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Germans and Jews

Professor Magnus

May 19, 2012

Die Jüdische Toynbee-Halle in Wien: Leon Kellner's Quasi-Colonialist

Bildungsinstitution, 1900-1904

While much has been done to examine the role of Jewish philanthropy in fin-de-siècle Vienna, the Jewish Toynbee-Hall stands shrouded in mystery. Despite much study of Central European Jewish philanthropy from the 1890s up until the interwar period, little has been done to examine the role of the Viennese Jewish Toynbee-Hall. Modeled after its London counterpart, the Viennese Toynbee-Hall was an exclusively Jewish settlement house founded in 1900 by Leon Kellner, a Polish-born world-renowned Shakespearian scholar, professor of English philology at the University of Vienna, and one of Theodor Herzl's closest associates. Kellner received his PhD in English and Germanic philology in 1884 at the University of Vienna. After spending a year in London, Kellner was impressed with the city's Toynbee-Hall—a settlement house founded in 1884 that sought to bridge the gap between social classes by bringing the privileged elite to live amongst the poor in the heart of one of London's immigrant-heavy working class districts. Deeply concerned about the growing tensions between the stratified Jewish social classes back in Vienna, Kellner was inspired to provide a venue that could unite the rich and the poor in order to overcome the feelings of social

inequality that divided Viennese Jewry. Jewish communities have always engendered a multitude of philanthropic organizations and religious societies, but rising anti-Semitic tensions and an influx of Jewish immigrants from the east heightened the need for separate Jewish philanthropic organizations in fin-de-siècle Vienna. In this paper I will seek to answer the question: What were Kellner's motivations in founding the Toynbee-Hall, and what does its mission tell us about the Austrian conception of *Bildung*? While the Toynbee-Hall was taken over by B'nai B'rith in 1904 and thrived until 1928, in this study I will specifically focus on 1900-1904, the years under Kellner's leadership.

Bildung and German Kultur

Viennese Jews viewed identification with German culture as the gateway to social status.¹ *Bildung*, the culture of German humanism, was a platform on which Viennese Jews constructed their German-ness. The concept of *Bildung*, as with the English idea of the 'gentleman,' embracing one's whole existence, was what was 'one's own'—what one had acquired oneself and therefore constituted something precious.² Viennese Jews identified themselves not only as Austrians, but also as Germans in the cultural sense. According to the chief rabbi of Vienna, Adolf Jellinek, 'exemplary citizenship' in Vienna meant devotion to the ideas of enlightenment, emancipation, *Bildung*, and German nationality all at the same time.³ In 1848, representing Viennese Jewry, Jellinek demanded emancipation of the Jews of Austria as a vital part of the *German* people in the Habsburg Empire—it was as Germans that they, the Jews, were

¹ Robert S. Wistrich, *Socialism and the Jews: The Dilemmas of Assimilation in Germany and Austria-Hungary* (East Brunswick: Associated University Press, 1982), 185.

² Steven Beller, *Rethinking Vienna 1900* (New York: Berghan Books, 2001), 156.

³ Malachi Haim Hacoheh, "Popper's Cosmopolitanism: Culture Clash and Jewish Identity," in Beller, *Rethinking Vienna*, 175.

also bearers of education, commerce, and culture to the non-German Empire.⁴ With the German spirit ‘identical to the spirit of liberty,’ Jellinek famously stated, “to feel German means to feel free.”⁵ As Austrian Zionist leader Isidor Schalit explained in his memoirs:

“Throughout the Nineteenth century the [Austrian] Jews as a whole were German. They were German through their education since the German *Kultur* dominated the multilingual Empire. They learned and taught in German schools. The Jews were German because the German nation in Austria was the symbol of freedom and progress...The Jews remained not only the bearers of German culture, they were also the most conspicuous defenders of German policy.”⁶

As Kellner explains, “There is no ‘Austrian Literature,’ in a strictly literal sense...literary Austria is as much one with the German States as literary Galicia with the Poland.”⁷

Throughout nineteenth century Western Europe, the term ‘assimilation’ was synonymous with adherence to German culture.⁸ The word ‘assimilation’ can be problematic, as the term tended to have negative connotations; the Zionists used it as a term of contempt and disdain, implying “traitorous behavior toward the Jewish people and cowardly subservience to gentile culture.”⁹ However, in this paper, the term ‘assimilation’ will appear in a neutral sense, as the preeminent social historian of

⁴ Robert S. Wistrich, *The Jews of Vienna in the Age of Franz Joseph* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 30.

⁵ Wistrich, *The Jews of Vienna in the Age of Franz Joseph*, 31; Adolf Jellinek, “Die Juden in Oesterreich XXIII,” *Der Orient*, 8 July 1948, 217-218, in Wistrich, *The Jews of Vienna in the Age of Franz Joseph*, 31.

⁶ Isidor Schalit, “Kadimah: Aus meinem Erinnerungen,” (MS, Central Zionist Archives, A 196/25, Jerusalem), in Wistrich, *The Jews of Vienna in the Age of Franz Joseph*, 31.

⁷ Leon Kellner, Paula Arnold and Arthur L. Delisle, *Austria of the Austrians and Hungary of the Hungarians* (London: Sir Isaac Pitman & Sons, 1914), 62. *These three authors wrote the book together, but the sections on Austrian and Vienna are attributed to Kellner.

⁸ Michael Pollak, “Cultural Innovation and Social Identity in Fin-De-Siècle Vienna,” in *Jews, Anti-Semitism and Culture in Vienna*, ed. Oxaal Ivar, Pollak, Michael and Gerhard Botz (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1987), 67.

⁹ Marsha L. Rozenblit, *The Jews of Vienna: 1867 - 1914: Assimilation and Identity* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1983), 3.

Viennese Jewry, Marsha Rozenblit, has used it to signify acculturation and adherence to *Bildung*.¹⁰ At the turn of the century, the majority of the Viennese Jewish community consisted of Viennese-born, westernized, pro-Austrian, acculturated, well-educated, and politically liberal Jews who adhered to ‘reform’ Judaism or were frequently even nonobservant. Austrian Jewry lived mainly within a German cultural sphere and assimilated only to the dominant nationalities.¹¹

Viennese Jews and Education

As Stefan Zweig explained in his recollection of pre-World War I Vienna,

“Every well-to-do family took care to have its sons ‘educated’ if only for purely social reasons. They were taught French and English, they were made familiar with music, and were given governesses at first and then tutors to teach them good manners...As a matter of course I was sent to the *Gymnasium* when I had finished attending elementary school.”¹²

Jews began attending *Gymnasium* at the end of the eighteenth century when Emperor Joseph II removed the restrictions against Jewish school attendance.¹³ By 1900, Viennese Jews attended the *Gymnasium* in record numbers, as they contributed 30 percent of the *Gymnasium* students in a city whose Jews made up only 8 percent of the population.¹⁴ Through *Gymnasium* education, Jews were not only provided with continued access to high-status careers, but such education also served as a great force for their acculturation and assimilation into the world of European *Kultur* and

¹⁰ Rozenblit, *The Jews of Vienna: 1867 - 1914*, 3. In her comprehensive social and cultural analysis of the integration of Viennese Jewry from 1867 to 1914, Rozenblit uses the terms ‘assimilation’ and ‘acculturation’ synonymously. I will be doing so as well in this paper.

¹¹ Wistrich, *Socialism and the Jews*, 176.

¹² Stefan Zweig, in Rozenblit, *The Jews of Vienna: 1867 – 1914*, 99.

¹³ Rozenblit, *The Jews of Vienna: 1867 – 1914*, 101.

¹⁴ Rozenblit, *The Jews of Vienna: 1867 – 1914*, 99.

Bildung.¹⁵ Indeed, *Gymnasium* graduates became the heirs to the humanistic tradition in European culture, and thus could secure their place in that most respected rung of society—the intelligentsia.¹⁶ Viennese *Gymnasium* curricula were known for their rigor. Students were required to study German language and literature, Latin, Greek, mathematics, history and geography, physics, and either French or English. As Marsha Rozenblit correctly concludes, the high percentage of Jewish students in the Viennese *Gymnasien* in the decades before World War I attests to the “high level of acculturation in Viennese Jewish bourgeois circles and to the desire of those middle-class Jews to encourage even further assimilation among the young.”¹⁷ Certainly, the *Gymnasium* was a major factor in the intellectual and cultural integration of Jews into broader Viennese society. While this educational system was not sufficient in *fully* assimilating Viennese Jewry, Jews were able to use the *Gymnasium* to improve their social status. At the least, a *Gymnasium* education allowed for Jews to enter into the more prestigious world of the professional middle-class, as lawyers, doctors, writers, and managers.¹⁸ This dramatic ascent of the Jews in terms of social status was especially apparent during the post-emancipation era. By 1889 it was estimated that Jews made up 48 percent of the medical faculty at the University of Vienna, and 394 out of the 681 practicing lawyers in Vienna were reputed to be Jewish.¹⁹

Ostjuden

¹⁵ Rozenblit, *The Jews of Vienna: 1867 – 1914*, 100.

¹⁶ Rozenblit, *The Jews of Vienna: 1867 – 1914*, 100.

¹⁷ Rozenblit, *The Jews of Vienna: 1867 – 1914*, 100.

¹⁸ Rozenblit, *The Jews of Vienna: 1867 – 1914*, 108.

¹⁹ Wistrich, *Socialism and the Jews*, 182.

At the turn of the century, Vienna experienced a massive influx of *Ostjuden* fleeing poverty, persecution, and pogroms. In this context, the term ‘*Ostjuden*’ refers to Yiddish-speaking traditional Eastern European Jews who had primarily come from Galicia, a former Polish territory under Austrian rule from 1772 to 1918.²⁰ Between 1867 and 1910, some 30,000 overwhelmingly poor, Yiddish-speaking Galician Jews, migrated to Vienna.²¹ Although Galician Jews were considered ‘legally’ equal to the acculturated Jews of western Austria, they were comparable economically to the Jews of Russia.²² As elsewhere in Eastern Europe, Galician Jews traditionally played the role of traders and economic middlemen, handling the money economy between peasants and landowners. Yet, at the end of the nineteenth century, Jewish poverty and anti-Semitic pressure were extensive in Galicia. Such poverty was induced by rapid population growth. Between 1869 and 1900, the Jewish population of Galicia grew 41 percent, while its respective Catholic population growth was only 10 percent.²³ With most Galician Jews working as traders, this sharp increase in population made it considerably more difficult to make a living in the already impoverished region of Galicia.²⁴ Furthermore, with the rise of capitalism and the Industrial Revolution in the late nineteenth century, this entire traditional social order began to shift, as the rise of Polish and Ukrainian nationalism fostered a climate of intense economic competition

²⁰ In the general context, ‘*Ostjuden*’ refers to Jews from Eastern Europe.

²¹ Bruce F. Pauley, “Reflections on Austrian Anti-Semitism,” in *Essays in European History, Volume II*, ed. June K. Burto. and Carolyn W. White (Lanham: University Press of America, 1996), 138.

²² Pauley “Reflections on Austrian Anti-Semitism,” 138.

²³ Rozenblit, *The Jews of Vienna: 1867 – 1914*, 32.

²⁴ Rozenblit, *The Jews of Vienna: 1867 – 1914*, 32.

between Jews and gentiles.²⁵ For example, the Poles created credit unions and cooperatives in a conscious effort to close the Jews out of their traditional role of the middleman in the peasant economy.²⁶ All of these factors accounted for the decline of Galician villages and the rise of unemployment among Galician Jews to levels over fifty percent.²⁷ Further, a series of pogroms in 1898 invoked fear among Galician Jewry. Therefore, Galician Jews sought employment and greater social equality in cities throughout central Europe, particularly Vienna.

Vienna was the primary magnet for this dramatic influx of Galician *Ostjuden*, and absorbed the bulk of internal Jewish migration throughout the nineteenth century.²⁸ By 1910, Vienna's Jewish population of 175,318 was the largest in Europe outside of Warsaw and Budapest; this constituted a tremendous leap when considering the figures for 1846, which showed a Jewish population of only 197 families and 3,739 individuals.²⁹ Within Vienna, the Leopoldstadt contained the largest single Jewish concentration, numbering 56,779 Jews in 1910, 33.95 percent of the population.³⁰ However, the living conditions of this second district (until 1900, Leopoldstadt also included the twentieth district of Brigittenau), contrasted sharply with those of the inner city area where the wealthy Jews resided.³¹

²⁵ Bruce F. Pauley, *From Prejudice to Persecution: A History of Austrian Anti-Semitism* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1992), 65.

²⁶ Rozenblit, *The Jews of Vienna: 1867 – 1914*, 32.

²⁷ Pauley, *From Prejudice to Persecution*, 65.

²⁸ Robert S. Wistrich, *Socialism and the Jews*, 179.

²⁹ Wistrich, *Socialism and the Jews*, 179.

³⁰ Wistrich, *Socialism and the Jews*, 184.

³¹ Wistrich, *Socialism and the Jews*, 184.

Stereotypes of *Ostjuden*

However, this wave of Galician *Ostjuden* would give rise to a deeply divided Jewish society in fin-de-siècle Vienna. A measure of sympathy for poverty-stricken, often traumatized Galician refugees was often overborne by a defensive rejection of their habits and appearance.³² *Ostjuden* were regarded by both gentiles and assimilated Jews as being poor, loud, dirty, smelly, superstitious, uneducated, unenlightened, and culturally backward. Such feelings of revulsion were apparent as a young Sigmund Freud described an encounter with an *Ostjude* on a train in the following manner:

“More intolerable than any other...[That *Ostjude*] was of the kind of wood from which fate carves the swindler when the time is ripe: crafty, mendacious, encouraged by his dear relatives in the belief that he has talent, but without principles or a view of life.”³³

Similarly, as Jewish Viennese native George Clare explains in his memoirs, the sight of the *Ostjuden*, with their “Yiddish singsong intonation,” was a stark reminder of the Jews’ not so distant past in the pre-emancipated ghettos and aroused the ire of assimilated Viennese Jewry.³⁴

Indeed, assimilated Viennese Jews saw the *Ostjuden* as a reemergence of an earlier period of Jewish history that they wanted to forget. Having shed their traditional dress, replaced their ‘backward’ Yiddish language with High German, and suppressed their external religious peculiarities for the price of emancipation, westernized Jews were increasingly perturbed by the arrival of their eastern coreligionists. In Galicia, Jews lived in tight-knit communities; geographically and culturally isolated from the

³² Peter Gay, *Freud: A Life for our Time* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1998), 4.

³³ Sigmund Freud, in Gay, *Freud: A Life for our Time*, 4.

³⁴ George Clare, *Last Waltz in Vienna: The Destruction of a Family, 1842-1942* (London, 1982), 31, in Wistrich, *The Jews of Vienna in the Age of Franz Joseph*, 51; *The Jews of Vienna in the Age of Franz Joseph*, 50.

West, and economically and culturally superior to the Polish and Ukrainian masses, rural Galician Jews had no logical temptation to assimilate to the larger society.³⁵

Having been entrenched in this isolationist mindset back in Galicia, these Jewish immigrants often retained their Orthodox lifestyle in both dress and manner. In Vienna, the *Ostjuden* continued to cling to the Yiddish language, to their Talmudic heritage and traditional Jewish culture.³⁶ As Holocaust survivor George Clare reflects on his youth in Vienna in his memoirs:

“I was already second-generation Viennese, and Viennese-born Jews felt resentment towards the less assimilated Jews from the East. We were, or rather thought we were quite different from that bearded, caftaned lot. We were not just Austrian, but German-Austrian.”³⁷

Horrified by the prospect of being identified with these caftan-wearing full-bearded easterners against a rising backdrop of anti-Semitism, assimilated Jews feared that a massive influx of *Ostjuden* would jeopardize their already-precarious status as emancipated, acculturated Jews. Furthermore, *Ostjuden* in Vienna lived in dire poverty and clung to their traditional occupations as peddlers, petty traders, tailors, and shoemakers. The Galician Jews in the Leopoldstadt and Brigittenau districts lived in the worst housing conditions in the city, with as many as six Jews to each room in these areas.³⁸

Thus, in fin-de-siècle Vienna, tensions between assimilated Austrian Jews and their newly arrived Eastern European counterparts were high, as both groups regarded each other with suspicion and even contempt. For example, the *Ostjuden* believed that

³⁵ Pauley, *From Prejudice to Persecution*, 65.

³⁶ Wistrich, *Socialism and the Jews*, 184.

³⁷ George Clare, *Last Waltz in Vienna*, in Wistrich, *The Jews of Vienna in the Age of Franz Joseph*, 38.

³⁸ Wistrich, *The Jews of Vienna in the Age of Franz Joseph*, 65.

the Germanized Jews had sacrificed their commitment to religious observance due to their secular pursuits. The *Ostjuden* were extremely uncomfortable with the formalism, decorum and restraint of Viennese synagogues.³⁹ As Galician born Joseph Roth remarked, “There is no harder fate than that of alien Eastern European Jews in Vienna. For the Christian Socials they’re Jews; for the German nationalists they are Semites. For the Social Democrats they are unproductive elements.”⁴⁰ Indeed, *Ostjuden* often found themselves ostracized by native-born Viennese Jews, who had internalized the prejudices of their neighbors towards the most recent Jewish arrivals in Vienna.⁴¹ Scorned by and excluded from Germanized Jewish establishments, *Ostjuden* proudly created a Galician-Jewish subculture in Vienna.⁴² They created their own synagogues replete with noisy *stieblach* and separate schools with a Polish flavor.⁴³ As Kellner himself dramatically stated, the *Ostjuden* and *Westjuden* “show far more contempt towards one another than Christians feel towards them.”⁴⁴

Despite this attitude of prejudice, assimilated Viennese Jews overwhelmingly responded to the influx of *Ostjuden* in the form of philanthropy work, intellectual acculturation, and social welfare. At the turn of the century, assimilated German and Viennese Jews undertook massive charitable work on behalf of the persecuted Eastern European Jews, and, though paternalistic in nature, Jewish philanthropy became central to the identity of the upper-middle class. These Jews regarded themselves as superior to

³⁹ Wistrich, *The Jews of Vienna in the Age of Franz Joseph*, 50.

⁴⁰ Joseph Roth, in Robert S. Wistrich, “Social Democracy, Antisemitism and the Jews of Vienna,” in *Jews, Antisemitism and Culture in Vienna*, ed. Oxaal et al., 111.

⁴¹ Jacobs, *Written out of History*, in *In Search of Jewish Community*, 120.

⁴² Rozenblit, *The Jews of Vienna: 1867 – 1914*, 151.

⁴³ A *Stiebel* is a side room in a synagogue used for public prayer. The term can also be applied to a mini-synagogue or a meeting place for Hasidim.

⁴⁴ *Ost und West*, Heft 4, April 1901, trans. Anna Band, p. 293.

their eastern coreligionists; ashamed of them, many assimilated Viennese Jews considered it their duty to ‘save’ the *Ostjuden* by helping them acculturate into Viennese society.

Jewish Philanthropy in fin-de-siècle Vienna

Social welfare was not simply a form of self-help for the Eastern European immigrants rooted in purely philanthropic ideals. In Vienna, Jewish philanthropy was a form of liberal, bourgeois politics vis-à-vis those of a lower social standing; specifically, German Jews sought to alleviate the conditions of *Ostjuden* and help them acculturate to German society.⁴⁵ In the liberal eyes, Hasidism and Polish orthodoxy were the hoary products of centuries of persecution, oppression, and suffering, of the ‘somber resignation of isolationism encouraged by ghetto conditions.’⁴⁶ Thus, as an unfortunate result, the *Ostjude* had become in the mind of the Gentile a veritable prototype of dirt, ugliness, parasitism, and dishonest business dealings.⁴⁷ Consequently, a major aim of Viennese Jewish philanthropy involved the attempt to overcome this social pathology—to improve, refine, and productivize Galician Jews by liberating them from their tragic ghetto inheritance and inculcating them with a modern work ethic.⁴⁸ Therefore, it is reasonable to conclude that the response of Viennese Jewish leadership to the plight of the *Ostjuden* was *not* couched in purely philanthropic terms.⁴⁹

⁴⁵ Marion Kaplan, *The Making of the Jewish Middle Class: Women, Family, and Identity in Imperial Germany* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 192.

⁴⁶ ‘Wiener Briefe,’ *Die Neuzeit*, 2 July 1880, 11 June 1880, 6 April 1883, in Wistrich, *The Jews of Vienna in the Age of Franz Joseph*, 83.

⁴⁷ Wistrich, *The Jews of Vienna in the Age of Franz Joseph*, 83.

⁴⁸ Wistrich, *The Jews of Vienna in the Age of Franz Joseph*, 83.

⁴⁹ Wistrich, *The Jews of Vienna in the Age of Franz Joseph*, 83.

Leon Kellner

Leon Kellner, born in Tarnow, Galicia in 1859, was the only son of a poor corn merchant. He entered Jewish school at the age of three, but left at age thirteen to continue with a private tutor, despite his family's state of poverty. According to his wife, Kellner came to Vienna in dire poverty with "not even a hat on his head."⁵⁰ After completing a traditional *Gymnasium* education, Kellner earned his PhD in English and German philology at the University of Vienna in 1884, and eventually became a professor of English philology and world-renowned Shakespearian scholar. In 1898, Kellner had the opportunity to visit the Toynbee-Hall in London. Kellner was impressed with the city's Toynbee-Hall—a settlement house founded in 1884 in honor of the historian Arnold Toynbee, that sought to bridge the gap between social classes by bringing the privileged elite to live amongst the poor in the heart of one of London's immigrant-heavy working class districts. He recalls, "I was able to see and observe the men at work, as hundreds of craftsmen and their families were literally uplifted to clean, healthy, stimulating entertainment and discussion...What I saw had a deep affect on me."⁵¹ London's Toynbee-Hall included adult education courses, university extension lectures, literary clubs, concerts, and assistance to Jewish immigrants.⁵² In the settlement house, privileged students lived alongside the disadvantaged local residents together. As Samuel Barnett, the hall's founder, explains the underlying idea:

"University men might get to know workmen and their problems through contact and discussion, and through teaching, research, public service and

⁵⁰ Anna Kellner, *Leon Kellner: Sein Leben und Sein Werk* (Vienna: C. Gerold's Sohn, 1936), 49.

⁵¹ *Ost und West*, Heft 4, April 1901, trans. Anna Band, p. 293.

⁵² Christian Johnson, "Strength in Community: Historical Development of Settlements Internationally," in *Settlements, Social Change, and Community Action: Good Neighbors*, ed. Ruth Gilchrist and Tony Jeffs (Philadelphia: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2001): 69-91, 72.

sociability, contribute something in return... Toynbee Hall was oriented, not to the parish or district, but toward the institutional structure of the nation... The residents came 'to learn as much as to teach, to receive as much as to give.' They lived in the neighborhood in order to know as much as possible about it, as a spring board bringing about changes in the mores and the institutional structure of the nation."⁵³

As Kellner noted, this concept of a settlement house as a reciprocal entity had "become the virtual model for all similar institutions. Toynbee-Hall has become a generic concept that has spread to all cultural languages."⁵⁴ Indeed, there is much truth to this statement, as settlement houses modeled after London's Toynbee-Hall began to spring up internationally at the end of the nineteenth century. Progressivist Jane Addams championed Barnett's idea of a settlement house as a reciprocal entity, opening Chicago's 'Hull-House' in 1889. Like Barnett, Addams was convinced that privileged citizens needed to actually *live* in settlement houses in industrial areas in order to fully engage in daily efforts with their neighbors and thereby relieve class tensions.

Kellner, too, was profoundly moved by the concept of a Toynbee-Hall. Deeply concerned about the growing tensions between the stratified Jewish social classes back in Vienna, Kellner was inspired to provide a venue that could unite the rich and the poor in order to overcome feelings of social inequalities that divided Viennese Jewry.

Why a Jewish Toynbee-Hall?

Initially, Kellner's colleagues discouraged him from founding a Jewish Toynbee-Hall in Vienna, deeming his plan all the more unrealistic and even "baneful."⁵⁵ As Kellner himself admitted, "It would have been the most natural thing, to simply

⁵³ Samuel Barnett, in Johnson, "Strength in Community: Historical Development of Settlements Internationally," in *Settlements, Social Change, and Community Action*, ed. Gilchrist and Jeffs, 73.

⁵⁴ *Ost und West*, Heft 4, April 1901, trans. Anna Band, p. 293.

⁵⁵ *Ost und West*, Heft 4, April 1901, trans. Anna Band, p. 293.

establish a Viennese Toynbee-Hall, free from denominational or national secondary implications, a house for the poor of all strata of the population.”⁵⁶ After all, many of Kellner’s British Jewish friends promised him their most generous financial support if he were to drop such a ‘baneful’ plan for a Jewish Toynbee-Hall, and instead create a People’s Hall for everyone.⁵⁷ Clearly, Kellner’s London colleagues did not grasp the extent of anti-Semitism in Vienna, nor the fact that its native Jews were not even fully assimilated. Kellner explained to them:

“This (founding a non-denominational settlement house) would have been a blind, foolish, unfruitful imitation—a non-event. Vienna is—unfortunately—not London, and what would have been obvious for the poor of Whitechapel, would have been an incomprehensible venture for the Viennese, and indeed not only the Viennese of the lowest class: Christians and Jews as equal citizens partaking in one and the very same social recreation and conversation! Ha! And even if the beneficiaries, the poor, had agreed to this impossibility, where would the unprejudiced men, women, and girls come from, who would submit to the difficult tasks of providing the conversation and hospitality?”⁵⁸

Kellner further notes that at the turn of the century, Vienna was already home to several non-denominational social establishments. However, as Kellner wrote in 1900, Jews are “today completely barred from these social altruistic creations, without consideration of race or creed, that well-meaning philanthropists had planned for society at large.”⁵⁹

Aside from the tensions between Jews and Gentiles in late nineteenth century Vienna, Kellner also voiced concern that, in such a project, any attempt to encompass the entirety of Vienna’s poor fellow citizens would “guarantee the danger of confusion and aimlessness.”⁶⁰ Finally, even though Kellner was once an *Ostjude* himself, he admitted

⁵⁶ *Ost und West*, Heft 4, April 1901, trans. Anna Band, p. 293.

⁵⁷ *Ost und West*, Heft 4, April 1901, trans. Anna Band, p. 293.

⁵⁸ *Ost und West*, Heft 4, April 1901, trans. Anna Band, p. 292.

⁵⁹ *Ost und West*, Heft 4, April 1901, trans. Anna Band, p. 293.

⁶⁰ *Ost und West*, Heft 4, April 1901, trans. Anna Band, p. 293.

to being ‘horrified’ by Vienna’s *Ostjuden*: “this community, this poor, ignorant community, alone comes into question here.”⁶¹

Thus, by founding a Jewish Toynbee-Hall, Kellner hoped to relieve the tensions between *Ostjuden* and assimilated Viennese Jews. Deeply concerned about the growing tensions between the acculturated westernized Jews and their newly arrived Yiddish-speaking counterparts, Kellner lamented, “We Jews have a curious fear of each other...we have lost our old camaraderie in thoughtless shortsightedness.”⁶² Kellner believed that all Jews have a responsibility to look out for one another, and sought to create an institution that could unite the rich and the poor in order to overcome feelings of social inequality. As Kellner explained, “A Toynbee-Hall is a place in which the rich and the poor, the educated and the ignorant, seek contact—common ground on which the extreme strata of society peacefully congregate—a house which paves the way for the moral equalization of social opposites.”⁶³

In some respect, Kellner’s Toynbee-Hall began as an attempt to serve the practical needs of working-class *Ostjuden* in an assimilative thrust. At its original location on Webergasse in the heart of Brigittenau (then part of Leopoldstadt), the complex housed twenty-four families at one given time. As Kellner attested, the residents did not receive mere free lodging, nor was the room and board cheaper or in any way superior to that in ordinary boardinghouses.⁶⁴ However, the Toynbee-Halls did offer residents free, German language courses, daycare programming for working mothers, and occupational training. In fact, residents were *required* to participate in

⁶¹ *Ost und West*, Heft 4, April 1901, trans. Anna Band, p. 293.

⁶² *Die Welt*, Heft 42, 19 October 1900, trans. Anna Band, p. 2-3.

⁶³ *Ost und West*, Heft 4, April 1901, trans. Anna Band, p. 292.

⁶⁴ *Die Welt*, Heft 42, 19 October 1900, trans. Anna Band, p. 2-3.

workers training programs in order to engage in ‘honorable’ occupations. As one of Kellner’s primary objectives was to eradicate the Jewish peddler from the streets of Vienna, he recruited colleagues to provide training for the *Ostjuden* in areas such as accounting or mechanics. Most importantly, the settlement house offered free classes in German language for its residents and non-residents alike, urging immigrants to drop their Yiddish accents and become fluent in the ‘superior’ German language. In a further assimilative thrust, seeking to eliminate the typical stereotype of the *Ostjude*, the Viennese Toynbee-Hall sponsored series of lectures specifically for *Ostjuden* that promoted proper hygiene practices and appropriate conduct in the public realm. From the hall’s opening in October 1900 until the end of 1904, 48 lectures were offered on issues of hygiene, cleanliness, the dangers of peddling, and Jewish prostitution.⁶⁵

Though theoretically modeled after its London counterpart, Kellner drastically moved away from Arnold Toynbee’s central vision when he founded Vienna’s Jewish Toynbee-Hall. Serving the practical needs of the *Ostjuden* proletariat was by no means Kellner’s primary motivation for founding the Toynbee-Hall. Unlike the social reform projects taken on by Barnett or Addams, the dogma of Kellner’s Toynbee-Hall bore little resemblance to a reciprocal relationship. While *Ostjuden* were to live in the hall full-time, the upper-middle class Viennese Jews only graced their coreligionists with their presence for evening programs. In fact, Kellner placed so much emphasis on the evening programs, that many are keen to forget that anybody actually lived there full-time. After all, since the October 19th issue of *Die Welt* in 1900, there has been little to

⁶⁵ Table 1.

no mention of permanent ‘residents’ or ‘living quarters’—Kellner simply refers to ‘guests,’ ‘visitors,’ and the hall’s ‘audience.’⁶⁶

I argue that Kellner really saw the Viennese Toynbee-Hall as an effort to educate, acculturate, and *uplift* the newly arrived *Ostjuden* in Vienna. In a spirit of *noblesse oblige*, Kellner saw himself as the provider of the acculturation of the “poor and ignorant” *Ostjuden*.⁶⁷ A sense superiority is reflected in Kellner’s statement that Toynbee-Hall is an “elegant building on the commercial street, though like a delicate dollhouse in a dirty, ugly environment.”⁶⁸ He believed that the Toynbee-Hall should amount to an “oasis for the poor, amidst their wandering in the wilderness as peddlers, junk dealers, and craftsmen.”⁶⁹ While the Toynbee-Hall was in part founded as a means of relieving the tensions between *Ostjuden* and assimilated Viennese Jews, this philanthropic effort was rooted in a condescending cultural superiority.

Intellectual Acculturation

First and foremost, Kellner and his colleagues sought to offer a diverse schedule of academically based lectures in order to embark on the task of acculturating the *Ostjuden* in the spirit of German *Bildung* through Vienna’s Toynbee-Hall. He explained, “Above all, the evenings in Toynbee-Hall should primarily offer intellectual and social conversation and entertainment”⁷⁰ Kellner’s Toynbee-Hall was considered a very successful *Bildungsinstitution*, or a cultural institution that embodies the spirit of

⁶⁶ My observations from reading every article pertaining to Toynbee-Hall from 1900-1904 in *Die Welt*.

⁶⁷ *Ost und West*, Heft 4, April 1901, trans. Anna Band, p. 292.

⁶⁸ *Die Welt*, Heft 42, 19 October 1900, trans. Anna Band, p. 3.

⁶⁹ *Ost und West*, Heft 4, April 1901, trans. Anna Band, p. 293.

⁷⁰ *Ost und West*, Heft 4, April 1901, trans. Anna Band, p. 293.

Bildung.⁷¹ The success of his program was certainly manifest in the attendance of evening lectures. As Kellner boasted,

“The hall seats 150 people. Of course, on some Sunday evenings we counted as many as 200; but this happened when the ushers did not exercise their authority with the necessary rigor... There are always so many more people than we can accommodate! On Sundays the crowd is at its greatest, so the ushers are backed up by a policeman... the Toynbee-Hall was immediately overcrowded on opening evening, so crowded that the hundreds had to be turned away. Ever since, the overcrowding has reoccurred every evening. If Toynbee-Hall is to fulfill its purpose, then we'll have to look into finding a suitable location that is at least three times the size of our current setting at Webergasse.”⁷²

In October 1901, the Toynbee-Hall actually did move to a new location on Karajangasse in order to accommodate more people. This new auditorium could accommodate up to four hundred people.⁷³ In analyzing the types of lectures offered at Toynbee-Hall, Kellner's aim to indoctrinate the *Ostjuden* with *Bildung* becomes apparent. Kellner and his bourgeoisie colleagues frequently gave lectures on Heine, Schiller, Goethe, Kant, Mendelssohn, and Voltaire—the epitome of *Bildung*. Other areas of study included science, economics, art, history, and law.

⁷¹ Klaus Hödl, *Als Bettler in die Leopoldstadt: Galizische Juden auf dem Weg nach Wien* (Wien: Böhlau Verlag Gessellschaft m.b.H., 1994), 162.

⁷² *Ost und West*, Heft 4, April 1901, trans. Anna Band, p. 293-294.

⁷³ *Die Welt*, Heft 40, 4 October 1901, trans. Anna Band, p. 13.

Table 1: Lectures offered at Toynbee-Hall as advertised in *Die Welt* during Kellner's leadership from 1900-1904

Category	Percentage	Total # Advertised	Examples of Lectures Advertised
Jewish History	10 %	29	The Marranos, Bar Kochba rebellion, Jewish Statesmen in the Middle Ages, Jewish Messianic movements in the 1700s and 1800s, Israel's migration in history, etc.
Austrian History	7 %	20	Austrian constitutional law, the history of Vienna, Kaiser Josef II, Austrian Freedom Fighters, Marie Ebner-Eschenbach, etc.
General History	4 %	11	Japanese culture, the German-French war of 1870-1871, the code of Hammurabi, etc.
Jewish Religion	6 %	17	Jewish holidays, Talmud, Bible, Aggadah, Jewish ethics, Maimonides, the concept of exile, etc.
*Issues for Immigrants	16.6 %	48	Hygiene, cleanliness, the dangers of peddling, Jewish prostitution, the Yiddish accent, Ostjuden as the 'new ghetto,' poverty, etc.
Philosophy	5.2 %	15	Kant, Mendelssohn, Voltaire, pre-mosaic world views, Schopenhauer, Moses Chaim Luzzatto, etc.
Literature	15.3 %	44	Shakespeare, Heine, Schiller, Lessing, Hebrew novels, Humanist poetry, Arabian Nights, Viktor Hugo, K.E. Franzos, Mapu, Francois Villon, etc.
Law	10.5 %	30	Capital punishment, criminal trials, the Justice Administration, the laws of war, the common law of Moses, etc.
Psychology	4.9 %	14	The 'doctrine of the soul,' anxiety, etc.
Philanthropy	3.1 %	9	Jewish women's associations, Jewish relief for the poor, the Jewish Institute for the Deaf, Hadassa, etc.
Natural Science	6 %	17	Chemistry, astronomy, modern physics, etc.
Medical Science	4.5 %	13	Eye diseases, the chemistry of food, Tuberculosis, etc.
Art	2.8 %	8	Painting, architecture, music as a form of expression, etc.
Economics	2 %	6	Insurance, banks, the stock market, national account systems, etc.
Mechanics	1 %	3	Electricity, the telephone, etc.
Travel	.7 %	2	Travels in Spain, the Orient, vacation accounts, etc.
Linguistics	.7 %	2	English philology, the origin of language, the origin of German, etc.
Academically-based lectures = 83.4 %		*Practically-based lectures (geared mainly for <i>Ostjuden</i>)= 16.6 %	
*Note: this table does not include the weekly Bible discussions offered each Friday evening.			

Toynbee-Hall as a preventative measure

In founding the Jewish Toynbee-Hall, Kellner's goal was also a "preventative kind: our youth ought to be kept away from a systematic education in insolence and frivolity."⁷⁴ Kellner viewed Vienna's evening nightlife and recreational atmosphere as corrupt and devoid of meaning, and therefore sought to provide the Jewish proletariat an alternative to working-class cafes through the Toynbee-Hall. He explained,

"How do our businessmen spend their time, when they leave work in the evening? This is one of the saddest chapters of life in a large city. The Viennese cafes and music halls have ruined more lives than tuberculosis and the plague. You don't die, if you accustom yourself in your youth to the coffeehouse and cabaret atmosphere, but one does go to ruin. All of the soulless Jewish families of the metropolis, whose life outside of work amounts to no more than game, theater, and turf and ball, have begun their education in the coffeehouse and terminated it in the cabaret."⁷⁵

Kellner was firm believer that recreation should involve cultural pursuits that would lead to the betterment of society and the cultivation of *Bildung*. He explained, "Man does not live by bread alone...the type and extent of acquisitions are very important factors in people's lives, but they are not everything. The ethics, the social values, the future of a family—depends ever so much on the type and extent of its recreation."⁷⁶ Thus, offering musical concerts in the spirit of *Bildung* formed an integral part of Kellner's program. He was eager to win over those *Ostjuden* who spent their time in the low-life saloons and Tingle-Tangles listening to hurdy-gurdy *Leiderkasten*.⁷⁷ Kellner aimed for Toynbee-Hall to "make an attempt to compete with these poisonous sites."⁷⁸

⁷⁴ *Ost und West*, Heft 4, April 1901, trans. Anna Band, p. 292.

⁷⁵ *Ost und West*, Heft 4, April 1901, trans. Anna Band, p. 295.

⁷⁶ *Ost und West*, Heft 4, April 1901, trans. Anna Band, p. 292.

⁷⁷ *Leiderkasten* is a genre of 'hurdy-gurdy' accordion music that tended to be associated with low-life saloons in Vienna and Berlin at the end of the nineteenth century and beginning of the twentieth century. Such music tended to mock Jews and distinctively Jewish traits.

⁷⁸ *Ost und West*, Heft 4, April 1901, trans. Anna Band, p. 293.

The Toynbee-Hall definitely succeeded in this respect. During Toynbee-Hall's beginnings, Keller called upon the hall's audience to participate in musical performances. However, one after the other came and volunteered for presentations of nothing less than mocking *Leiderkaten* such as "I am Isaak Silberstein!"⁷⁹ Though the singers were astonished when Kellner turned them away for their low-life kind of artistic entertainment, these people nevertheless "came back, and today these very same people sing Wagner, Schubert, Schumann, Grieg, and Brüll for us. The singers of Toynbee-Hall have by now self-educated themselves through Toynbee-Hall to such a degree, that one can turn the piano over to them without clearing the program in advance."⁸⁰ The *Bildung* character of Toynbee-Hall's musical program from 1900 - 1904 is evident.

Table 2: Music played in the Toynbee-Hall from 1900-1904
 *Source: *Jahres-Bericht der Jüdische Toynbee-Halle in Wien, 1904.*

Composer	Times	Composer	Times	Composer	Times
Abt	2	Hentschel	1	Raff	3
Adam	1	Herbert	1	Reinhold	2
D'Albert	1	Hildach	4	Rode	1
Ambrosio	1	Holländer Viktor	1	Rolsen	1
Bach	7	Hubay	3	Rossini	1
Beethoven	14	Humel	1	Rubinstein	12
Becker	1	Hunter	1	Rückauf	3
Beriot	4	Jellinek Irene	1	Saint-Saëns	1
Bizet	1	Joachim	1	Sarasate	3
Bohm	8	Jüngst	1	Sauer	1
Braga	1	Kaiser V.	1	Schlamm	1
Brahms	16	Kéler Bela	2	Schmitt Hans	1
Brüll	10	Kienzel	1	Schubert	18
Bruch	3	Kirchl	2	Schütt	1
Cesek	2	Kjerulf	1	Schumann	14
Chopin	11	Koschat	2	Sicard	1
Cornelius	1	Kreutzer	1	Simon	2
Czerwenka	1	Krug	1	Simonetti	5

⁷⁹ *Ost und West*, Heft 4, April 1901, trans. Anna Band, p. 293.

⁸⁰ *Ost und West*, Heft 4, April 1901, trans. Anna Band, p. 293.

Danbé	1	Lassen	2	Sinding	4
Dancla	2	Leschetizky	2	Singelée	1
Davidoff	1	Liszt	24	Smith Sidney	1
Delibes	2	Littolf	1	Spohr	1
Dessauer	1	Löwe	7	Steinbach	1
Donizetti	1	Löwenberg Ernst	3	Steiner	1
Drdla	2	Maillard	1	Strauss Johann	2
Dvořak	4	Marschner	1	Suppé	2
Esser	2	Mascagni	2	Svendsen	2
Franz Robert	4	Mendelssohn	15	Tartini	1
Fischhof Robert	1	Meyer-Helmund	5	Taubert	1
Gabriel Marie	2	Meyerbeer	3	Thomas	2
Gluck	1	Millöcker	1	Thomé	2
Godard	5	Moskowski	6	Tchaikovsky	3
Goldbaum Felix	1	Mozart	8	Verdi	5
Goldmark	8	Nessler	1	Vieuxtemps	2
Golkin	1	Nicolai	3	Volklieder	6
Goltermann	1	Ole Olsen	1	Wagner E. D.	1
Gounod	4	Pabst	1	Wagner Richard	10
Grieg	12	Paganini	1	Wieniawski	6
Grünfeld	4	Pahlen Richard	2	Weber	5
Gumpert	1	Peiser	1	Wolf Hugo	3
Haendel	1	Pierné	1	Zargiczka	1
Halevy	3	Poldini	1	Zemlinsky	1
Hauser	1	Popper	3		
Haydn	5	Rachmaninoff	2		

Yet, while the success of the Toynbee-Hall became manifest through evening programs and lectures, most were of an intellectual nature and geared towards the acculturated Viennese Jewish public. Only 16.6 percent of lectures offered involved practical concerns of the *Ostjuden*: the rest were aimed at an acculturated public.⁸¹ By 1903, Kellner seemed to be further alienating the *Ostjuden*—a gross departure from his original goal. He explained,

“Week after week, we have tolerated lazy, work-avoiding, scandal-addicted, reckless fellows and we let them play their various pranks on us in the hope that we converted them to better morals through their time at the Toynbee-Hall. Unfortunately, this hope did not in the least bit come to fulfillment. These people had to be kept away from our establishment this winter. For this

⁸¹ Table 1.

cleansing, the Toynbee-Hall owes its energy to Dr. Sadger, who guarded the entrance every evening for two whole weeks and performed the task with soothing strictness. A consequence of this cleansing is that we once again see the very decent men and women coming with increasing regularity.”⁸²

The results of this ‘cleansing’ effort are apparent in the fact that in the summer of 1903, the hall cancelled their German language courses due to increasingly low attendance rates.⁸³

Against an atmosphere of growing anti-Semitism and internal Jewish divisions, Kellner claimed to have recognized the need to provide a place that could unite rich and poor Jews to overcome feelings of social inequality, as well as to help both groups strengthen their Jewish identities and ultimately merge into a united entity. Yet, despite his personal background, Kellner was embarrassed and repelled by the ‘primitive’ culture of the *Ostjuden* and their ‘backward’ ways. For Kellner, the solution to the problem of *Ostjuden* lay in *Bildung*—education in its broadest sense; Eastern European Jews must immerse themselves in German humanism, learn Western languages and literature, and internalize proper etiquette.⁸⁴ Kellner believed that by becoming ‘gebildet’—educated—the *Ostjuden* would improve their lot; he believed that the *Ostjuden* had suffered because they had not yet followed the path of German Jews.⁸⁵ As historian Jack Wertheimer explains, “this perceived link between their own *Bildung* and emancipation also accounts for the hostility of German Jews toward immigrants, for the newcomers threatened to revive an image of the Jew that natives had worked so hard to obliterate.”⁸⁶ As Viennese Jews linked the improvement of their status to their

⁸² *Die Welt*, Heft 8, 20 February 1903, trans. Anna Band, p. 5.

⁸³ *Jahres-Bericht der Jüdische Toynbee-Halle in Wien*, 1904.

⁸⁴ Wertheimer, *Unwelcome Strangers*, 160.

⁸⁵ Wertheimer, *Unwelcome Strangers*, 160.

⁸⁶ Wertheimer, *Unwelcome Strangers*, 160.

own self-betterment, they believed that emancipation had been *earned*, and therefore projected their own situation upon *Ostjuden* and repeatedly advised their coreligionists to *imitate their example*.⁸⁷ Ultimately, Kellner's 'love affair' with *Bildung* was the driving force that forged the mission of the Jewish Toynbee-Hall of Vienna.

⁸⁷ Wertheimer, *Unwelcome Strangers*, 160.

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