American Jewish Yearbook* 3 (1901-2/5662), 25-62, here 53 f.

the optimism of the enlightenment, the political philosophy of early nationalism proposed the a model of a homogenous and coherent nation with a higher, a holy calling. Andreas Wimmer has emphasised the centrality of the idea of cultural and ethnic homogeneity in this discourse, and its impact on the occurrence of interethnic violence.⁴⁹ The examples presented in the paper reflect the dynamism of this discourse, and the opening up of new – and highly problematic – spaces of political thinking, justifying the forced removal of ethnic minorities on the basis of their alleged harmfulness, and making such expulsions the object of legislative proposals and constitutions. Brian Porter has convincingly argued that in Poland, such discourses were overall marginal between the November and January Uprisings.⁵⁰

What were their impact? This is difficult to show, but it should be attempted. In expectation of the attack on the Soviet Union, the Lithuanian Activists Front(LAF) in 1941 explained that the future liberation from the yoke of the Red Army offered “an important opportunity to get rid of the Jews. It is important to create such an oppressive climate in the country that no Jew would dare to assume to have a prospect of a joint existence. The objective is to force all Jews to leave the country with the red Russians, and the more we expel on this occasion, the easier the later complete separation from them will be.” Among the measures planned by the LAF was the full and final revocation of the settlement privilege of Grand Duke Vytautas, an echo of several sources presented in this paper.⁵¹ In February of the same year, Romania's ruler Ion Antonescu (1882-1946) explained that while there were differences between different segments of the Jewish population in Romanian territories, “also those Jews who lived in Romania before 1913 will eventually have to be expelled”, and his deputy Mihai Antonescu in July 1941 explained that the first step of a comprehensive policy of Romanisation of all territories under Romanian control “will have to be an expulsion of the Jews from villages, their ghettoisation and forced expulsion”.⁵² And in 1943, the Diplomatic Service of the Polish Government in Exile explained that “in the eastern parts of Poland, a return of a great number of Jews would be perceived by the local population as

⁴⁹ This argument has been made for western Europe by Andreas Wimmer: *Nationalist exclusion and ethnic conflict : shadows of modernity* (Cambridge : Cambridge UP, 2002).

⁵⁰ Porter, *When Nationalism Began to Hate*, 37-42.

⁵¹ Joachim Tauber: "Hitler, Stalin und der Antisemitismus in Litauen 1939-41," in: *Jahrbuch für Antisemitismusforschung* 2012, 179.

⁵² Müller, *Staatsbürger auf Widerruf*, 475.

an invasion”, making the restitution of former dwellings impossible.⁵³ I would contend that there are continuities of radical, exclusionary discourses pertaining to the Jews in eastern central, eastern and southeastern Europe which go back a long time, and which are insufficiently understood. I also contend that in this context, the early 19th century is a period of highly relevant transformations, a process which, as demonstrated, was not limited to one school of thought, state, or administration, but a highly interconnected phenomenon. Rather than positing inherently antisemitic attitudes of Poles, Romanians, Lithuanians, Germans or Russians, this paper proposes to historicize and thus provincialize such discourses.

⁵³ *Inferno of Choices. Poles and the Holocaust* (Warschau 2011), 52-3. See also above, fn. 15, Cała's observation about the project of the *Obóz Narodowy-Radykalny* of 1934 to make Jews pay for their expulsion.