

# THE “JUDISK KRÖNIKA” AND THE FINNISH JEWISH IDENTITY-BUILDING, 1918–1920

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*The article discusses how the short-lived Finnish Jewish journal Judisk Krönika (The Jewish Chronicle), 1918–1920, attempted to reshape Jewish identity in Finland. Before the Finnish independence in 1917, Jews were regulated by special statutes, which made them second-class citizens. In 1918, they formally got full civil rights. At the same time, due to the changes in Palestine, they were faced with an opportunity to become citizens of a Jewish state, promised by the Balfour Declaration in 1917. In principle, the Judisk Krönika was open to all kinds of discussion of Jewish culture and Jewish societal interests. In fact, however, in most articles it provided material for discussion, how Jews in Finland could be, or decide between being, loyal Finnish citizens and true members of the Jewish nation. The journal suggested that in considering this ‘double identity’ the Jews had to take into account two things. On the one hand, they had to consider the risks of the rising anti-Semitism and pogroms connected to armed conflicts, above all in the territories of the former Russian Empire. On the other hand, they had the option to join Zionist Movement and its aspirations to turn Palestine again into the Jewish homeland. The journal seemed to be on the side of Zionism and active creation of a Jewish national identity, but did not decline the emancipation of Jews. Both Jewish and Finnish Jewish identities were suggested as equally valid.*

KEYWORDS: Jews, Finland, Zionism, identity, early 20<sup>th</sup> century Jewish journals.

## INTRODUCTION: JEWS IN FINLAND BEFORE 1918

From ca. mid-twelfth century until 1809, Finland was part of the Kingdom of Sweden. Jews were officially allowed to the country quite late, during the later part of the seventeenth century, and only on the territories of the present-day Sweden. Tolerance of Jews was limited to well-to-do merchants who the King expected to revitalise the Swedish trade. In 1782, King Gustav III promulgated a statute called the Judereglement, or the Jewish Regulation, which gave the

rich Jews the right to permanently settle down in three Swedish cities, Stockholm, Gothenburg and Norrköping, but not in Finland.<sup>1</sup>

After the so-called Finnish War in 1808–1809, the Russian Empire annexed Finland as an autonomous Grand Duchy, where the Swedish legislation was kept in force. This meant that, officially, Jews had no right to stay permanently in Finland. Therefore, and due to the fact that most Jews in Russia were inhabited in the empire's westernmost provinces commonly called the Pale Settlement, the only Jews who settled down to Finland were the Jewish soldiers, the so-called cantonists, who since 1827 had to serve in the Russian army. In 1858, and in contradiction to the Jewish Regulation, Tsar Alexander II issued a decree allowing the demobilised Jewish (and Muslim) soldiers and their families to stay in the territory they had been garrisoned. Some dozens of Jews having served in Finland did so. They were followed by others so that in 1870 there were some 400, and in 1910 ca. 1,200, Jews in Finland. Half of them were in Helsinki (226 in 1870, 738 in 1910), and the rest mainly in Turku (59 and 273, respectively) and Vyborg (119 and 212), the two other cities allowed to Jews in Finland.<sup>2</sup>

Between 1872 and 1897, liberal members of the Finnish estates introduced several motions to abolish the 1782 ban and to grant the Jews permanently living in Finland extensive civil rights (full rights could be granted to the Lutherans only), but all attempts were broken down by the opposition of the conservative clerical and peasant estates. After the estates were abolished, the first Finnish parliament in 1906 finally agreed to give the Jews civil rights, but due to the rise of conservatism in Russia, which resulted in dissolving the separate Finnish parliament, they materialised only after the Finnish independence (1917). The law, promulgated in January 1918, granted the Jews civil rights, on the condition that they applied for them; they were not given automatically. There were a few restrictions; Jews could not hold positions where issues of the Lutheran church were handled, nor could they have teaching positions involving Lutheran education. Briefly, Jews were (almost) accepted as individuals. However, at that time in general the more burning question was their acknowledgement as a nation.<sup>3</sup>

## JUDISK KRÖNIKA

The first Finnish Jewish journal appeared in 1908 in Vyborg. *Suomen Juutalainen – Den Finske Juden* (The Finnish Jew) was edited and published by the

1 VALENTIN, Hugo. *Judarna i Sverige*. Stockholm, 1964, p. 20–55.

2 LAITILA, Teuvo. *Uskonto, isänmaa ja antisemitismi*: kiistely juutalaisista suomalaisessa julkisuu-

dessa ennen toista maailmansotaa. Helsinki, 2014, p. 39–42.

3 Ibid., p. 119–122.

pioneer of Jewish rights in Finland, the politician and newspaperman Santeri Jacobson. The journal, which was discontinued after five issues, was explicitly political, fighting for Jewish civil rights. Its contributors included the first Jewish doctoral graduate (in medicine) from the University of Helsinki, Isak Pergament, and the teacher of the Jewish parish in Helsinki *cheder* or elementary school, Israel Schur.<sup>4</sup> The latter was also the editor of the next Finnish Jewish journal *Judisk Krönika* (The Jewish Chronicle, hereafter JK), which started to appear in November 1918. It came out twice a month until December 1920, when it was discontinued due to financial problems. A few additional issues appeared in 1925.

According to the subtitle, the Chronicle was a ‘journal for the Jewish national culture and societal interests’.<sup>5</sup> Thus, the journal had a political agenda not much differing from that of *The Finnish Jew*. Schur determined the tone, although, since January 1920, the journal also had an advisory board consisting of five prominent Finnish Jews, among them the above-mentioned Pergament, and occasional contributors who followed what domestic and foreign newspapers wrote on Jews.<sup>6</sup>

Chronicling worldwide news on Jews and Judaism made up one to three pages of each individual issue, which in 1918 and 1919 consisted of 12 and in 1920 of 8 pages<sup>7</sup> in roughly folio size. In the unsigned editorial of the first issue, entitled “Our program”, Schur stated that the journal aimed at strengthening the Finnish Jews both as citizens of Finland and as members of the Jewish nation.<sup>8</sup> In other words, following Theodor Herzl he wanted to suggest the Jews in Finland a ‘double’ identity<sup>9</sup> suitable for the new conditions of the evolving Finnish national state. In what follows I discuss how the main topics of the journal, Zionism and Palestine on the one hand, and anti-Semitism and pogroms (as issues of Jewish human rights) on the other, contributed to this identity-making project.<sup>10</sup> Methodologically I thus join the mainline media analysis by assuming that reiteration of particular themes, also called codes, implicates the objective of the journal in question. Furthermore, I presume that, because of the general context in which the codes were produced, their intention was to create a web of meanings, a new identity in a situation where the Jews were expected to assimilate or integrate into other nations, whereas they for centuries had been excluded from the rest of the society because of their ‘alien’ religion.<sup>11</sup> This web, in turn, was weaved by emphasising a few points crucial to Jewish identity; that the world is hostile to them (anti-Semitism, pogroms), that the protector of Jews, and mediator between them, is the Zionist Movement, and that the Jewish national state in Palestine, as explicated by Zionists, could solve identity problems and end attacks against Jews.

All articles were published in Swedish. One reason for this could be the fact that Schur did not know Finnish, but one is tempted to speculate that the language-

policy also indicated the journal's association with the largest minority in Finland, the Swedish-speaking Finnish citizens, who were generally considered more liberal and international than the Finnish-speakers. Perhaps Schur also wanted to speak to the Jewish, and perhaps other audiences in Scandinavia, who could understand Swedish, but not Finnish.

It is hard to say how effective or influential the journal was. Eric Olsoni (1893–1973), a Swedish-speaking Finnish gentile author and book-handler, who now and then contributed to the JK, provides one clue. In October 1919 he regretted that ‘members of [the Finnish Jewish] congregations have shown very low interest towards both the various important societal matters and the journal and its endeavour’.<sup>12</sup> This may be an exaggeration, but there seems to be no reason to assume that the journal had any larger circulation.

4 KUOPPALA, Ossi. *Antisemitismi ja sionismi Suomen juutalaisessa aikakauslehdistöissä vuosina 1908–1948*. Unpublished MA thesis in Systematic Theology, University of Helsinki. Helsinki, 1982, p. 38–51.

5 *Judisk Krönika* (hereafter JK) 1/1918, p. 1. In Swedish: Tidskrift för judarnas nationella kultur och samhällsintressen.

6 KUOPPALA, Ossi. *Antisemitismi...*, p. 45.

7 From November 1918 to December 1919, the journal used running pagination and volume numbering. Thus the first issue in 1919 started on page 49 and bore the number four. In 1920, the pagination and numbering started anew from one.

8 JK 1/1918, p. 2 (Vårt program). See also 24/1919, p. 242 (När skall det ske?), where Schur expresses his contentment for the progress the Finnish Jews have made both as Jews and as Finnish citizens.

9 In his *The Jewish State*, Herzl suggested that Jews were loyal to both a Jewish homeland and to the state they were living in Europe.

10 I have determined the main themes by counting articles. The division into different categories is far from clear-cut, but the following numbers give a rough overview. Nota bene that short news and the chronicle section of the JK are excluded. Thus, from November 1918 to December 1920, the JK contained ca. twenty-five articles on Zionism,

mainly reports on Zionist conferences or conference proclamations. About the same number focused, on the one hand, on Palestine, most of which dealt with Jewish daily life, and the other, dealt with pogroms, usually in Poland or Ukraine. Roughly twenty-four articles singled out anti-Semitism in Finland, some half of them criticising the publication of the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* in Finland; and around forty-five articles discussed anti-Semitism in general, in most cases portraying the hard situation of Jews in the regions of the former Russian Empire. In addition, Schur published fifteen “Letters to a Friend” (Brev till en vän), in which he presented the early history of anti-Semitism. Except articles on Zionism, which slightly centred on the year 1919, all texts were quite evenly scattered throughout the whole period under study. Together, if we leave out the chronicle section, these texts cover something between half and three quarters of the journal.

11 On codes as a web of meanings, see GILLESPIE, Marie; TOYNBEE, Jason. Introduction: Textual Power and Pleasure. In *Analysing Media Texts*. Maidenshead, 2006, p. 1–4. On changes in Jewish identity policy, see JUUSOLA, Hannu. *Israelin historia*. Helsinki, 2005, p. 24–29.

12 JK 21/1919, p. 219–220 (E. O–i, Andlig lättja).

According to its founding father, Theodor Herzl, Zionism can be summarised as a claim that the Jews make up a single nation, which needs a national state of its own. This 'national identity' contradicted both the 'citizen identity' created by emancipation, which was well advanced among Western European Jews, and the religious identity-making common among Eastern European Jews. Zionists, among whom secular 'Easterners' were a majority, had diverse opinions on the role of emancipation and religion in the development of Jewish identity, resulting in several branches of Zionism, such as bourgeois liberals, socialists and revisionists.<sup>13</sup> The JK did not differentiate among these multiple Zionisms and their representatives. Its main criteria to select the published material seems to have been their suitability to promote the discussion on Jewish identity in general. Most of the borrowed material was taken from Scandinavian and Central European newspapers and news organisations, Zionists or otherwise.<sup>14</sup>

Right from the beginning, the JK advocated the spreading of Zionist ideas in Finland. For example, in December 1918 the journal published a note by Abraham Nemeschansky, a young Turku-born Finnish Jew, who apprised that young Jews of Turku had established a Zionist association *Zeire Zion* (The Youth of Zion) to promote the building of a national state. The author expressed the wish that the youth in Helsinki and Vyborg would follow the lead.<sup>15</sup> Next month, anticipating the Peace Conference in Versailles, Schur discussed the position of Jews (in Europe) between assimilation and Zionism, evidently expecting that the conference would establish 'a Jewish territorial centre' in Palestine, thus solving the 'Jewish question'.<sup>16</sup>

However, Schur did not expect that every Finnish Jew would immigrate to Palestine. In the beginning of February 1919, he wrote that 'the history of the Finnish nation shows best the great importance [that] collaboration between different peoples has for the country's future cultural development'.<sup>17</sup> In the next issue, he clarified the matter by stating that Zionism is not only about Jewish nationalism, it is also about ameliorating the Jewish condition in the countries where they live.<sup>18</sup> Evidently, the journal saw the on-going Versailles peace negotiations crucial to the Jewish future, because it quoted approvingly views of both Martin Buber (1878–1965) and Henri Nathansen<sup>19</sup> (1868–1944) to the effect that what was going on was the regeneration and the liberation of the Jews. Eric Olsoni, who wrote on Buber, ended his article by stating that the 'true Zion is the mission of the Jewish folk soul, the outline of Messianic humanity'.<sup>20</sup> This, in fact, summed up Buber's religiously coloured Zionism, but ignored that he advocated a binational Palestine.<sup>21</sup>

The Versailles Peace Treaty on 28 June 1919 turned Palestine into a British mandate under the League of Nations. The mandate materialised next year, but

already before that a contributor to the JK argued that the Jews should be active in their own affairs and to show, if they really have ‘sense for the concrete and practical, which is so much [both] hailed and denied by the non-Jewish world’.<sup>22</sup> The author evidently wanted to accelerate the Jewish immigration to Palestine. He (or she) was seconded by Eric Olsoni, who in November 1919 claimed, in an article on the history of Zionism, that although the Peace Treaty had failed to fulfil the Zionists’ wishes of their own country, they would not give up their dream of a Jewish Palestine. Olsoni also assured that ‘Zionism symbolises the freedom of the [Jewish] people’.<sup>23</sup> Thus, in a very Herzlian way the JK represented Zionism as a means for Jews to become a united nation and supported a kind of ‘general’ Zionism, which emphasised the immigration as a way to establish a Jewish state.<sup>24</sup>

## PALESTINE

The JK published many short notices, pieces of news, and pictures on Palestine, taken from foreign press or from the Copenhagen Zionist News Bureau.<sup>25</sup> For example, in December 1918 the journal quoted the editorial of the English *Economist*, arguing that Palestine’s economic potential was not fully understood by general public and that the land needs ‘such a political organisation that enables its economic development’.<sup>26</sup>

13 On the diversity of Zionism, see BRENNER, Michael. *Zionism, a Brief History*. Princeton, 2003.

14 For example, the chronicle part of the first issue of the JK (1/1918, p. 6–9) was based on material taken from the Jewish Press Bureau (Stockholm) and especially the Zionist Organization (Copenhagen). The same trend continued in the following issues (e.g., 2/1918, p. 18–21; 3/1918, p. 33–34).

15 JK 3/1918, p. 31 (A. Nemeschansky, Till den judiska ungdomen i Finland). In Vyborg, a Zionist youth organization was established a few months later (JK 6/1919, Jacob Nemeschansky, Några kollegiala ord ägnade ”Vyborgs zionistiska ungdomsförening”).

16 JK 5/1919, p. 53 (Israel Schur, Emancipationen, Assimilationen och Zionismen).

17 JK 6/1919, p. 62 (Israel Schur, Al Paraschath Derachim [On crossroads]).

18 JK 7/1919, p. 74 (Israel Schur, Al Paraschath

Derachim [II, On crossroads, II]).

19 Nathansen was a well-known novelist and theatre director of Danish Jewish origin.

20 JK 11/1919, p. 124–126 (Eric Olsoni, Martin Buber och judendomens förnyelse; unsigned translation from Danish entitled En zionistisk skrivelse av Henri Nathansen).

21 See BRENNER, Michael. *Zionism*, p. 114–115.

22 JK 20/1919, p. 210 (VI. Gr., Nya tider och nya uppgifter).

23 JK 22/1919, p. 228–229 (E. O–i, ”Zionismen, dess väsen och organisation”).

24 See BRENNER, Michail. *Zionism*, p. 101; JUUSOLA, Hannu. *Israelin historia*, p. 36–39.

25 During the First World War, the headquarters of the Zionist Movement were located to Copenhagen.

26 JK 4/1919, p. 41 (Palästinas förvaltning i engelsk belysning).

The 1 February 1919 issue contained a long, bright and optimistic view on Jewish life in Palestine.<sup>27</sup> The lack of comments and explanations indicate that the JK expected the article to speak for itself. The construction of a positive view on Palestine continued in April, when the journal published a text by an outstanding German ideologist of Zionism, Richard Lichtheim (1885–1963) on the ‘colonisation of Palestine’, originally addressed to the participants of the fifteenth congress of the Zionist Association for Germany. He emphasised the ‘moral duty’ of immigrants to ‘establish a Hebrew Palestine for them and their children’.<sup>28</sup> To illustrate the progress the immigrants were making, the JK also published photos representing the grape- and wine-based affluence of a new ‘colony’, Rishon LeZion, which is the second-oldest kibbutz in Palestine close to modern Tel Aviv.<sup>29</sup> In August 1919, the JK started a series of reports describing the employment prospects of various craftsmen in Palestine.<sup>30</sup> All this suggests a strong support for immigration to Palestine.

In the last issues of the year 1919, and during the early 1920, the journal opened its pages to views on the future of the (expected) Jewish state. It quoted the Swedish newspaper *Svenska Morgonbladet*, citing American Zionists, assuring their belief in the foundation of the Palestinian Republic, a politically and economically democratic country, and the reincarnation of the Jewish nation.<sup>31</sup> In April 1920, the JK reproduced a text from *Mitteilungen des Daniels-Bundes*, a newly founded German organisation for the unification and ethical revitalising of the Jews. Written by a Jewish judge, Alfred Freimann, the article “Die Behandlung von Volksfremden im jüdischen Staate” argued, with copious references to what the Christians call the Old Testament, that foreigners coming to the Jewish state who did not want to assimilate nevertheless had the same rights as the Jews.<sup>32</sup>

There seems to be no doubt that the author, and the journal, wanted to dispel the suspicion, voiced by Palestinian Arabs, who similarly demanded independence, that Arabs and Jews could not peacefully live side by side.<sup>33</sup> An article on 2 May 1920 quoted the New York-based Jewish paper, *Haiברי*, stating that the Zionist organizations have to strive for mutual understanding between Jews and Arabs.<sup>34</sup> This was in line with the Balfour Declaration’s implication of Jewish national rights and the Arabs’ individual rights, a view emphasised by several Jewish authorities as late as after the foundation of the state of Israel (in 1948).<sup>35</sup> The policy implied legally-based protection, but not total equality, of the other.

In place of editorial, the 2 May 1920 issue also quoted a special telegram sent by the Zionist Executive Committee to the ‘Zionist Federation [in] Helsinki’<sup>36</sup>. It stated that the San Remo Peace Conference<sup>37</sup> had decided to incorporate ‘the Balfour declaration in the treaty of peace with Turkey which provides that Palestine

will be the National Home of the Jews'.<sup>38</sup> In fact, the treaty assigned the mandate for Palestine from the League of Nations solely to the British. However, quoting the Swedish daily *Dagens Nyheter*, the JK spoke of the foundation of the new 'Jewish homeland' as a fact and declared that it will be created on the bedrock of social justice and charity.<sup>39</sup> To bolster the argument, the journal's tenth issue in 1920 summarised an interview of Max Nordau<sup>40</sup> (1849–1923), originally published in *The Observer*, to the effect that it is possible to turn Palestine into a Jewish state.<sup>41</sup>

The next issue contained the former part of a long reportage on the situation in Palestine, written by the German Jewish historian and Zionist protagonist of women's rights, Helene Hanna Cohn<sup>42</sup>. Under the title "On Our Everyday Life", she stated that the Jewish people were living in a turning point of their destiny.<sup>43</sup> She described in details the Jewish daily life in Palestine, warned that the creation of a Jewish state would take much time and effort and, above all, love of both Eretz Israel and all who work for its realisation. Cohn neither singled out details nor gave

27 JK 6/1919, p. 64–66 (Det judiska livet i Palästina).

28 JK 10/1919, p. 115 (De delegerades för "Zionistische Vereinigung für Deutschland" XV kongress: Richard Lichtheims referat om Palestinas kolonisation [I]). The second part was published in 13/1919, p. 147–148, and the third one in 14/1919, p. 163–164.

29 JK 9/1919, p. 103; JK 13/1919, p. 151; JK 23/1919, p. 237.

30 JK 17–18/1919, p. 191–192 (M.K.B., Arbetsmarknaden i Palestina). The second part appeared in JK 21/1919, p. 220–221, and the third part in 23/1919, p. 239–240.

31 JK 23/1919, p. 234–235 (Tillbaka till hemlandet – republiken Palestina [unsigned]).

32 JK 7/1920, p. 50–51 (Alfred Freimann, Främmande folks ställning i den judiska staten). Original text was published in *Mitteilungen* 2/1920.

33 Cf. JK 5/1920, p. 36 (Ett olöst problem. Palestina och judarna [unsigned], quoted from the *Kristelige Dabladet*, a Danish Lutheran newspaper devoted to Home Mission).

34 JK 8/1920, p. 59–60 ([G. Malul,] Judar och araber).

35 JUUSOLA, Hannu. *Israelin historia*, p. 33, 40–41.

36 Schur was secretary to the Helsinki organization (see JK 8/1920, p. 58).

37 The conference, held on late April 1920, and attended by representatives of Britain, France, Italy, and Japan, continued the Versailles Peace Treaty discussions. On the agenda were, for example, questions on a peace treaty with Turkey and the League of Nation's mandates in the Near East.

38 JK 8/1920, p. 57 (Fredskonferensen i San-Remo och Palestinafrågan). The text appeared both in English and in a Swedish translation.

39 JK 9/1920, p. 65 (Judarnas nya hemland skall nu byggas upp under engelsk mandat).

40 Hungarian-born Nordau was one of the best-known Zionist leader, and one of the founders of the World Zionist Organization.

41 JK 10/1920, p. 77–78 (Nordau intervjuad).

42 Also spelled Helena Hanna Cohn. She contributed to the monthly journal *Der Jude*, which was founded by Martin Buber and the German Zionist Salman Schocken and appeared from 1916 to 1928. I have been unable to find any biographical data on her.

43 JK 11–12/1920, p. 89 (Helena Hanna Cohn, Om vårt dagliga liv [originally published in July 1919]).

any instructions how these ideals could be materialised. Nor did she linger on the very difficult living conditions the immigrants in reality faced.<sup>44</sup>

The journal shared Cohn's idealism, related to Buber's views. In September 1920, it published a summary of an interview of the new High Commissar (until 1925) of Palestine, Sir Herbert Samuel, himself a Jew. According to the JK, Samuel had said to the English Press that the British would initiate the building of the Jewish national homeland in Palestine.<sup>45</sup> To support this view, the journal published, in October 1920, a "Manifesto of the Executive Committee for the Zionist Organization", which expressed a strong belief in the re-establishment of Jewish land in Palestine. The manifest was dated Tishri 5681 (September 1920) and signed by the then President of the Zionist Organization, Chaim Weizmann (1874–1952), and four other well-known Zionist leaders.<sup>46</sup> I have been unable to track the original version of this document.

Neither the Manifesto nor the JK took seriously the growing tensions between immigrating Jews and local Arabs, which later led the British authorities to limit the number of immigrants.<sup>47</sup> Nor did they discuss the larger political struggle on power in the Near East between Britain (occupying Palestine) and France (having control over Lebanon, where part of Jews were settled). Political realities were still seen in the light of Herzl's utopian novel *Altneuland* (Old New Land), published in 1902, which portrayed 'Jews and Arabs liv[ing] together in peace and harmony'.<sup>48</sup> Along the same lines, the JK suggested that the Arabs in fact accepted the Jewish presence, if not supremacy.<sup>49</sup> This view is understandable, taking into account the journal's philosophical, even religious nature, rather than political emphasis in the creation of a Jewish national identity.

## ANTI-SEMITISM

After the Finnish independence, Schur complained the Finnish government's decision to grant the Jews in Finland civil rights only after a special application. In February 1920, he and some other members of the Helsinki Jewish congregation had an audience with the President of Finland, K. J. Ståhlberg, stating that such a procedure kept Jews as second-rate citizens. However, nothing was changed.<sup>50</sup> Another right issue the journal addressed was the women's right to vote in the congregation ballot. In the wake of Herzl's ideal, the JK stated that all congregation members of age (in Finland, 21 years old or elder) had the right to vote.<sup>51</sup>

However, the most important issue concerning rights was anti-Semitism. Here, too, Schur followed Theodor Herzl, who criticised racially informed anti-Semitism of branding Jews as an inferior nation, to convince both Jewish and gentile

audiences of the necessity to protect the Jews by creating a Jewish state.<sup>52</sup> Until the summer of 1920, the JK paid close attention to both domestic and foreign anti-Jewish actions and propaganda. For example, when during and right after the Finnish Civil War in early 1918 the local newspaper in Vyborg, *Karjala*, accused some Jewish merchants on speculation, Isak Pergament wrote, in an article entitled “Hostile Agitation towards Jews” that Finnish ‘quasi-patriots’ wanted to incite nationalism by branding the Jews a national risk.<sup>53</sup>

In the spring of 1919, Schur tackled the question: Where and how did the hate of the Jews begin? He claimed that, unlike the anti-Semites argued, ancient peoples, such as Egyptians or Assyrians, did not really hate the Jews.<sup>54</sup> He admitted that the Egyptians, for example, hated Jews but argued, like many scholars today, that this hate was not anti-Semitic, because it was not based on religion or the concept of race.<sup>55</sup> However, he did not specify the reasons for the Egyptians’ hate. In a latter piece, he suggested that the origins of modern anti-Semitism could be traced back to the Hellenistic Greeks, who, when subordinating various tribes in the Near and Middle East, came across with a superior Jewish-related notion of god-based morality. According to Schur, they could not tolerate that, because they considered those tribes barbarians. Hence, they declared war to Jewish morality, and that was the ground for their hate of Jews.<sup>56</sup>

I do not argue about the veracity of this claim. What I find important is that Schur regarded anti-Semitism an abstract ideology more than a social phenomenon based

44 JK 13–14/1920, p. 95–97 (Helena Hanna Cohn, Om vårt dagliga liv). On everyday hardships in Palestine, see BRENNER, Michael. *Zionism*, p. 75–76.

45 JK 18/1920, p. 127 (En intervju med Herbert Samuel).

46 JK 19/1920, p. 129–130 (Den verkställande kommiténs för den zionistiska organisationen manifest).

47 See JK 21/1919, p. 218–219 (M. Wischnitzer, Brev från London I).

48 BRENNER, Michael. *Zionism*, p. 59.

49 See above, Dr Freimann’s article, and JK 15–16/1919, p. 178 (Emir Feisal och Zionismen; Feisal, actually Faisal, was the future king of Iraq, who in January 1919 signed, with Chaim Weizmann, an agreement, in which the Arabs recognized Jewish claims to Palestine, see BRENNER, Michail. *Zionism*, p. 109–110).

50 JK 3/1920, p. 17–19 (Ett memorandum i den finländska judefrågan [in place of the editorial]); LAITILA, Teuvo. *Uskonto, isänmaa...*, p. 121–122.

51 JK 8/1919, p. 86–87 (Till frågan om kvinnans rösträtt [unsigned, possible by Abraham Nemeschansky]). On Herzl and women, see JUUSOLA, Hannu. *Israelin historia*, p. 40.

52 See JUUSOLA, Hannu. *Israelin historia*, p. 31. The so-called revisionists developed the idea in the 1930s (see BRENNER, Michael. *Zionism*, p. 114).

53 JK 2/1918, p. 14 (I[sak] P[ergament], Den judefientliga agitationen).

54 JK 11/1919, p. 128–129 (Israel [Schur], Brev till en vän.).

55 JK 12/1919, p. 142–143 (Israel [Schur], Brev till en vän.).

56 JK 17–18/1919, p. 199 (Israel [Schur], Brev till en vän.).

on social, political or economic reasons. Accordingly, his argument seems to be that anti-Semitic ideology is the root of concrete discrimination of Jews and therefore more important to fight against than its individual manifestations in social life.<sup>57</sup>

At the same time, Schur wrote what to my knowledge is the first Finnish critique of the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. He did not name the work, the translator or the publisher,<sup>58</sup> but spoke about ‘a brochure cooked up by a Russian [i.e., Sergeï Nilus, 1862–1929]’, in which ‘Jews are accused of everything evil that has happened and happens to the Russian people’. Schur refuted the main allegations, for example, the argued negative influence of Jews upon Christians, and concluded that from a nation (i.e., the Russians) whose religiosity is forced and who in fact hates its religious leaders one can wait merely for accusation of the other, because that nation is incapable of understanding its own errors.<sup>59</sup>

On 1 April 1920, the JK published, without comments, a translation of nom de plum Miettinen’s originally Finnish-language critique of the Protocols’ Swedish-language version. Miettinen identified the work as an example of the worst kind of Russian pogrom literature.<sup>60</sup> In the same issue there appeared rabbi Salomon Poliakof’s<sup>61</sup> critique of an open letter, published in *The Times*, advocating the authenticity of the Protocols.<sup>62</sup>

Two weeks later, the editor tackled anew the Protocols’ Swedish-language translation, called it pogrom-literature and a provocation against the Jews, and wondered why the Swedish-speaking intellectuals did not criticise its publication.<sup>63</sup> In May, the journal published two other pieces of critique, one by a Finnish artist, Sigurd Wettenhovi-Aspa (1870–1946), well-known for his eccentric interpretations of the Finnish history, and the other by the first female professor in Finland, Alma Söderhjelm (1870–1949), a specialist in French history.<sup>64</sup> Both condemned the Protocols’ publication. On 1 June 1920, the editor continued the fulmination by comparing the Swedish-language translation to the original Russian text by Nilus. Schur’s main point was that the translator has ‘forgotten’ to reproduce 52 pages from the Introduction and the second part, 54 pages, of Nilus’s work, because, Schur said, these contain material not supporting the translator’s point on global Jewish conspiracy.<sup>65</sup> Thus, it is clear that Schur considered the publication of Protocols in Swedish a major issue for Jews in Finland, evidently because he rightly understood that it could support a chauvinist, xenophobic Finnish nationalism.

However, Schur did not neglect other similar issues, either. In January 1920, he commented an article published in *Iltalehti*,<sup>66</sup> written by a certain A.L., and entitled “The Rights and Duties of Our Jews”. According to the JK, the author demanded the Jews in Finland to be grateful for the ‘gift’ they had gotten (i.e., civil rights).

The editor retorted that civil rights are not a gift; granting them is the duty of every civilized nation. Hence, A.L. cannot require a return gift, the less so because the civil rights were not granted unconditionally (see above, “Introduction”). A.L. also blamed the Finnish Jews for not contributing the establishing of the Finnish-language university in Turku (opened in 1921), although they lavishly supported their co-religionists abroad. The JK remarked that the Jews do not take part in nationalistic-informed conflicts between Finnish- and Swedish-speaking Finns (this was the main reason for founding a new university), because they seek after the benefit of all Finnish citizens and have contributed much to this goal, although A.L. and many others seem not be conscious of that. Regarding the Jews abroad, the editor wondered what A.L. would have done in similar position; had he refused of helping his suffering co-patriots.<sup>67</sup>

The nationalistic issue was tackled again in June 1920, when both Schur in his editorial and the pseudonym Ulf criticised the Finns who argued that to defend itself Finland had to get rid of the Jews, who ‘destroy the land’.<sup>68</sup> In the next issue, the editorial accused ‘the so-called intelligentsia’ of maintaining anti-Semitism by arguing that ‘Jewish crowd’ would invade the land from the east, i.e., from Russia. In other words, he blamed ‘the intelligentsia’ of cultural arrogance, of regarding

57 Cf. JK 22/1919, p. 232 (Israel [Schur], *Brev till en vän*).

58 The Swedish title of the translation was *Förlåten faller...* Det tillkommande världsdjälvhärkardömet enligt ‘Sions vises hemliga protokoll’, translated and published by the Swedish-speaking Finnish author, Rafael Lindqvist (1867–1953). He was known by his extreme right and White Russian sympathies. See LAITILA, Teuvo. *Uskonto, isänmaa...*, p. 141.

59 JK 12/1919, p. 134–136 (I[sak] S[chur], *Den mystiska broschyren*).

60 JK 6/1920, p. 43 (Miettinen, *Några ord om en pogrombok*). The review first appeared in one of the leading Finnish-language newspapers, *Helsingin Sanomat*, on 19 March 1920.

61 Salomon Poliakov (in the JK’s transcription, Poliakov) was born in Belorussia in 1889, was at the time of writing rabbi of the Jewish community in Luneville, northeastern France.

62 JK 6/1920, p. 44–45 (S. Poliakov, *Den “judiska hämnden”*, originally published in *La Tribune Juif*).

63 JK 7/1920, p. 49–50 (*Förlåten faller*).

64 JK 9/1920, p. 67–68 (S. Wetterhovi-Aspa [misspelling in original], *Har Finland en judefråga?*); *ibid.*, p. 68–69 (Alma Söderhjelm, *Antisemitiska fantasier* [originally published in *Svenska Tidningen*]).

65 JK 10/1920, p. 73–74 (*Förlåten har fallit... En studie I jämförande pogromvetenskap*).

66 Iltalehti, which started to appear in 1919, was closely connected with the right-wing nationalistic newspaper, *Uusi Suomi*, and the party behind the paper, National Coalition Party (in Finnish, *Kokoomus*). NYGÅRD, Toivo & SALOKANGAS, Raimo. *Suomen lehdistön historia 2*. Kuopio 1987, p. 185, 189.

67 JK 2/1920, p. 9–10 (*Våra judars rättigheter och skyldigheter*).

68 JK 11-12/1920, p. 81–82 (*Isch-Jehudi [Schur], Judehetsen i Finland*). See also *ibid.*, p. 83–84 (Ulf, *Finland är i fara*).

Jews automatically Russians (at that time portrayed as archenemies of the Finns) and, therefore, uncivilised or barbarous, incapable of being Finnish citizens.<sup>69</sup>

The editorial was evidently related to the growing aggressive nationalism in Europe and its hostility to Jews. For example, in October 1920, an article on general elections in Germany expressed the worry on the growing anti-Semitism in nationalistic argumentation.<sup>70</sup> On 1 November, the editorial pointed out the anti-Judaic consequences of the Hungarian intention to turn the country a 'purely Christian' state;<sup>71</sup> and the pseudonym "One of the Shameless" listed a multitude of accusations from various foreign newspapers, which all portrayed Jews as the most shameless people in the world.<sup>72</sup> Particularly worried the JK was about the situation in Poland.<sup>73</sup>

Anti-Semitic nationalism was also tackled in a more fictitious, and partly ironizing, way. Examples are columns by the pen name Humoricus. In a text "Without Jews: From the Diary of an Anti-Semite", the author traced the origins of the present anti-Semitism to the Great War, reiterating the accusations typical for the German anti-Semites that Germany had lost the war because of Jewish treachery. After the end of the war, there were no more Jews, he said, but problems caused by the war did not disappear. Humoricus's anti-Semite is confused: Without Jews, what is the cause for our misery?<sup>74</sup>

In a subsequent issue, Humoricus ironized Finnish entrepreneurs who refused to accept the Jewish concurrence; they were 'Polish magnates' wishing to limit the Jewish activities to a few occupations,<sup>75</sup> although Jews now had full economic freedom in Finland. Similarly, he satirised the fear of the chief of a border guard detachment next to Vyborg, who argued that if the border were not closed immediately, countless number of Jews will deluge Finland because of the messy situation in Russia.<sup>76</sup> In fact, this fear was ungrounded. Instead, at that time there was a flood of immigrants (Karelians, White Russians, etc.) fleeing the Russian civil war to Finland.

Yet another, although related, issue was Bolshevism and the Jews. The matter had become a hot topic in Western Europe after the White Russian military setbacks in late 1919, when the Whites' anti-Semitic propaganda introduced a new libel; the claim of a 'massive' Jewish representation among the Bolsheviks, particularly on the higher echelon.<sup>77</sup> Even the usually liberal Swedish-language *Hufvudsbladet* published an article accusing Jews of blood libel<sup>78</sup> of a certain cavalry captain, Viktor Stjerncreutz.<sup>79</sup>

The readers of the article evidently were expected to know that Stjerncreutz was a Finnish officer serving in the White Russian armies, and his killers purportedly were Bolsheviks or their allies, implicated to be Jews. Schur dismissed blood

libel as superstition not worth of civilized people, but the unstated main point of the text most likely was the implied connection of Bolsheviks and Jews.

In addition to the news on Sjerncreutz, the JK commented the accusations on Jewish Bolshevism in several other articles. In January 1920, it published statistics, taken from the Parisian-based *Obsheye delo*<sup>80</sup>, claiming that the major nationalities among the Bolsheviks were, in this order, Russians, Latvians, and Poles; the Jewish representation compared to the number of Jews on the Bolshevik-held territories, was negligible.<sup>81</sup> This is not quite correct. Although Stalin later eliminated several leading Jewish Bolsheviks, in the early years 14 of the leading 93 Bolsheviks, or 15 per cent, were of Jewish origins. The Jews made then four per cent of the total population of the Russian Empire.<sup>82</sup> This, however, does not tell much about the connections between Bolsheviks and Judaism; it only indicates that Russian Jews had good reasons to side with those wishing to end the tsarist rule.

A subsequent issue contained Max Nordau's article "Bolshevism and Judaism". Nordau stated that 'many Bolsheviks were of Jewish origins', but not in terms of religion. Therefore, the anti-Semites shoot a line when claiming that the most of Jews are Bolsheviks.<sup>83</sup> In other words, the article emphasised religion as the primary marker of Jewish identity and let the reader infer that secularised Jews were in fact not Jews. This interpretation differed from the general Zionist views, but may be understood as the JK's means of emphasising, in the manner of emancipated Jews, that the Jews were loyal to nationalistic state and diverged the other citizens merely in terms of their religion.

69 JK 13–14/1920, p. 93–94 (Isch-Jehudi [Schur], Finlands judefråga).

70 JK 19/1920, p. 134–135 (Riksdagsval och judefrågan [unsigned], translated from the *Judische Rundschau*, published by the *Zionistische Vereinigung für Deutschland*).

71 JK 20/1920, p. 137 (Ben-Ami, Kristendomens förverkligande i Ungern).

72 JK 20/1920, p. 143–144 (En av de skamlösa, De skamlösa judarna).

73 JK 21/1920, p. 145 (Ben-Ami, Där stormen rasar).

74 JK 5/1920, p. 34–35 (Humoricus, Utan judar).

75 JK 6/1920, p. 47–48 (Humoricus, Min vän Andersson). This was in fact what also Tsar Alexander II had done when allowing the Jewish soldiers to stay in Finland.

76 JK 8/1920, p. 63–64 (Humoricus, Judarna

i Ryssland längta till de finska köttgrytorna). On the chief's statement, see *ibid.*, p. 58. This was one of the main arguments of conservative estates opposing the granting of civil rights to Jews in the last quarter of the nineteenth century.

77 LAITILA, Teuvo. *Uskonto, isänmaa...*, p. 137–139.

78 The allegation that Jews murder non-Jews, especially Christian children, in order to use their blood in Passover or other rituals.

79 JK 22/1920, p. 153–154 (Ben-Ami, Martyren).

80 The JK used the name in French translation (*La Cause commune*).

81 JK 1/1920, p. 4 (Judarna och bolschevismen).

82 RIGA, Liliana. *The Bolsheviks and the Russian Empire*. Cambridge, 2012, p. 16.

83 JK 3/1920, p. 19–20 (Max Nordau, Bolschevismen och judaismen).

In its world news, the journal covered especially the former Russian Empire, where ancestors to Schur and several other Finnish Jews originated (Schur's father was born in the present Belorussia). Besides anti-Semitism, pogroms dominated this part of the JK. For example, the 15 December 1918 issue contained an eyewitness's story on recent pogroms in Lwow (former Lemberg, today L'viv), a long report on a protest against them in Copenhagen, and their objection by the Jewish congregation in Vyborg.<sup>84</sup> The next JK printed a report published in *The Times* in February 1919 on Lwow pogroms, and yet another story by an eyewitness.<sup>85</sup>

Later in 1919, the JK focused on the vicissitudes of Jews in the Russian civil war, which was partly fought on the present Polish and the westernmost Ukrainian territories, and the accusations levelled against the Jews as 'tsar's henchmen and obedient slaves of Bolshevism', as the editorial for the 15 May issue put it.<sup>86</sup> The reason to cover the pogroms was indicated in the next editorial, where Schur asked, whether the European nations will finally carry out their promise expressed in the Balfour Declaration to end anti-Semitism and to set the Jews free (by giving them a national state).<sup>87</sup>

In July 1919, in place of editorial the JK published a report by the Jewish historian Mark Wischnitzer<sup>88</sup> (1882–1955), who alerted the readers to the killing of Vilnius Jews by Polish military in previous April and claimed that the 'Lithuanian Jerusalem' was irrevocably lost.<sup>89</sup> A few months later the journal acknowledged that Lithuania and Ukraine had recognised the rights of Jewish (and other religious) minorities, while Poland stubbornly refused to do so.<sup>90</sup>

Meanwhile, the Russian civil war continued, and the Jewish rights were repeatedly transgressed, as the JK with horror noticed.<sup>91</sup> In November 1919, due to latest pogroms in 'Southern Russia', i.e., in Ukraine, the journal labelled the White Russian general Anton Denikin butcherer of the Jews.<sup>92</sup> The editorial of the next issue continued the critique,<sup>93</sup> and in December the subtitle to an article asked, if the Russian Jews will be completely exterminated.<sup>94</sup> Briefly, when writing about the pogroms the JK emphasised the present horrible sufferings of the Jews as a justification for a Jewish national state, and, by implication, a reason for opting for a conscious Jewish national identity.

### Conclusions

After the Finnish independence, the Jews in Finland faced a new situation. Earlier legislation had forced them a separate, second-class identity. The new Finnish legislation acknowledged them as citizens, although they had to apply the

citizenship, and thus allowed them a full Finnish identity. However, in popular view they were far from equal to Finns. Old and new stereotypes abounded, from ‘treacherous’ and ‘anti-Christian’ to ‘Jews as Bolsheviks’ or ‘members of an alien or inferior race’. The situation of Finnish Jews thus was comparable to that of Jews in almost every European country: political changes had created new identity structures, but prevailing prejudices and the building of ‘homogenous’ national states prevented the Jews from making full use of them. Zionism offered a solution to this dilemma, the Jewish national state. For Finnish Jews, the *Judisk Krönika* was a Zionist-informed means to discuss the conundrum.

In a way reminiscent of Theodor Herzl, the journal suggested that local and global situations of the Jews made it indispensable to recreate their identities both as citizens of the countries they lived (to be able to stay) and as members of the Jewish nation (to be ready to travel to their old national state, Israel). By advocating the Zionist option of immigration to Palestine, and by emphasising the rise of aggressive anti-Semitism (in the form of the publication of the Protocols of the Elders of Zion as well as the exclusive nationalism) the journal suggested that the Jews in Finland should seriously consider the Zionist aspirations. On the other hand, the JK urged the Jews in Finland to fight for their full civil rights by opposing all kinds of discrimination, particularly anti-Semitism and its physical manifestation, pogroms.

We do not know how influential the JK was. Evidently, most Jews in Finland were too busy with everyday issues related to, for example, education of the youth,

84 JK 3/1918, p. 26–29 (Ett ögonvittnes meddelanden över pogromerna i Lemberg [unsigned]; Henri Nathansen, Tal vid protestmötet i Köpenhamn i anledning av pogromerna i Polen); (Protest, signed by the Jewish congregation in Vyborg)..

85 JK 9/1919, p. 99–100 Frukantvärda avslöjanden av pogromerna i Polen i den engelska tidningen “Times” [unsigned]; JK 10/1919, p. 111–112 (Philipp Waschitz, Judepogromen i Lemberg; the text does not specify whether this is a translation or has been published elsewhere before).

86 JK 13/1919, p. 146 (Gamla metoder). The same issue included a report on the situation of Jews in Russia (JK 13/1919, p. 149–150, Om läget i Ryssland [unsigned]), and the next issue spoke about horrible pogroms in Poland and West-Galicia (JK 14/1919, p. 161 [Frukantvärda judepogromer i Polen och Vestgalizien]).

87 JK 14/1919, p. 157–158 (Vårt folks öde).

88 Wischnitzer was born in Rivno, then part of the Austrian-held Galicia, but stayed in 1919 in Helsinki.

89 JK 15–16/1919, p. 169–170 (Mark Wischnitzer, Tragedin i Vilna).

90 JK 17–18/1919, p. 187 (L. Chasanowitsch, Till judefrågan).

91 JK 20/1919, p. 211–212 ([M. Grossman], Frukantvärda pogromer i Ukraina).

92 JK 22/1919, p. 227–228 (Denikin-judenslaktaren, a piece of news translated from the *Wiener Morgenzeitung*).

93 JK 23/1919, p. 233–234 (En falsk taktik).

94 JK 24/1919, p. 245 (Polska judepogromer av ententesoldater. Förskräckliga skildringar. Skall ryska judebefolkning fullständigt utrotas?).

care taking of elder and poor to pay much attention to more abstract issues, such as identity formation.<sup>95</sup> To judge on the basis of later history, my guess is that the Jews in Finland mostly adopted a sort of silent emancipation: both active resistance to public manifestations of anti-Semitism, which admittedly was not extensive, and immigration to Palestine, taking place mainly in the 1930s,<sup>96</sup> was scanty. This suggests that the JK's in a way Herzlian programme, as explicated in the editorial of the first issue, that depending on political development in Finland, the Finnish Jews could, and perhaps had to, chose between being loyal citizens and faithful nationalists ended with the victory of the former.

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„ŽYDŲ KRONIKA“ IR SUOMIJOS ŽYDŲ TAPATYBĖS FORMAVIMASIS  
1918–1920 METAIS

Teuvo Laitila

## Santrauka

Straipsnyje aptariamos trumpai, 1918–1920 metais, gyvavusio Suomijos žydų žurnalo „Judisk Krönika“ (Žydų kronika) pastangos atgaivinti žydų tapatybę Suomijoje. Iki nepriklausomybės paskelbimo Suomijoje 1917 m. žydų gyvenimas buvo reglamentuojamas specialiais teisės aktais, pavertusiais juos antrarūšiais piliečiais. 1918 m. jiems formaliai buvo suteiktos visos pilietinės teisės. Tuo pačiu metu dėl Palestinos įvykių žydams buvo suteikta galimybė tapti žydų valstybės

piliečiais, įgyvendinant 1917 m. Balfūro deklaracijoje įtvirtintą pažadą. „Žydų kronika“ iš esmės buvo atvira visoms diskusijoms apie žydų kultūrą ir žydų visuomenės interesus. Vis dėlto daugelyje žurnalo straipsnių buvo pateikiama medžiaga diskusijai, kaip Suomijos žydai galėtų būti ar nuspręstų būti lojalūs Suomijos piliečiai ir tikri žydų tautos nariai. Žurnale buvo teigiama, kad svarstydami šią „dvigubą tapatybę“ žydai turėtų paisyti dviejų veiksnių: viena, jie privalo atsižvelgti į kylančio antisemitizmo ir su ginkluotais konfliktais susijusių pogromų, visų pirma buvusios Rusijos imperijos teritorijoje, riziką; antra, jie turi kitą pasirinkimą – jungtis į sionistų judėjimą ketinant vėl paversti Palestiną žydų tėvyne. Atrodė, kad žurnalas palaikė sionizmą ir aktyvų žydų nacionalinės tapatybės kūrimą, tačiau neatmetė ir žydų emancipacijos. Taigi žurnale tiek žydų, tiek Suomijos žydų tapatybei buvo teikiamas vienodas svoris.

*Įteikta 2015 m. gruodžio 15 d.*

*Priimta 2016 m. kovo 29 d.*

95 See WEINTRAUB, Daniel. *“Suomen juutalaisten vapauksia ja oikeuksia ei millään tavoin ole loukattu”. Juutalaisvastaisuuden Suomen juutalaisissa herättämät tunnot ja reaktiot 1930-luvun Suomessa.*

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96 See KUOPPALA, Ossi. *Antisemitismi ja sionismi...*, p. 92–96.