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ISRAEL BARTAL and ANTONY POLONSKY

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Kazimierz Kelles-Krauz, 1872–1905: A Polish Socialist for Jewish Nationality

TIMOTHY SNYDER

WHERE there are nation-states, the natural reach of political parties is easily defined. But where the nation-state is absent, political parties find themselves confronted with issues of national identity, which can easily turn them against each other and distract them from their avowed goals. This is even the case among parties that have similar programmes and confront a common oppressor. In the western reaches of tsarist Russia at the turn of the century, for example, Polish and Jewish socialists missed many opportunities for fruitful cooperation. Most Polish socialists (united after 1892 as the *Polska Partia Socjalistyczna*, or PPS) identified themselves with a past in which Poles ruled other nationalities, whereas Jewish socialists (united from 1897 in the Bund) had no territorial identity and only an extremely distant tradition of statehood. Each party saw the other's programme as misguided and potentially counter-productive, as supporting rather than challenging tsarist rule. These deep differences between Jewish and Polish socialists in tsarist Russia demanded creative and courageous solutions, which were usually lacking. The single exception on the Polish side was Kazimierz Kelles-Krauz (1872–1905), a pioneering sociologist and the major theorist of the PPS.¹ His unusually sympathetic appreciation of the predicaments of Jewry in central and eastern Europe allowed him to see points of common history and common interest

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¹ Kelles-Krauz was not of Jewish descent. His first known ancestor was one Baron von Krause of Bavaria, a Knight of the Sword who took part in the conquest of Livonia (present-day Estonia and Latvia) in the early part of the 13th century. This Baron von Krause settled near Dorpat (now Tartu, Estonia), and built a castle on lands known as Kelles; his descendants were known by this second surname. The family migrated south to what is now Lithuania in the 17th or 18th century. Michael von Kelles-Krauz lost his Lithuanian estates for taking part in the uprising of 1863, and his son Kazimierz was born in Szczepieszyn.

between Jews and Poles, and led him to a pioneering explanation of the rise of modern nationalism in general.

POLISH AND JEWISH SOCIALISM, 1893-1901

Before examining Kelles-Krauz's views, however, it is necessary to step back and describe the relations between Jewish and Polish socialists. The Pale of Settlement included the territories of the Polish-Lithuanian commonwealth just before the partitions (as well as lands known as New Russia). Józef Piłsudski and the PPS leadership at the end of the nineteenth century believed that Jews as well as Poles had an interest in severing these lands from Russia.² Piłsudski hoped that Russian oppression would turn Jewish workers in Vilnius towards Poland and the PPS,³ but the emerging Jewish socialist intelligentsia responded to his agitation with hostility.⁴ Although in Vilnius in the 1890s Poles (about 35 per cent of the city's population) outnumbered Russians (about 15 per cent) the city's Jews (about 40 per cent) had already made the turn towards Russian culture.⁵ Since the closing of the Polish university and schools in Vilnius in 1832, Russian language and culture had crowded out Polish among the Jewish intelligentsia.⁶ The young intellectuals who were to lead Jewish socialism in Vilnius regarded their education in Russian as a window onto a wider world, while to their Polish counterparts Russian culture seemed inferior and their education in Russian the worst experience of their lives.⁷ The early PPS was more understanding of Jewish concerns than were socialist parties in western Europe, but the experience of Jews as Russifiers was embittering.⁸ In the first issue of the illegal PPS organ *Robotnik* (April 1893) Piłsudski demanded that Jewish socialists agitate in Yiddish rather than Russian. This they soon began to do.⁹

Jews also made up nearly two-fifths of the urban population in the former Congress kingdom of Poland at this time, and Warsaw had become the largest

² J. Frankel, *Prophesy and Politics: Socialism, Nationalism, and the Russian Jews, 1862-1917* (Cambridge, 1981), 198-9.

³ M. Sliwa, 'Kwestia żydowska w polskiej myśli socjalistycznej', in Feliks Kiryk (ed.), *Żydzi w Małopolsce* (Przemyski, 1991), 276.

⁴ R. Blobaum, *Feliks Dzierżyński and the SDKPiL: A Study of the Origins of Polish Communism* (Boulder, Colo., 1984), 34.

⁵ These proportions are according to the 1897 census. The city had 140,200 residents in 1897. D. Beauvois, 'Polish-Jewish Relations in the Territories Annexed by Russia in the First Half of the Nineteenth Century', in C. Abramsky, M. Jachimczyk, and A. Polonsky (eds.), *The Jews in Poland* (Oxford, 1988).

⁶ H. J. Tobias, *The Jewish Bund in Russia* (Stanford, Calif., 1972), pp. xv, 12-13, 53. On Piłsudski, see A. Garlicki, *Józef Piłsudski, 1867-1935* (Warsaw, 1988), 9; and W. Suleja, *Polska Partia Socjalistyczna* (Warsaw, 1988), 41.

⁷ M. Mishkinsky, 'Polish Socialism and the Jewish Question', in *Polin*, v (Oxford, 1990).

⁸ Piłsudski helped Jewish socialists find the means to publish in Yiddish. Tobias, *Jewish Bund in Russia*, 46, 52-3.

Jewish city in the world.¹⁰ The Warsaw Jewish intelligentsia was polonophone, but the Jewish masses spoke Yiddish.¹¹ The PPS (like Rosa Luxemburg's Social Democrats, and Jewish and Polish progressive intellectuals generally) saw Jewish culture as backward and reactionary, believed Jewish workers would soon assimilate, and hesitated to agitate in Yiddish for fear of slowing the process.¹² Although Polish socialists preferred that Jews beyond ethnographic Poland identify as Jews rather than as Russians, they were unwilling to accept the idea of Jewish nationality on Polish lands. Where the alternative for Jews was Russian language and culture, as in Vilnius, the PPS had to accept Jewish identity. But where the alternative was still Polish language and culture, as in Warsaw, the PPS preferred to work in Polish only. At a more practical level, of the many assimilated Jews in the party leadership, very few could write in Yiddish.¹³ Hence, when in 1895 John Mill arrived from Vilnius with Yiddish materials, he was able to split the PPS's Jewish organization and start his own.¹⁴

The true challenge to the PPS's hold on its Jewish membership arrived in 1897 with the foundation of the Bund. Mill's Warsaw group joined the new party, which soon became active in Białystok and Hrodna as well.¹⁵ Functioning in Yiddish, claiming as its geographic scope the whole Russian empire, and advocating a pure internationalism, the Bund quickly became the patriotic PPS's *bête noire*. The PPS condemned the Bund for dividing Jews from the Polish and Lithuanian nations and for its willingness to deal with the existing Russian state, and countered by trying to publish its own Yiddish journal.¹⁶ Max Horwitz (the

¹⁰ H. Wereszycki, *Historia polityczna Polski, 1864-1918* (Wrocław, 1990), 87; Blobaum, *Dzierżyński*, 11; S. D. Corrin, 'Language Use in Cultural and Political Change in Pre-1914 Warsaw', *Slavic and East European Review*, 68/1 (1990), 69; S. Kieniewicz, *Historia polski, 1795-1918* (Warsaw, 1975), 351.

¹¹ Corrin, 'Language Use', 85; H. Piasecki, *Żydowska Organizacja PPS, 1893-1907* (Wrocław, 1978), 14.

¹² See J. Holzer, 'Relations between Polish and Jewish Left Wing Groups in Interwar Poland', in Abramsky *et al.* (eds.), *Jews in Poland*, 140-1; J. Lichten, 'Notes on the Assimilation and Acculturation of Jews in Poland, 1863-1943', *ibid.* 108; and S. Kieniewicz, 'Polish Society and the Jewish Problem in the Nineteenth Century', *ibid.* 74-5.

¹³ The PPS was not exceptional in this respect. Of the leaders of Jewish descent of the Social Democracy of the Kingdom of Poland (SDKPiL), only Feliks Dzierżyński could read Yiddish. Most early leaders of the Bund itself could not have written an article in Yiddish, for that matter. Tobias, *Jewish Bund in Russia*, 11.

¹⁴ For this story, see S. Wojciechowski, *Moje wspomnienie* (Lwów, 1938), i, 112-13; *Materiały do historii PPS i ruchu rewolucyjnego w zabrze rosyjskim od r. 1893-1904* (Warsaw, 1907), i, 219-21; J. Kancowicz, *Polska Partia Socjalistyczna, 1893-1896* (Warsaw, 1984), 204; Piasecki, *Żydowska Organizacja PPS*, 23-33. For Mill's recollections, see *Pionier un boyer* (New York, 1946-9).

¹⁵ Piasecki, *Żydowska Organizacja PPS*, 34; J. Tomicki, *Polska Partia Socjalistyczna, 1892-1948* (Warsaw, 1983), 34.

¹⁶ Frankel, *Prophesy and Politics*, 220; Piasecki, *Żydowska Organizacja PPS*, 34, 69; W. Feldman, *Życie polskiej myśli politycznej w okresie porozbrojenym* (Warsaw, 1920), iii, 90; S. Wojciechowski, *Polska Partia Socjalistyczna w ostatnich pięciu latach* (London, 1900), 31-2; Wojciechowski, *Moje wspomnienia*, 113; Holzer, 'Relations between Polish and Jewish Left Wing Groups', 141; Tobias, *Jewish Bund in Russia*, 72, 103.

only PPS intellectual able to write, if weakly, in Yiddish) edited two numbers of *Der arbeiter* in 1898 and 1899 before being arrested. Leon Wasilewski taught himself Yiddish in order to continue the journal.¹⁷

The question of Polish independence divided the PPS and the Bund most clearly. The PPS advocated Polish independence as a 'minimum programme' to be achieved before the arrival of socialism. The Bund, for its part, opposed Polish independence on the grounds that the new political boundaries would divide the largest Jewish community in the world.¹⁸ Mill argued that Jews would be wasting their effort in working towards an independent Poland for they would have to begin socialist agitation all over again in the new Polish state.¹⁹ In addition, Bund members pointed out, under democratic conditions Poles might well vote to deny rights to the Jewish minority.²⁰

At the Bund's founding congress in 1897 a resolution was passed favouring contacts with Russian socialists, but no mention was made of the PPS.²¹ Several members of the Bund took part in the first congress of the Russian Social Democratic and Labour Party (RSDRP) in Minsk in 1898, to which, despite its 'Russia-wide' character, the PPS was not invited. In the years 1898-1900 the Bund maintained very good terms with the anti-patriotic Polish socialist Rosa Luxemburg, and reprinted her articles in its organ *Der yidishke arbeiter*.²² The distance between the Bund and the PPS thus appeared insurmountable.

FROM PARIS TO VIENNA (1901)

At the time of Kazimierz Kelles-Krauz's move from Paris to Vienna in April 1901 the Bund and the PPS had very poor relations and little contact, and the PPS was struggling desperately not to lose its Jewish members. Since 1892 Kelles-Krauz had lived in emigration in Paris, where he had become the leading theorist of the PPS. Although his Marxism placed him in the party's left wing, his consistent advocacy of independence won him the trust of party leaders such as Piłsudski and of *émigrés* such as Bolesław Antoni Jędrzejowski. Kelles-Krauz had followed the struggle between Mill and the PPS for Warsaw's Jewish proletariat, and had advocated publishing agitation material in Yiddish. Upon meeting Jews from Warsaw, he tried to learn something of their attitudes about their own national status.²³ In a

¹⁷ Prasecki, *Żydowska Organizacja PPS*, 45; Holzer, 'Relations between Polish and Jewish Left Wing Groups', 140; Siwa, 'Kwestia żydowska', 276.

¹⁸ Frankel, *Prophesy and Politics*, 142.

²⁰ Siwa, 'Kwestia żydowska', 277.

²² P. Nertl, *Rosa Luxemburg* (London, 1966), i, 254.

²³ Kelles-Krauz in Paris to Centralizacja Związku Zagranicznego Socjalistów Polskich (CZZSP—Central Body of the Foreign Union of Polish Socialists) in London, 6 Sept. 1899, in K. Kelles-Krauz, *Lisy* ('Letters'), ed. F. Tyeb *et al.* (Warsaw, 1982), ii, 270; 14 Sept. 1899, *ibid.*, ii, 278; 26 Feb. 1900, *ibid.*, ii, 328-9; 27 Feb. 1900, *ibid.*, ii, 334; Kelles-Krauz in Paris to the Komitet Zagraniczny Polskiej Partii Socjalistycznej (KZPPS, Foreign Committee of the Polish Socialist Party) in London, 3 Jan. 1901, *ibid.*, ii, 426.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 218.

²¹ Tobiasz, *Jewish Bund in Russia*, 67.

long letter written in 1899, he provided his wife, Maria, with arguments to use against an acquaintance who termed Jews natural usurers. No trait inheres in any nation, Kelles-Krauz explained, throughout history typical Jewish vocations have varied enormously.²⁴ Yet despite his interest in the Jewish question, he had little reason to take up the issue in any comprehensive manner from Paris.

In Vienna the Jewish question was unavoidable. The city was enjoying one of European history's most magnificent flowerings of science and culture, with people of Jewish descent at the forefront. The absolute majority of Viennese doctors and lawyers were of Jewish origin, and the same was probably true of journalists.²⁵ Jews played a prominent role in industry, and the empire relied upon Jewish financiers. At the same time, about a third of the Jewish population of Vienna was working class, and extremely poor Jews poured into the capital each year from Galicia. Nevertheless, the stereotype of Jew as capitalist ruled the age, and the age was one in which capitalism was very unpopular.

The Jews lacked the traditional prestige of old landholders, and almost every major political force in Austria, save the liberals and socialists, consciously encouraged the popular association of Jews with the calamitous instability of early capitalism.²⁶ Karl Lueger, leader of the Christian Socials and a political calculator (rather than an antisemite by conviction), understood that antisemitism had become the lowest common denominator of Viennese politics, and tailored his electoral message around the theme that the common people's problems resulted from Jewish capital.²⁷ Lueger was elected mayor in 1895; the emperor, however, refused to sanction his election. Freud smoked a cigar to celebrate Franz Joseph's decision. But the continuing rise of the Christian Socials forced the emperor's hand in 1897, and Lueger governed Vienna during the entirety of Kelles-Krauz's stay there. (He would still be in office when Adolf Hitler arrived in 1910.) His Christian Socials grew to become the dominant political force at the national level as well, sending the largest number of deputies to the parliament in the elections of 1902.

Austro-German socialists were ill equipped to meet the challenge of an antisemitic rival on the left.²⁸ Competing with the Christian Socials for the Catholic

²⁴ Kelles-Krauz in Paris to Maria Kelles-Krauzowa in Radom, 29 July 1899, *ibid.*, ii, 229-30.

²⁵ S. Beller, 'Class, Culture, and the Jews of Vienna, 1900', in Ivar Oxaal, Michael Polak, and Gerhart Botz (eds.), *Jews, Antisemitism, and Culture in Vienna, 1908*, 43, 46, 57-8.

²⁶ R. S. Wistrich, *Socialism and the Jews: The Dilemmas of Assimilation in Germany and Austria-Hungary* (London, 1982), 180-4.

²⁷ On Lueger's rise, see P. Pulzer, *The Rise of Political Anti-Semitism in Germany and Austria* (New York, 1964), 166-9, 199; Beller, 'Class, Culture, and the Jews of Vienna', 44.

²⁸ I use the term 'Austro-German' advisedly. Ignacy Daszyński, leader of Polish socialism in the Austrian partition, is exempt from the generalizations in these paragraphs of the chapter. From as early as 1891 Daszyński considered the Jews a nationality deserving of appropriate rights and protections. On his unusual stand, see W. Najdus, *Ignacy Daszyński, 1866-1936* (Warsaw, 1988), 83, 133; and Frankel, *Prophesy and Politics*, 177. As early as 1881 a programme of Galician socialists mentioned the Jews as a nationality. R. Wapinski, *Polska i made ojczyzny polaków* (Wrocław, 1994), 182.

German working class, the socialists did little to undermine the popular association of Jewish wickedness with the crises of capitalism. In the prevailing political climate, the debate between the socialists and the Christian Socials often amounted to each party accusing the other of being the real tool of Jewish capital. Because almost the entire leadership of Austrian social democracy was of Jewish descent, the socialist side began the contest at a disadvantage.

Moreover, Austro-German socialists assumed the Jewish problem would eventually solve itself. In an argument that harmonized with the life-path of Marx and numerous socialist leaders to follow, Hegel had proclaimed the Jews an ahistorical relic. For Marxists of the Second International, Jews were a caste, a religion, a medieval curiosity, but certainly not a nationality. Assimilation appeared as inevitable as it was desirable. While pogroms were regrettable, the only progressive response to them was to encourage assimilation, for the organization of Jews as a group could only prolong the death throes.²⁹ Following this reasoning, Austrian socialists actually welcomed the success of the Christian Socials, in a peculiar Hegelian fashion. Since the Christian Socials had buried the Liberals in 1900, the socialists had now become the leading force of the opposition. Since socialists saw antisemitism as an intermediary step towards opposition to capitalism as such, and believed that history would soon resolve the Jewish question, they took their defeat at the hands of an antisemitic party as a signal of their own eventual victory. Antisemitism was the socialism of the dolt, opined Otto Bauer; to Victor Adler's mind, the Christian Socials were doing the socialists' work.³⁰

Although far from the worst culprits, socialists contributed to a political atmosphere ever more suffocating to Austria's Jews. The political options available to Jews narrowed dramatically. Assimilation had traditionally meant acceptance of German culture; now as German culture itself became ever more associated with antisemitism, this option lost much of its appeal.³¹ Liberalism, the political direction that corresponded to assimilation, was in sharp decline.³² Official opposition blocked the opposite path, assertion of a Jewish nationality. Demands for separate Jewish curia in parliamentary elections and for Jewish cultural autonomy went unheeded. In this environment of political encirclement and frustration, the least expected and most controversial option of all took shape: Zionism. Until Theodor Herzl's death in 1904 Vienna remained the international centre of the Zionist movement, and Zionism prompted Kelles-Krauz's first published reflections on the Jewish question, in April 1902.

²⁹ On Kautsky, the German Social Democratic Party (SPD), and on Orthodoxy, see Wistrich, *Socialism and the Jews*, 16–18, 138–9, 143–4, 146, 153; and M. Waldenbergh, *Wzlot i upadek Karola Kautsky'ego* (Kraków, 1972), i, 581. On the Austro-Germans, see Pulzer, *Rise of Political Anti-Semitism*, 267; Wistrich, *Socialism and the Jews*, 251, 306–7; and R. Wistrich, 'Social Democracy, Antisemitism, and the Jews of Vienna,' in Oxaal et al., (eds.), *Jews, Antisemitism, and Culture in Vienna*, 117.

³⁰ Pulzer, *Rise of Political Anti-Semitism*, 168; Wistrich, *Socialism and the Jews*, 168–9, 248–9, 269.

³¹ Polak, *Cultural Innovation and Social Identity in fin-de-siècle Vienna* (London, 1987), 66–7.

³² Wistrich, *Socialism and the Jews*, 208–9.

KELLES-KRAUZ ON ZIONISM, 1902

Kelles-Krauz was impressed not only by Zionism's attainments but by its resemblance to other national movements. A speech of Martin Buber's reminded him, in content and especially in tone, of Polish patriotism. This parallel may have been a key to Kelles-Krauz's intuition that Zionism signified a qualitative change in the character of Jewish identity towards that of a modern nation.

So I ask, what is this common goal, uniting artist and economist? Why do people of such different political convictions in other spheres feel that they have something essential in common? Nationality. It suffices to look at the Zionist movement without prejudice to see that from Jews scattered about the globe, speaking different languages, from populations that for ages have had nothing in common except religion and tradition, is being formed a modern nationality.

At this point Kelles-Krauz hints at a general analysis of the causes of modern national identity:

I call the Jews a modern nationality because the Jewish nationality is being formed under the influence of those same factors that have strengthened or revived nationalities—French, German, Italian, Slovene, up to and including the Lusatian Serb revival—and at least under the influence of the most important of these influences, that great historical current whose point of departure is the French Revolution: the democratization of culture, the accessibility of cultural goods to the people, allowing the masses to master and further develop culture.³³

Although Zionism's goals are unachievable, he believes, its existence as a movement signals the arrival of a Jewish nationality, deserving of the 'universal, and for us the most profitable, principles of tolerance, respect, and equal rights'.³⁴

KELLES-KRAUZ, MAX ZETTERBAUM, AND THE BUND, 1902–1903

Yet, if for the general Polish public Zionism addressed the Jewish question in the most startling fashion, for the PPS it was the Bund's approach that startled. Kelles-Krauz's insight that Jews had become a modern nationality informed his own attitude towards the Bund and distinguished him from his peers. Though he agreed with other PPS leaders that the programme of the Bund was misguided, he was unusual in his willingness to try to understand the Bund's point of view, and he never underestimated the Jewish party. He began to teach himself Yiddish,³⁵

³³ K. Krauz, 'Z powodu kongresu syonistów', *Prawa*, 22/14 (1902), 162.

³⁴ Ibid. 175.

³⁵ Kelles-Krauz in Vienna to Komitet Zagraniczny Polskiej Partii Socjalistycznej in London, 11 June 1902, in *Listy*, ii, 617; Kelles-Krauz in Plankau to Bolesław Antoni Jedrzejowski in London, 13 Sept. 1903, *ibid.* ii, 699. A sign of his interest in mutual Polish-Jewish portrayal is K. Kelles-Krauz (pseud. K. Radostawski), 'Judyra i Raachela', *Prawa*, 22/4 (1902), 44–5.

and through the good offices of his friend Max Zetterbaum attempted to resolve the dispute between the two parties.

Zetterbaum was a natural link between Polish and Jewish socialism. A Galician Jew raised in poverty, he studied law at the University of Lviv, then returned home to Kolomyia and agitated among local Jews. He organized a strike of tailors weavers in which hasidim took to the barricades and rabbis urged the strikers to persevere.³⁶ In 1892 Zetterbaum helped found Daszyński's Polish Social Democratic Party (PPSD)—either the Polish branch of Austrian social democracy or the Austrian branch of Polish socialism, depending on one's point of view), and he consistently supported the goal of an independent Poland. He directed much of his effort towards preventing Jewish separatism within the PSD.³⁷ He also addressed various questions of socialist theory in the pages of *Przedsmi*, *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, and *Neue Zeit*, where he discussed his friend Kelles-Krauz's conception of Marxism as sociology.³⁸ Zetterbaum wrote a good deal about the Jewish question, from a position quite different from Kelles-Krauz's.

Kelles-Krauz met Zetterbaum shortly after his arrival in Vienna and kept him company during his recovery from the amputation of a leg.³⁹ At the end of 1901 Zetterbaum revealed to Kelles-Krauz his dream of convincing the Bund to accept the PPS programme.⁴⁰ In response to a query from Kelles-Krauz, Bolesław Antoni Jędrzejowski indicated that the London *émigré* leadership of the PPS was willing to let Zetterbaum try, though they were convinced that the Bund's activities were on balance harmful, and fairly sure it would reject any overture from the PPS side. Jędrzejowski characterized the mood of PPS leaders as *Judenmüde*, weary of Jews.⁴¹

In February 1902 Zetterbaum reported back to Kelles-Krauz that the Bund was preoccupied with the organizational form a merger might take. Kelles-Krauz replied that the PPS's *sine qua non* was that the Bund agree to propagate Polish independence on Polish lands. If the Bund would consent to that, as well as to cooperating with Polish, Lithuanian, and Ukrainian rather than Russian socialists, the PPS would grant the Bund complete autonomy on Jewish matters on Polish lands.⁴² Piłsudski was of the same mind, writing to Kelles-Krauz, 'You responded so beautifully to Zetterbaum that I want to hug you,' and adding:

In time we will have to put something in the programme guaranteeing certain rights of Jews in the Polish paradise to come. . . . Apropos 'certain rights', don't think that I'm trying to oppress them; I mean that in a section of the party programme we could specifically indicate that Jews in a future Poland will have the right to remain Jews if they wish, and that we will defend their rights as a nationality. But that's the future.⁴³

Piłsudski's proposal spoke to an important change in the Bund programme, approved at its fourth congress in Białystok in April 1901. Ending its previous indifference to national questions, the Bund now declared that it supported the transformation of Russia into a federation of nations, with cultural autonomy guaranteed to all nationalities—including the Jews.⁴⁴ The Bund's leaders, however, all agreed that socialists could not support territorial resolutions (such as Polish independence) to national problems.⁴⁵

At the next PPS congress, in June 1902 in Lublin, condemnation of the Bund continued, but the party offered the following concession on the question of Jewish rights: 'A [Polish] republic would ensure the Jews complete equal rights as citizens, would give Jews the possibility of free development and sufficient influence on public affairs. . . in our country, which is at the same time their country.'⁴⁶ Although relations between the Bund and the PPS remained very tenuous, Kelles-Krauz saw this as a ray of hope.

From 1901 the Bund's close ties with the Russian socialists and Rosa Luxemburg's Polish but anti-patriotic Social Democratic Party (SDKPIL) began to unravel. As the Bund adopted national goals, and as its use of Yiddish material stirred national feeling among Jewish workers, the SDKPIL questioned its socialist internationalism.⁴⁷ Lenin's *Skriva* attacked the Bund for its independence on programmatic issues, and Plekhanov also voiced hostility. In the months preceding the second congress of the RSDRP of July 1903, Lenin used Rosa Luxemburg's SDKPIL as an instrument to attack the Bund's right to autonomy within the Russian party.⁴⁸ That 1903 congress, best known for the Bolshevik-Menshevik split, also witnessed the withdrawal of the Bund from the RSDRP.⁴⁹

As the PPS and Bund programmes converged, and the Bund's relations with the PPS's rivals worsened, Kelles-Krauz perceived an opportunity for a PPS *rapprochement* with the Bund in 1903. He kept up contacts with Bundists through

³⁶ H. Piasecki, *Selecja żydowska PPSD i żydowska partia socjalno-demokratyczna* (Wrocław, 1982).

³⁷ A. Pacholczyrowa, 'Cederbaum (wczesniej Zetterbaum) Maksymilian', in Feliks Tych *et al.* (eds.), *Słownik biograficzny działaczy polskiego ruchu robotniczego* (Warsaw, 1978), ii: 291.

³⁸ M. Zetterbaum, 'Zur materialistischen Geschichtsauffassung', *Die Neue Zeit*, 21 (1902-3), 399-407, 498-506, 524-31.

³⁹ Kelles-Krauz in Vienna to Kelles-Krauzowa in Radom, 25 May 1901, in *Listy*, ii: 494.

⁴⁰ Kelles-Krauz in Vienna to KZPPS in London, 6 Dec. 1901, *ibid.* ii: 591.

⁴¹ Bolesław Antoni Jędrzejowski in London to Kelles-Krauz in Vienna, Archiwum Lewicy, Warsaw, 305/II/25, bk. XIX, 633-4.

⁴² Kelles-Krauz in Vienna to KZPPS in London, 12 Feb. 1902, in *Listy*, ii: 601-2.

⁴³ J. Piłsudski to Kelles-Krauz in Vienna, 17 Feb. 1902, *Niepodległość*, 13 (1980), 8-10.

⁴⁴ Frankel, *Prophecy and Politics*, 164, 171; E. Mendelsohn, *Class Struggle in the Pale* (Cambridge, 1970), 136; Tobias, *Jewish Bund in Russia*, 163-4; John Mill, influenced by his experiences in Warsaw, and convinced that the PPS was not entirely wrong to consider the national question part of the socialist agenda, had been pressing for some such change. See *ibid.* 107.

⁴⁵ Cited after Sliwa, 'Kwestia żydowska', 277. On the Bund's reaction, see Tobias, *Jewish Bund in Russia*, 286-7. On PPS-Bund relations in 1903, see Piasecki, *Żydowska Organizacja PPS*, 72, 76-8, 85, 90.

⁴⁷ Frankel, *Prophecy and Politics*, 200.

⁴⁸ Luxemburg's position was odd, as she did demand autonomy for her own organization.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.* 175, 227-8; Tobias, *Jewish Bund in Russia*, 77-205.

Zetterbaum, but with little result.⁵⁰ As Zetterbaum pointed out, no Bundist could understand the advantages that Polish independence might have for Jews.⁵¹ In the conclusion of his critique of the Austrian socialists' programme in July 1903, Kelles-Krauz tries to advance a more attractive deal. There he argues that, unlike Russian comrades, the Polish socialists understand and accept the Bund's goal of national autonomy.⁵² In any case, he continues, the Bund will never manage to win national rights for the Jews in any multinational state ruled from Moscow. The PPS, on the other hand, promises full autonomy within a future Polish republic. The Bund should therefore realize that its proper partner is the PPS, and accept the PPS programme.⁵³

In the same spirit, hoping to find the formula that might break the ice between the Bund and the PPS, Kelles-Krauz decided in late 1903 to give voice to his personal views on the Jewish question.⁵⁴

'ON THE QUESTION OF JEWISH NATIONALITY', 1904

Kelles-Krauz published his most significant article on the Jewish question, 'W kwestii narodowości żydowskiej' ('On the Question of Jewish Nationality'), in the January and February 1904 issues of Wilhelm Feldman's influential Kraków monthly *Krytyka*.⁵⁵ It does not explain the PPS position on the Jewish question to the general Polish public, but rather calls on both the party and the progressive public to take a fresh look at the issue.⁵⁶ Believing large-scale emigration of Jews from Poland unlikely, Kelles-Krauz grants that the typical Polish objection that Zionism's goals are utopian, but argues that the Zionist programme does not exhaust the 'historical content' of Zionism. Its significance must be sought in the factor that has made such a seemingly unlikely organization successful and that stands beyond all plans and personalities: the idea of Jewish nationality.⁵⁷

⁵⁰ Kelles-Krauz in Vienna to Bolesław Antoni Jedrzejeowski in London, 4 May 1903, in *Liszy*, ii, 682.

⁵¹ Kelles-Krauz in Vienna to Leon Wasilewski in London, 15 Mar. 1902, in *Liszy*, ii, 611.

⁵² Kelles-Krauz insisted on preserving this conclusion, despite opposition from London. Kelles-Krauz in Plankau to Leon Wasilewski in Kraków, 12 July 1903, *ibid.* ii, 687.

⁵³ K. Kelles-Krauz (pseud. M. Lusnia), 'Programme narodowościowy Socjalnej Demokracji Austriackiej a programme PPS', *Przedświt*, 7-8 (1903), 276-83, 333-41.

⁵⁴ At about the same time Józef Piłsudski urged the PPS to fight antisemitism. Tobiasz, *Jewish Bund in Russia*, 288.

⁵⁵ K. Kelles-Krauz (pseud. M. Lusnia), 'W kwestii narodowości żydowskiej', *Krytyka*, 61-2 (1904), 318-41, cited after K. Kelles-Krauz, *Pisma wybrane*, ii (Warsaw, 1962). Feldman offered to publish the article as a pamphlet, but Kelles-Krauz replied that its 'heretical content' would prevent the PPS from distributing it in Russian Poland.

⁵⁶ Kelles-Krauz, 'W kwestii narodowości żydowskiej', 337.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.* 323-4. Stanisław Barański had argued in 1889 that nationality is a question of consciousness, and that the Jews should be considered a nationality on the basis of this criterion. M. Mishinsky, 'A Turning Point in the History of Polish Socialism and its Attitude toward the Jewish Question', *Polim*, i (Oxford, 1986), 120-1. Kelles-Krauz did not know Barański, but in Paris he did live in a house filled with Barański's followers.

At this point, Kelles-Krauz stops to define terms. Nationality is a new and modern social category, he writes, qualitatively different from religious or state affiliations inherited from feudalism. The nineteenth century has proven the forge of nations, in that groups of people speaking a similar language and sharing something like a common history have concluded that they constitute a distinct body. Each nation believes itself equal to all others, and insists that it alone must decide all questions of its own fate. Kelles-Krauz stresses that this transformation characterizes not only nations that have achieved unified statehood in the nineteenth century (Germany and Italy) and ones with proud state traditions (Hungary and Poland) but also 'nationalities that, one might say, no one expected': Czechs, Ukrainians, Croatio-Slovenes, Lusatian Sorbs, and Lithuanians.⁵⁸

Whence this new form of consciousness? Kelles-Krauz answers unequivocally: 'Modern capitalism directly forms nationalities.' Capitalism transforms a static feudal economic order into numerous mobile and overlapping classes. In the new capitalist economy individuals uprooted from their traditional economic and social positions find a single constant in their native language. At the same time the complex relationships created by capitalism demand an effective form of communication. Producers and consumers speaking the same language are more likely to trade than those who do not, and entrepreneurs are likely to cooperate with others sharing their tongue against the foreigner. Mass culture hastens the consolidation of this national identification. Capitalism demands an educated population, and thus 'in the very interest of capitalism' traditional national myths must reach the nation as a whole, rather than its élites only.

Here intellectuals catalyse a process that Kelles-Krauz terms *retrospection*. Although modern nationalism constitutes a genuinely new form of social consciousness, its advocates traditionally present their beliefs and goals as the revival of an eternal tradition. The formation of modern nationalities always takes on the 'external form' of a 'renaissance'. Mass culture also allows for the transmission of the liberating ideas of 'equality and democracy' to the oppressed. Because the French Revolution began the process of spreading these ideas throughout Europe, they need not be formulated anew by each awakening nation.⁵⁹

In setting forth a general descriptive model of the rise of the modern nation, Kelles-Krauz formulates criteria by which recent Jewish history might be judged. Given the power of traditional stereotypes, this in itself is no small accomplishment. He finds that Jews manifest the same signs of nation formation as other European peoples. The idea of equality serves an important function: Jews observe the arrival of modern nationalism around them and apply the same ideas to themselves. The very fact that Jewish political formations such as the Bund now demand that Jews be treated as a nationality is of key importance. The idea must also be found in larger masses, however, and a mass culture demands a mass language. The distribution of Yiddish socialist materials by the Bund and the PPS

⁵⁸ Kelles-Krauz, 'W kwestii narodowości żydowskiej', 324, 326.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.* 324-7.

has allowed workers a sense of their own worth as part of a larger community. Despite the intentions of both parties, this self-identification has taken on a national form. Kelles-Krauz calls the Zionist programme (with its revival of Hebrew and return to Zion) a characteristic example of retrospection.⁶⁰

Kelles-Krauz then draws the political conclusions. He distinguishes between the Zionist programme and the idea of Jewish nationality, noting that arguments against the feasibility of the first rarely speak to the reality of the second. He takes careful aim at the popular argument of the Polish left that if Jews organize rather than assimilate, they should not be surprised if antisemitism increases. Such an argument can come across only as a threat, further increasing the tension between Poles and Jews. Against the claim that Jewish organizations will tend to be reactionary, he cites the example of the Bund.⁶¹ And while Poles have the right to criticize Jewish backwardness, their first responsibility is to cure antisemitism, the backwardness in their own national culture.

Kelles-Krauz contends that, because every nation considers itself to be an end in itself, Poles and Jews will find common ground only if progressive Poles can come up with arguments that speak to the interests of Jews. Jews cannot achieve the natural goal of other rising national movements, the nation-state, because they do not inhabit a defined territory. A future Polish republic must therefore do whatever possible to compensate for this aching loss. Given that Jews will not leave Poland *en masse* for Palestine, and that large-scale assimilation has become highly improbable, a future Polish republic should recognize the national rights and autonomy of its Jewish population. In Kelles-Krauz's opinion, the interests of both nations would be best served in a Polish republic that offers extensive national rights and cultural autonomy to its Jewish citizens. (Here he once again invokes the Bund to argue that its programme of cultural autonomy will be much more feasible if it turns its attention from a future constitutional Russia to a future independent Poland.) Kelles-Krauz imagines a Poland in which Polish and Jewish cultures freely intermingle, and in which Polish citizens considering themselves to be of both Polish and Jewish nationality provide links between the two. In such a republic all individuals would have the right to choose their own national identity.⁶²

MOTIVES

Kelles-Krauz hoped for cooperation between the PPS and the Bund. He knew that the Bundists could see little advantage in a Polish republic, and so he advanced the

idea of a Polish state that would more than meet the demands of the Bund's programme. Unlike the majority of PPS leaders, Kelles-Krauz did not think the Bund would splinter and weaken of its own accord, and he intended his argument that the Jews constituted a nationality to provoke thought in that quarter as well. Most PPS leaders stood by their belief in the inevitability of assimilation⁶³—even as antisemitism increased, the small Polish Jewish assimilationist movement dissolved,⁶⁴ Zionism made inroads into the Russian empire, and around 1904 the Bund overtook the PPS among Warsaw's Jews.⁶⁵ Piłsudski was willing to entertain the idea that Jews constituted a nationality if it would serve a political purpose; Kelles-Krauz became convinced that they genuinely did.

Central European Marxists were usually even less flexible than the PPS on the Jewish question. Kelles-Krauz's position, although based on what he understood to be Marxist premisses, could scarcely have differed more from the consensus among his Marxist comrades.⁶⁶ Rather than thinking capitalism would necessitate a general assimilation that would obviate the Jewish question, Kelles-Krauz believed it had transformed Jewry into a modern nation, and that socialists needed a new and creative political response.

He may also have been motivated by a broader concern. In Vienna he had to confront the reality of a popularly elected left-of-centre, antisemitic mayor. Leftist antisemitism, critical of capitalism and armed with a scapegoat ideology, had succeeded in attracting the working class.⁶⁷ In Poland, Dmowski's National Democrats, then embracing an ever more exclusionary and biological view of nationality,⁶⁸ offered a similar message to Poles. Because Kelles-Krauz, unlike his central European comrades, believed neither that assimilation was inevitable nor that antisemitism would naturally lead to simple anti-capitalism, he searched for some means to safeguard a future Polish republic from Dmowski. Kelles-Krauz did temporarily convert Wilhelm Feldman of *Krytyka* from ardent assimilationism to his own position, and apparently exerted some influence over Aleksander Świętochowski, the influential editor of the Warsaw journal *Pravda*, as well.

THE CONSEQUENCES, FROM 1905

As Kelles-Krauz penned his articles on Zionism and on Jewish nationality, he was already infected with tuberculosis. His death in July 1905 deprived the Polish political scene of its only major non-Jewish advocate of Jewish nationality. The PPS, which Kelles-Krauz had held together during the last months of his life, split

⁶⁰ Kelles-Krauz, 'W kwestii narodowości żydowskiej', 326–7.

⁶¹ Ibid. 330–5. Kelles-Krauz in Vienna to Feldman in Kraków, 13 Jan. 1904, in *Listy*, ii, 710. On Feldman, see Dąbrowski, 'Feldman', and E. Mendelsohn, 'Jewish Assimilation in Lvov: The Case of Wilhelm Feldman', *Słavia Review*, 28/4 (1969), 577–96.

⁶² Kelles-Krauz, 'W kwestii narodowości żydowskiej', 338–40. He did not spell out just what measures such cultural autonomy would consist of, aside from the use of the local language in schools, courts, and administration.

⁶³ Piasecki, *Żydowska Organizacja PPS*, 101–4.

⁶⁴ Wapinski, *Polska i male odczynny polaków*, 173–4.

⁶⁵ M. Sobelman, 'Polish Socialism and Jewish Nationality', *Soviet Jewish Affairs*, 20/1 (1990), 48.

⁶⁶ [K. Kelles-Krauz], 'List z Wiednia', *Pravda*, 24/45 (1904), 530–1.

⁶⁷ Roman Dmowski's *Mysli nowoczesnego Polaka* was published in 1903, Zygmunt Balicki's *Egoizm narodowy wobec cyki* in 1901.

into Pilsudski's revolutionary fraction and the PPS 'Lewica'. Neither of these parties had a thinker of Kelles-Krauz's stature, capable of exploiting his intellectual achievement to seek reconciliation between Jewish and Polish socialists. In Jerzy Holzer's words, Polish socialists 'were unable to propose anything concrete for the future of the Jewish national existence'.⁶⁹ After 1918 independent Poland would pursue policies towards the Jews that were precisely the opposite of what Kelles-Krauz had advocated. Even in conditions of freedom and independence the PPS and the Bund rarely managed to cooperate until their hands were forced by the rising antisemitism of the late 1930s.⁷⁰

Kelles-Krauz's arguments on behalf of Jewish nationality were published in Polish, and they had no discernible effect on the stereotypes held by the European Left outside Poland. As a socialist and as a Pole, Kelles-Krauz was so exceptional in his views that it would be incorrect to speak of him as part of a tradition. At most, he was an honourable example of tolerance whose political remedies still merit attention. His scholarly achievements, inspired by his consideration of the Jewish question, remain impressive. His explanation of the rise of modern nationalism, sketched largely on the basis of the Jewish example, anticipated the major currents of our contemporary debate.⁷¹

⁶⁹ J. Holzer, 'Polish Political Parties and Antisemitism', *Polin*, viii (Oxford, 1994), 146.

⁷⁰ A. Bromberg, 'The Bund and the Polish Socialist Party in the 1930s', in Y. Gutman, E. Mendelsohn, J. Reinharz, and C. Shmeruk (eds.), *The Jews of Poland between Two World Wars* (Hanover, NH, 1989), 76.

⁷¹ On this point and on Kelles-Krauz's life and works generally, see T. Snyder, *Nationalism, Marxism, and Modern Central Europe: A Biography of Kazimierz Kelles-Krauz, 1872-1905* (Cambridge, Mass., 1997).