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MARXISM AND ANTI-SEMITISM: KAUTSKY'S PERSPECTIVE*

Karl Kautsky's views on the Jewish question are of great import precisely because they are Kautsky's. In the years following Engels' death, Kautsky was the leading orthodox Marxist theoretician, executor of Marx's literary estate, editor of *Die Neue Zeit*, and a prolific author of popular Marxist tracts. It was Kautsky who drafted the theoretical part of the Erfurt Program of 1891, and Kautsky who wrote the classic rebuttal to Bernstein. It is scarcely an exaggeration to say that an entire generation of socialists around the world were taught Marx through Kautsky. There is a sense in which Kautsky's views on the Jewish question were even more influential than were his views on other matters. For Kautsky was perceived as an authority on the Jewish question even by many Marxists who were, or eventually became, sharply critical of his views on other questions.

In general, the academic community has neglected the study of Kautsky's views on the Jewish question. Those who have examined Kautsky's writings on this subject have tended to blur the distinctions between Kautsky's views and those of Marx. Edmund Silberner, for example, asserts that Kautsky had a "contempt for Judaism" differing in intensity, but not differing in essence, from that of Marx.¹ George Mosse claims that "for both Marx and Kautsky the Jews' supposed lack of humanity was of crucial concern."² While there is reason to accept the view that Marx held anti-

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¹ Edmund Silberner, "German Social Democracy and the Jewish Problem Prior to World War I", in: *Historia Judaica*, XV (1953), p. 41. Cf. id., "Was Marx an Anti-Semite?", *ibid.*, XI (1949), p. 51, in which Silberner contends that "*basically* the same contempt for the Jews" as that exhibited by Marx, "though couched in a different language, is to be found in the writings of Karl Kautsky, Victor Adler, Franz Mehring, Otto Bauer, and others." Emphasis in the original.

² George L. Mosse, "German Socialists and the Jewish Question in the Weimar Republic", in: *Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook*, XVI (1971), p. 124.

Semitic attitudes to some extent, the evidence put forth by those who make this claim about Kautsky does not withstand a close examination.

One of the most striking aspects of Kautsky's writings on the Jewish question is the fact that none of these writings discusses – or even mentions – Marx's *Zur Judenfrage*. There can be no doubt that Kautsky was familiar with Marx's piece. *Zur Judenfrage* was published in *Der Sozialdemokrat* in 1881, in the *Berliner Volksblatt* in 1890, and was quoted in the *Vorwärts* in 1891.³ Why, then, did Kautsky never mention Marx's article?

Though the policy which Marx advocates in *Zur Judenfrage* is more progressive than the policies advocated by many of Marx's contemporaries (including, notably, Bruno Bauer), Kautsky was well aware that readers could take Marx to be an anti-Semite. Kautsky did not want Marxism to be associated with anti-Semitism, and, above all, did not want his own work to be associated in any way with an anti-Jewish perspective. However, Kautsky was also unwilling to criticize Marx openly unless absolutely necessary. For Kautsky saw his role as interpreter and defender of the Marxist tradition, and was eager to avoid giving ammunition to the opponents of Marxism by himself attacking Marx. Thus Kautsky sidestepped his problem by writing works on the Jewish question wholly different in tone from Marx's *Zur Judenfrage*, but written in Marxist terminology and using a Marxist mode of analysis. In so doing, Kautsky probably comforted himself with the knowledge that Engels and Bernstein – the two men from whom he had learned the most about Marxism – had also broken with the tone of Marx's *Zur Judenfrage* in their writings on the Jewish question. Throughout his career, Kautsky's views on anti-Semitic political movements, on Jewish assimilation, and on the Jewish socialist and labor movements were similar to views which either Engels or Bernstein had held on these phenomena in the 1880's and early 1890's.⁴

But Kautsky ought not be seen entirely in the shadow of his teachers. The death of Engels, and Bernstein's break with orthodox Marxism, left Kautsky as the most prominent surviving member of what had been a group of leading Marxists. Whereas before 1895 Kautsky's perspective on the Jewish question was merely one example of a view shared by many of the most renowned Marxists, a decade later Kautsky was the single most authoritative theoretician in the Marxist world, and his views on the Jewish

³ Robert Wistrich, "Karl Marx, German Socialists and the Jewish Question, 1880-1914", in: *Soviet Jewish Affairs*, III (1973), pp. 92-93; Rosemarie Leuschen-Seppel, *Sozialdemokratie und Antisemitismus im Kaiserreich* (Bonn, 1978), pp. 81-86.

⁴ See my doctoral dissertation, "Kautsky on the Jewish Question" (Columbia University, 1983), pp. 8-89.

question commanded enormously increased attention and respect. Even when Kautsky did no more than re-state earlier opinions, his words were translated and debated in socialist circles.

Kautsky, however, could not and did not solely re-iterate. On the contrary, Kautsky confronted aspects of the Jewish question which quite simply had not existed in Engels' day – let alone Marx's. One of these new aspects was the emergence of a mass-based Jewish Marxist movement with a national program – the General Jewish Workers' Union, most often known as the *Bund*. It was one thing to support the Jewish socialist and labor movements when these movements were cosmopolitan and anti-national, as they generally had been in the 1880's and 1890's. It was quite another thing to support these movements after they began to demand national rights for Russian Jewry. Another phenomenon related to the Jewish question which did not emerge until after Engels' death was the rise of Zionism as a mass-political movement. Engels never so much as mentioned Zionism in his correspondence or other writings. Bernstein, similarly, did not take a public position on Zionism before the revisionist controversy. It was, therefore, left to Kautsky to set the tone for the orthodox Marxist position on the *Bund* and on Zionism. In fact, it was Kautsky who set the tone for the orthodox Marxist debate on the Jewish question in general during the period 1895-1914. It is to an explication of Kautsky's position that we now turn.

The first piece by Kautsky relevant to the Jewish question published after he became a Marxist appeared in *Der Sozialdemokrat* in October 1882. "It is a characteristic sign", Kautsky wrote at that time, "that *Jew-baiting* breaks out precisely in those lands where 'divine right' rules uncontestedly".⁵ True, Kautsky continued, there is a social "moment" to this baiting, but, precisely because the anti-Semites single out Jews rather than attacking societal parasites without regard to race and religion, the anti-Semitic movement is unhealthy. The appearance of a Jew-baiting movement in Austria-Hungary demonstrates the corrupting influence of the absolutist form of government. In Kautsky's mind, there could be no doubt that the Austrian government was ultimately responsible for the attacks on the Jews which occurred in the Austro-Hungarian Empire. In explaining why the people had participated in anti-Jewish actions, Kautsky noted that in those places where the people are absolutely without rights, they tend to strike where they are least likely to encounter resistance. Thus, in Austria-

⁵ "Oesterreich-Ungarn", in: *Der Sozialdemokrat*, October 5, 1882; cf. Werner Blumenberg, *Karl Kautskys literarisches Werk* (The Hague, 1960), No 237.

Hungary Jews were likely victims precisely because they were weak. "A thing like this", Kautsky concludes, "would not be possible in a free land."⁶

Kautsky continued to attack anti-Semitism, both in public and in private, in the years following the publication of this article. In September 1883, for example, Kautsky wrote an article for the *Züricher Post* in which he noted the "ominous" magnitude of Jew-baiting in Austria-Hungary.⁷ At the end of that same year, Kautsky wrote a manifesto to the workers of Austria in which he stressed the reactionary character of anti-Semitism.

Not the birth cries of a new society, but the death spasms of an old one manifest themselves in Hungarian Jew-baiting.⁸

The Jew-baiting, Kautsky prophesied, will and must repeat itself, and will ultimately affect not only the Jews, but all those in the propertied classes.

Just as did Bernstein, Kautsky warned Engels of the power of the anti-Semites. In a letter to Engels written in 1884, Kautsky told his teacher that

we [Austrian Social Democrats] have difficulty in hindering our own people from fraternizing with the anti-Semites. The anti-Semites are now our most dangerous opponents, more dangerous than in Germany, because they pose as oppositional and democratic, thus comply with the instincts of the workers.⁹

Kautsky re-iterated this warning in December 1884. The anti-Semitic movement is an enemy of the socialist movement, Kautsky declared, an enemy of "colossal dimensions".¹⁰

The first article by Kautsky on the Jewish question to appear under Kautsky's name was published in the *Oesterreichischer Arbeiter-Kalender für das Jahr 1885*. Though not many people openly identify themselves as anti-Semites, Kautsky asserted in this piece, nine-tenths of the population of Hungary belong to the anti-Semitic tendency. What, Kautsky asks, are the roots of the anti-Semitic movement? It is, he replies, first and foremost a class struggle. Society is divided into three sorts of classes: a rising class, a ruling class, and declining classes. Anti-Semitism is associated with the last of these three groups. However, anti-Semitism does not emerge in all areas in which there are declining classes, but only in those in which Jews "are

⁶ "Oesterreich-Ungarn".

⁷ "Aus Oesterreich", in: *Züricher Post*, September 11, 1883; cf. Blumenberg, Kautskys literarisches Werk, op. cit., No 304.

⁸ Quoted in Ludwig Brügel, *Geschichte der österreichischen Sozialdemokratie*, III (Vienna, 1922), p. 320.

⁹ To Engels, June 23, 1884, in *Friedrich Engels' Briefwechsel mit Karl Kautsky*, ed. by Benedikt Kautsky (Vienna, 1955), p. 125.

¹⁰ To Engels, December 22, *ibid.*, p. 159; cf. to Engels, November 26, 1888, *ibid.*, p. 225.

still nationally separated from the rest of the population".¹¹ Where this is not the case, as in Western Europe, it could not possibly occur to anyone to wage a class struggle against a race.

To Kautsky, the position the Social Democratic Party ought to take vis-a-vis anti-Semitism is clear. Though the anti-Semitic movement borrowed socialist slogans, though it thundered against capital, the social democrats must condemn it, for it is "reactionary through and through".¹² The anti-Semitic movement is also exploitative. To be sure, the anti-Semites claim to struggle against exploitation. In point of fact, they actually direct their energy primarily against working Jews. "There is, therefore, nothing more inimical to social democracy than anti-Semitism. [. . .] Anti-Semitism is not misunderstood socialism, but misunderstood feudalism."¹³ It is not doing the preparatory work for socialism, but is, on the contrary, socialism's "most dangerous opponent".¹⁴

The importance of this article by Kautsky cannot be overstated. For it was the first open attack on the anti-Semitic political movements which could be definitely attributed to a major Marxist theoretician. Bernstein, while certainly in agreement with Kautsky's position, had not yet published anything on the issue in his own name by 1885. Engels, similarly, had, in *Anti-Dühring*, paved the way for the position delineated by Kautsky in this article. However, Engels did not publish a public condemnation of the anti-Semitic political movement until 1890. Not necessarily in theory, but rather in terms of presenting a jointly held analysis to the public, Kautsky led the way.

In his article in the *Oesterreichischer Arbeiter-Kalender* Kautsky makes passing reference to Jewish "racial characteristics", which, he asserts, came into being as a result of historical conditions. Kautsky returned to the theme of Jewish characteristics in an article published in *Die Neue Zeit* in 1890. The modern anti-Semites, Kautsky notes in this article, attack the Jews because they are economic competitors. However, the anti-Semites do not admit that this is the case, but, rather, claim that their ideology is grounded in "laws of nature", in a "natural" and "eternal" opposition of races.¹⁵

It is certainly true, Kautsky continues, that opposition to the Jews is a long-standing phenomenon. There were examples of such opposition as early as Roman times. It is also true that anti-Semitism is geographically

¹¹ C. Kautsky, "Der Antisemitismus", in: *Oesterreichischer Arbeiter-Kalender für das Jahr 1885* (Brünn), p. 100.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 101.

¹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 102-03.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 104.

¹⁵ S., "Das Judentum", in: *Die Neue Zeit* (henceforth NZ), VIII (1890), pp. 23-24.

widespread, and can be shown to exist in all the lands of Europe, and even in the Orient. Nevertheless, this opposition ought not be attributed to a natural feeling, nor ought it to be thought of as eternal. For the supposedly natural characteristics of the Jews are characteristics which are also exhibited by other peoples. These characteristics are not racial, but rather “the characteristics of inhabitants of specific localities under specific conditions of production”.¹⁶

In the case of the Jews, the geography of Palestine, and the pressure of over-population in ancient Palestine, go a long way towards explaining Jewish traits. When over-population led Jews to emigrate in ancient times, Kautsky claims, these emigrees always thought in terms of eventually returning to their homeland. They therefore chose non-agricultural occupations, which, they hoped, would facilitate their eventual return to Palestine. Thus the Jewish people, which had been an agricultural people when it was based in Palestine, became a trading people outside of Palestine. This tendency was accelerated by the conquest and subjugation of the Jewish state. For, at that point, the peasant component of the Jewish people ceased to exist. Whereas the urban populations of all other nations have been continuously influenced and replenished by the peasants of those nations, Jews, in the second century AD, became a purely urban population, with no possibility of replenishment by peasants of their own stock.

In this sense the Jewish case is unique. The Jews are the only nation which has managed to survive under such circumstances. Thus, for historical reasons, the Jews became the people which most strongly exhibited the characteristics, both positive and negative, of city dwellers. In Kautsky's words:

What appears to us as the unbridgeable racial opposition between the “Aryan” and the “Semite” is, in truth, only the opposition between the peasant and the city dweller driven to the extreme by special circumstances.¹⁷

But precisely because the purportedly Jewish characteristics are not natural but rather historical, these characteristics will cease to exist in time. Jewry is becoming stratified along class lines. Increasingly, this stratification within the Jewish people will eliminate the unique aspects of the Jewish case.

However, Kautsky stressed that he did not expect that anti-Semitism would disappear rapidly. In a book review published in *Die Neue Zeit* Kautsky asserted that the modern mode of production tends to efface religious and national differences when these differences are not combined

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 25.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 27.

with social differences. When, on the other hand, religious and national differences coincide with social differences, the contemporary mode of production tends to strengthen differentiation.

The expectation of bourgeois ideologues, to wit, bourgeois democrats, that the progress of “culture” within our society must by itself lead to the abolition of all national and religious disputes, is, consequently, only partially substantiated.¹⁸

Anti-Semitism will continue to exist for so long as the petty bourgeoisie and the peasantry continue to consider it possible to “secure a tolerable existence within the framework of modern society”.¹⁹ Thus, while the anti-Semitic movement has no ultimate prospects for success, it cannot be wholly eliminated in today’s society. A letter by Kautsky to Emma Adler written in 1895 reveals much about Kautsky’s attitude towards the anti-Semites of that era. In Germany, Kautsky wrote, the SPD deals with the anti-Semites too snobbishly, for the party thinks of the anti-Semites as a negligible quantity. The German socialists do not properly understand Austrian anti-Semitism.

As an element of decomposition, and of nullification of stability of that which exists, anti-Semitism has, in my opinion, great significance.²⁰

Kautsky’s view of anti-Semitism, once developed, seems to have remained more or less fixed. In fact, Kautsky never departed from the view which he put forth in the 1880’s and 1890’s. However, Kautsky’s views took on a new importance in the late 1890’s. As his stature in the Marxist movement rose, his pronouncements on issues of the day – including his pronouncements on the Jewish question – were accorded greater respect and attention. To be sure, the social democrats of Central and Eastern Europe did not always act in accordance with the views expressed by Kautsky. However, in the years before the First World War Kautsky’s views always received an attentive hearing.

An indication of the kind of role Kautsky played can be seen in an incident which occurred at the time of the Dreyfus Affair. The Affair had caused splits within the French socialist movement. Jean Jaurès, leader of one of the French socialist factions, had undergone a transformation, and was, by late 1898, fully supportive of Dreyfus’ cause. Jaurès’ biographer,

¹⁸ K. K., review of *Die Ungarischen Rumänen und die Ungarische Nation* and of *Die Rumänische Frage in Siebenbürgen und Ungarn* in *NZ*, XI (1892-93), 1, p. 831.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 832.

²⁰ To Emma Adler, April 22, 1895, in Victor Adler, *Briefwechsel mit August Bebel und Karl Kautsky*, ed. by Friedrich Adler (Vienna, 1954), p. 175.

Harvey Goldberg, notes that “Jaurès, moving beyond the limited confines set by the schematic Socialist approach to the European Jewish question, made the struggle against antisemitism one of the central symbols of Socialism.”²¹

In 1899, Charles Rappoport, a prominent Russian Jewish émigré active in French socialist affairs, suggested to Jaurès that opinions on the correct handling of the Dreyfus Affair be solicited from the most prominent leaders of the world’s major socialist movements.²² Jaurès polled a large handful of individuals – including Kautsky. One of the questions in Jaurès’ poll read:

Can the socialist working class, without abandoning the principle of the class struggle, take sides in the conflicts among various bourgeois factions, whether to save political liberty or, as in the Dreyfus Affair, to defend humanity?²³

While all those polled answered “yes” to this question, not all were willing to support Jaurès’ stance in the Affair. Liebknecht, for example, maintained that the socialists ought not involve themselves in the Dreyfus Affair. He did not believe in Dreyfus’ innocence, and at one point went so far as to claim that the Affair was of import only insofar as it exposed the dangers inherent in military espionage.²⁴

Kautsky disagreed with Liebknecht and supported the stance taken by Jaurès. He not only endorsed Jaurès’ positions in the poll, but also wrote the French socialist leader a strongly worded note in which he declared:

I use the opportunity to express to you my deep admiration for the incomparable manner in which you have saved the honor of French socialism in the Dreyfus Affair. I can think of no more disastrous position for a fighting class than to persist in a position of neutrality in a crisis which stirs a whole nation; I can think of no more destructive position for a party of social regeneration than to remain indifferent in a question of law, no mistake which would be more unpardonable than irresolution against soldiery. I wish your noble work full success and shake your hand with friendship.²⁵

²¹ Harvey Goldberg, “Jean Jaurès and the Jewish Question: The Evolution of a Position”, in: *Jewish Social Studies*, XX (1958), p. 68.

²² Charles Rappoport, “Dos lebn fun a revolutionarn emigrant”, in: *Di yidishe sotzialistische bavegung biz der grindung fun “bund”*, ed. by E. Tscharikower, A. Menes, F. Kursky and A. Rosin (Ben-Adir) (Vilna, Paris, 1939), p. 307.

²³ Harvey Goldberg, *The Life of Jean Jaurès* (Madison, 1968), p. 523.

²⁴ James Joll, *The Second International 1889-1914* (London, 1974), p. 86; Paul W. Massing, *Rehearsal for Destruction* (New York, 1949), p. 274; Silberner, “German Social Democracy and the Jewish Problem”, loc. cit., pp. 16-21; Rappoport, *ibid.*

²⁵ [Karl Kautsky,] “Jaurès’ Taktik und die deutsche Sozialdemokratie”, in: *Vorwärts*, July 26, 1899, p. 3, c. 1; “Un Mot de Kautsky”, in: *La Petite République*, July 24, p. 1, c. 5.

Another indication of the respect accorded Kautsky's views is evident in a letter to Kautsky by Adolf Warszawski, a leader of the Social Democratic Party of the Kingdom of Poland and Lithuania, in May 1903.²⁶ Warszawski's letter was written immediately after the Kishinev pogrom of 1903,²⁷ and contains a request that Kautsky write an article on anti-Semitism and the tasks of the social democracy for *Przegląd Socjaldemokratyczny*, an organ of the SDKPiL. Warszawski informed Kautsky that there was reason to believe that pogroms similar to the one in Kishinev would occur in Poland, since representatives of the Tsarist government were involved in instigating anti-Jewish actions. He also noted that the SDKPiL was particularly concerned with this question because of the large Jewish population in Russian Poland. Warszawski admitted, however, that the SDKPiL was interested in an article by Kautsky on anti-Semitism primarily because the party wanted to use such an article to bolster its position in the ongoing struggle between the Polish social democrats and the *Bund*.

Warszawski claimed that the *Bund* was becoming increasingly nationalistic, and that it was increasingly moving towards advocacy of a separate party organization for the Jews. We are afraid, Warszawski wrote, that the recent massacres will drive the *Bund* further in this separatist direction. There are already two social-democratic organizations in each city: one non-Jewish, and the other a national-Jewish organization.

Leaving aside the question of whether the Jews truly form a nation and whether they have a national future in Russia – as the *Bund* claims –, the question of party organization and of the relation of the Jewish worker to the working class as a whole must be solved on the basis of common class interest, and not on the basis of isolating, national, interests.²⁸

Thus, Warszawski concludes, precisely because the *Bund* would consider an article by Kautsky to be of the greatest importance, the SDKPiL hoped that Kautsky would see fit to write on this subject.

Kautsky fulfilled Warszawski's request by writing an article entitled "The Kishinev Massacre and the Jewish Question". His article begins as follows:

²⁶ On Warszawski see J. P. Nettl, *Rosa Luxemburg* (London, 1966), I, p. 79.

²⁷ The Kishinev massacre – one of the worst pogroms in the history of Russian Jewry – was sparked by the false accusation that Jews had killed a Russian (non-Jewish) boy. Acting with the consent and encouragement of Russian officials, unruly gangs murdered forty-five Jews and seriously wounded eighty-six others. Cf. Simon Dubnov, *History of the Jews*, transl. by Moïse Spiegel (5 vols; South Brunswick, 1967-73), V, pp. 716-19.

²⁸ To Kautsky, May 20, 1903, Kautsky Papers (henceforth K) D XXIII 63, Internationaal Instituut voor Sociale Geschiedenis.

The editor of the *Przegląd Socyaldemokratyczny* [sic] [. . .] requests me to express my opinion on the Kishinev bloodbath. It is not easy to give an answer to this question which goes beyond that which is self-evident, beyond the self-evident horror of the dreadful brutalities. It is difficult to meditate quietly and dispassionately about events the very reporting of which makes our blood run cold, and which, at the same time, kindles our most furious hatred of those who are responsible.²⁹

Kautsky continues by analyzing the cause of anti-Semitism from a Marxist perspective. He notes that anti-Semitism in Western Europe is linked to the despair of declining strata, and that it is the history of Jews rather than racial characteristics which explains the concentration of Jews in certain economic categories and occupations. In Eastern Europe, where Jews are not overwhelmingly affiliated with either the bourgeoisie or the intelligentsia, the antipathy towards them cannot be explained solely in terms of the jealousy of declining strata. It is, however, explicable as a specific example of the general tendency of primitive and traditional peoples to display hostility towards neighbours of another stock. Not only Russian Jewry, but also the Negroes of the United States and the minorities of Turkey and Austria-Hungary suffer from the effects of this phenomenon.

Kautsky maintained that the hostility between the backward East European peoples and the Jews would not be overcome until there were no cultural differences between them. Thus Kautsky “advocated” the assimilation of Jews and non-Jews because he believed that only assimilation could rid the world of the scourge of anti-Semitism. In his article on Kishinev, Kautsky stressed the factors leading to such assimilation. The fact that Jews no longer controlled their original homeland, and thus no longer had the territorial base which had made them a nation, the fact that there were class divisions within Jewry, and, on the other hand, the commonality of interests between Jewish and non-Jewish proletarians were all discussed. So long, however, as assimilation does not occur, “there is only one means whereby to counteract the aversion towards the Jewish character: the *enlightenment* of the masses.” Since the Tsarist government blocked enlightenment of this kind,

There is no doubt that the Russian autocracy is the key guilty party in the Kishinev murders – indirectly through the ignorance, through the isolation from the rest of the world and from all new ideas in which it artificially maintains the masses, directly through its tools who were active as the inciters of these masses.³⁰

²⁹ Karl Kautsky, “Das Massaker von Kischeneff und die Judenfrage”, in: *NZ*, XXI (1902-03), 2, p. 303.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 308. For an additional comment by Kautsky on the Kishinev pogrom see *id.*, “Die Fortsetzung einer unmöglichen Diskussion”, *ibid.*, XXIII (1904-05), 2, p. 719.

“The Kishinev Massacre and the Jewish Question” appeared in German in *Die Neue Zeit*, was translated into Polish and published by those associated with Rosa Luxemburg, and was published by the *Iskra* in Russian.³¹ Those active in the Jewish socialist movement were less pleased with Kautsky’s piece. There is no record of its being translated into Yiddish, nor of its Polish or Russian versions being distributed by the *Bund*. The disagreements which the Bundists had with Kautsky’s article, however, did not lead them to break with him. The Bundists believed in the necessity of an autonomous Jewish socialist organization in the Russian Empire. Kautsky’s article, though it did not directly make such an assertion, implied that autonomous Jewish movements would hinder assimilation and were therefore not desirable. This difference notwithstanding, Kautsky’s good will and intentions – not always present in other socialists who wrote on Jewry – were manifest even to those Bundists who disagreed with him.

On the eve of the First World War³² Kautsky wrote a book-length critique of anti-Semitism, in which he expanded upon many of the themes mentioned in his article on Kishinev. German anti-Semites had shifted the basis of their attacks on Jews from traditional and religious rationalizations to pseudo-scientific racial ones. Kautsky’s *Rasse und Judentum* destroyed the scientific mask of the anti-Semitic propagandists and was, in fact, motivated by a desire to do so.

Drawing on his considerable knowledge of Darwinian and other theories of evolution, Kautsky attempted to prove that

The sharpness of race demarcation, which is evident in the case of animals, disappears more and more among men. In the place of sharply distinct races, unchanged for long periods, we find a constant and increasingly rapid process of race disintegration; the formation of new races, race mixtures, conditioned by the general process of technical, economic, social evolution, arising from this process and closely interlaced with it.³³

The Jews, Kautsky maintained, were a classic example of such a process. By presenting scientific data on the color of hair, shape of nose and form of

³¹ Blumenberg, Kautskys literarisches Werk, No 814. During this period Kautsky also endorsed several resolutions of the International Socialist Bureau condemning anti-Semitism: International Socialist Review, II (1901-02), p. 600; “The Kischiniff Massacres”, *ibid.*, IV (1903-04), p. 46; K G 3, No 145.

³² On July 13, 1914, Kautsky wrote to Adler that he had not yet proofread his work on Jewry. Adler, Briefwechsel mit August Bebel und Karl Kautsky, *op. cit.*, p. 594.

³³ Karl Kautsky, *Rasse und Judentum* (Stuttgart, 1914), p. 28, as translated in *id.*, *Are the Jews a Race?* (New York, 1926), p. 62.

head of Jews in various parts of the world, Kautsky demonstrated that there were no longer sharply defined physical traits which were both exclusively Jewish and could be considered racial. Having made this point, Kautsky went on to contend that all remaining Jewish traits, whether acquired due to environmental, social or economic factors, would likewise disappear as Jews assimilated. He provided figures on the steady increases in the number of conversions from Judaism and of mixed marriages, and concluded that

it is only in the ghetto, in a condition of compulsory exclusion from their environment, and under political pressure, deprived of their rights and surrounded by hostility, that the Jews can maintain themselves among other peoples. They will dissolve, unite with their environment and disappear, where the Jew is regarded and treated as a free man and as an equal.³⁴

Thus, just as in his article on Kishinev, Kautsky “advocated” assimilation in *Rasse und Judentum* because he believed that the assimilation of the Jews (and of other small peoples) would be a positive development for the Jews and for their neighbors. It must be stressed, however, that Kautsky was absolutely opposed to forcing Jews to assimilate by denying them the right to educate their children and use their own language, or by any other means. One of the reasons for which Kautsky was opposed to forced assimilation was that he believed that it would backfire. Referring to the case of the Czechs, for example, Kautsky noted in 1917 that the attempt to force them to assimilate had actually hindered assimilation.³⁵ Similarly, in *Die Befreiung der Nationen* Kautsky remarked that the assimilation of Jews had been hindered by an era of persecutions.³⁶ Kautsky was well aware that policies designed to pressure Jews into assimilating or a general increase in anti-Semitism might prevent assimilation from occurring. While he believed and even hoped that Jewish assimilation would occur, his theory was neither mechanistic nor fatalistic.

Kautsky’s views on the desirability of assimilation help explain his principled opposition to Zionism. When Kautsky first concretized his position on Zionism, the Zionist movement, while growing in strength, represented a small minority of Jewish opinion, and was especially weak among Jewish workers and artisans. Several different socialist-Zionist movements emerged in Eastern Europe in the first few years of the twentieth century. The mainstream Zionist movement, however, was essentially anti-social-

³⁴ *Are the Jews a Race?*, p. 156.

³⁵ Karl Kautsky, *Die Befreiung der Nationen* (Stuttgart, 1917), p. 45.

³⁶ *Ibid.* My thanks to Professor John Kautsky for pointing out this passage to me.

ist.³⁷ In Germany, Kautsky's home at the turn of the century, the official newspaper of the German Zionists, the *Jüdische Rundschau*, cautioned Jews not to vote for the SPD in 1903, claimed that anti-Semitism was evident in socialist ranks, and insisted that Jews were deluding themselves if they believed that the political situation of the Jews would improve under socialism.³⁸

This animosity on the part of the general Zionists towards the SPD probably contributed to Kautsky's strong condemnation of Zionism.³⁹ In the course of his article on Kishinev, Kautsky declared that

The Zionist movement [. . .] can only strengthen the anti-Semitic feelings of the masses in that it increases the isolation of Jewry from the rest of the population and thus stamps Jewry even more than hitherto as a foreign tribe, which according to its own notions has no business being on Russian soil. Against its will, it thereby looks after the business of Tsardom, by which it was hitherto only tolerated. The Zionists should be cured of the hopes which most of them now place in the Tsar.⁴⁰

In 1908, after pieces critical of the labor Zionists had been published in *Die Neue Zeit*, Leon Chasanowitsch (a prominent labor-Zionist writer) decided to interview Kautsky.⁴¹ Chasanowitsch hoped that Kautsky's position on Zionism was based on lack of information, and that Kautsky could be convinced to change his opinion of the labor-Zionist movement. The interview, published in the central organ of the *Poalei Tsion* in Austria,⁴² disappointed Chasanowitsch, and led him to characterize Kautsky's posi-

³⁷ On the history of Zionism see Walter Laqueur's *A History of Zionism* (New York, 1972).

³⁸ "Das Ergebnis der Reichstagswahl", in: *Jüdische Rundschau*, July 3, 1903, pp. 26ff., cited in Jehuda Eloni, "Die zionistische Bewegung in Deutschland und die SPD 1897-1918", in: *Juden und jüdische Aspekte in der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung 1848-1918*, ed. by Walter Grab (Tel Aviv, 1977), pp. 90-91.

³⁹ I do not mean to suggest that Kautsky's position on Zionism was a reaction to attacks by Zionists on Socialists, but merely to indicate that the mainstream Zionist movement was hostile to socialism. Long before he spoke out against Zionism, Kautsky had allowed anti-Zionist articles to be published in *Die Neue Zeit*. See, for example, S[amuel] Häcker, "Über den Zionismus", in: *NZ XIII* (1894-95), 2, pp. 759-61; J[akob] St[ern], review of *Der Judenstaat* *ibid.*, XV (1896-97), 1, p. 186; Johann Pollak, "Der politische Zionismus", *ibid.*, XVI (1897-98), 1, pp. 596-600.

⁴⁰ "Das Massaker von Kischeneff und die Judenfrage", *loc. cit.*, p. 308.

⁴¹ The article which provoked Chasanowitsch (1880(?) - 1925) to seek out Kautsky was almost certainly B. Rosin, "Die zionistisch-sozialistische Utopie", in: *NZ, XXVII* (1908-09), 1, pp. 29-34. B. Rosin was a pseudonym of Boris Frumkin, see Franz Kursky, *Gezamlte shriftn* (New York, 1952), p. 252.

⁴² Kasriel [Leon Chasanowitsch], "Karl kautsky un wurm iber der yudenfrage", in: *Der yudisher arbayter*, December 25, 1908, pp. 1-2.

tion as naive.⁴³ However, Kautsky's answers to the questions posed by Chasanowitsch actually demonstrated a principled commitment to the positions delineated in the articles on the labor-Zionist movement which Kautsky had allowed to be published in *Die Neue Zeit*. For during this interview Kautsky indicated that he was not opposed to Jewish colonization *per se*, but that he feared that the Zionist movement was interfering with the activity of the *Bund*. Jewish colonization projects ought to be left to philanthropy, not undertaken as the major goal of a Jewish socialist movement. Besides, Kautsky asked, why ought Jews move to Palestine rather than, for example, New Zealand? Agitation among the non-Jewish workers, equal civil rights and assimilation, Kautsky implied, would ultimately solve the problems which the Jews were encountering.

A revised edition of *Rasse und Judentum*, published in 1921, contained a chapter specifically devoted to Zionism after the war. Kautsky revised his work yet again in the mid 1920's, in preparation for the publication of an English translation. Precisely because Kautsky believed that assimilation would ultimately bring an end to anti-Semitism, and that Zionism hindered assimilation, he characterized Zionism in these revised editions of his work as a "reactionary" movement: "Zionism aims not at following the line of necessary evolution, but of putting a spoke in the wheel of progress."⁴⁴ Kautsky was also skeptical of the practical possibility of realizing the Zionist goal. He noted the lack of a solid economic infrastructure in Palestine and the absence of a large body of experienced Jewish farmers, and predicted that the lack of economic opportunities would induce Jews to emigrate from, rather than immigrate to, Palestine. Again, in *Die materialistische Geschichtsauffassung*, which was published in 1927, Kautsky claimed that the restoration of a diminutive Jewish state in Palestine would not change much for world Jewry, and pointed to the hostility of the Arabs to such a state.⁴⁵

The prediction of Arab hostility was confirmed by the pogrom in Hebron in 1929. Writing in the wake of this pogrom, Kautsky explained his long-term and continued opposition to Zionism in the following terms.

Its goal is one which we like very much: to create a home for tormented Jewry, in which it would freely control itself, secured against every type of maltreatment. Only unwillingly did we come to the conviction – the "we" being almost all of social democracy up to the First World War – that

⁴³ Leon Chasanowitsch, "Vos kautsky veys vegn di yidn frage", in: Varhayt, January 13, 1909, p. 4, cc. 4-5.

⁴⁴ Are the Jews a Race?, p. 207.

⁴⁵ Karl Kautsky, *Die materialistische Geschichtsauffassung* (Berlin, 1927), I, p. 690; II, p. 169.

Palestine is not the best basis on which to collect the Jews as a nation and in which to unite them in a national state. For that purpose Palestine is much too small.⁴⁶

Kautsky also pointed to the problems which "Europeanized" Jews would have living in an Islamic area, and did not find the argument of Jewish historical rights to Palestine convincing. He believed that the Jews already in Palestine could live there only under the protection of the British, and predicted a rise in Arab nationalism followed by a catastrophe for the Jewish settlers. Far from gloating over the confirmation of his prophecies of 1921 and 1927, Kautsky very much regretted their fulfillment.

It is rather astonishing how many of the expectations which Marx and the Marxists expressed have come about. We were not always enthusiastic about the correctness of the prophecy. For it not rarely consisted in predicting a failure for enterprises which we would rather have wished success.

Who had not wished that Lenin's bold enterprise would have succeeded and that it would have brought Russia and, from there, the world socialism! That our fear that the Leninist method must end in disaster was realized did not by any means fill us with satisfaction.

And the situation with Zionism is the same.⁴⁷

Kautsky's writings on Zionism in 1929 provoked rejoinders from other prominent social democrats, including Emile Vandervelde, Camille Huysmans and Eduard Bernstein.⁴⁸ In a letter to Vandervelde dated November 21, 1929, Kautsky commented on Vandervelde's rejoinder, and clarified his own position. "I am entirely in agreement with you in your sympathy for the Zionists, particularly the socialists among them."⁴⁹ But this sympathy, Kautsky immediately added, was comparable to the feeling which he had for utopian-socialist experiments based on the ideas of Owen, Fourier or Cabet. There is, Kautsky continued, another similarity between the utopian socialists and the Zionists. The Zionists have no better chance of success than did the utopians. To be sure, there are also differences

⁴⁶ Id., "Die Aussichten des Zionismus", in: Arbeiter-Zeitung, September 22, 1929, p. 4.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Emile Vandervelde, "Karl Kautsky et le Sionisme", in: La Dépêche, November 2, 1929; Comité Socialiste pour la Palestine Ouvrière, Bulletin, November 1929, pp. 10-11; La Vie Socialiste, December 14, pp. 8-9; Camille Huysmans, "Sur le Sionisme", in: Bulletin, ibid., pp. 9-10; "A propos de sionisme", in: La Vie Socialiste, ibid., p. 7; Eduard Bernstein, "Die Aussichten des Zionismus. Eine Antwort an Karl Kautsky", in: Vorwärts, December 8, 2. Beilage, cf. Zwei sozialistische Antworten auf Karl Kautsky's Artikel "Die Aussichten des Zionismus", Bernstein Papers B 10, Internationaal Instituut voor Sociale Geschiedenis.

⁴⁹ To E. Vandervelde, November 21, 1929, Institut E. Vandervelde, Brussels, EV/1077/

between the conditions under which the Zionists work and those which confronted the utopians. The Zionists, for one thing, have access to capital. But the Zionists also confront great obstacles. "There is not one country at this time where the Jews are more menaced by pogroms than Palestine."⁵⁰ Encouraging Jews to emigrate from Europe to Palestine, therefore, creates great danger for the Jews themselves.

Kautsky also replied to Bernstein's rejoinder. Bernstein's comments, Kautsky claimed, can be so "construed as if I denied Zionism any justification. This is in no way correct. [. . .] I objected not to the *justification* of Zionism, but to its *prospects*."⁵¹ These prospects, Kautsky continued, remain dim, and the expectation of inducing harmony between an increasingly large Jewish population in Palestine and the Arabs living there remains chimerical. "On this point my critics have not produced anything which could shake my views."⁵² Kautsky also rebuts the charge made by Bernstein that his remarks were similar in tone to those made by Nazis. Kautsky insists that he did not and would not charge the Zionist movement with consciously acting as an agent of British imperialism. Nevertheless,

Whatever intentions the Zionists may have, the basis of the home which is offered to them in Palestine is to be found exclusively in the military might which England has unfolded there, not for the sake of Jewry, but for its own imperialistic aspirations.⁵³

Thus, whether or not they so desire, the Zionists are in fact tied to English colonial policies. In sum, Kautsky declares, "[my view is] not a *reproach*, and it is also not a *disparagement* of Zionism, but a *warning*. [. . .] I wrote my article in the *interests of Jewry*".⁵⁴

Referring to Kautsky's articles of 1929, George Mosse has suggested that "Kautsky seemed to be weakening in his polemics" with Zionism, and that there is "scattered evidence of a certain new ambivalence" in Kautsky's attitude towards Zionism during that period.⁵⁵ But the evidence brought to bear by Mosse in support of these suggestions is not convincing. It is true that labor Zionists such as Berl Locker, Marc Jarblum and David Ben-Gurion wrote to Kautsky in the 1920's.⁵⁶ However, Kautsky did not en-

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Karl Kautsky, "Nochmals der Zionismus. Eine Antwort an Eduard Bernstein", in: Vorwärts, December 15, 1929, 2. Beilage.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Mosse, "German Socialists and the Jewish Question in the Weimar Republic", loc. cit., p. 127.

⁵⁶ Locker to Kautsky, K D XVI 29; Jarblum to Kautsky, K D XIII 375; Ben-Gurion to Kautsky, K D IV 128.

courage these men to do so, and did not answer their requests for support affirmatively. The tone of Kautsky's articles on Zionism is neither surprising nor indicative of a substantial change. Through all of Kautsky's writings on Zionism the same spirit is evident. He was, and always remained, an opponent of the Zionist movement, but he was an opponent who was sympathetic to Jewry's plight. The fact that this was the case is manifest in the record of Kautsky's relationship with the anti-Zionist and non-Zionist Jewish socialist and labor movements.

The non-Zionist Jewish socialists – a sizeable portion of the Jewish community in Kautsky's day, and the portion of the Jewish community with the greatest knowledge of Kautsky's ideas – considered Kautsky to be an ally and teacher. The leaders of Jewish socialist movements around the world considered it a great honor to meet with Kautsky. Abe Cahan and Raphael Abramowitch were among the socialists of Jewish origin who made the pilgrimage to Kautsky's home.⁵⁷ Discussing the impact of Kautsky on his own thought, Abramowitch comments that "the first socialist brochure which I saw in my life was, after all, Kautsky's *Erfurt Program*."⁵⁸ When the *Bund* began to disseminate socialist materials, Kautsky's works were amid the first items thought worthy of translation and distribution.⁵⁹ The respect which many Jewish socialists had for Kautsky, and his import as a filter of Marx's ideas to the Jewish proletariat, are also demonstrated by the request made to Kautsky by the *Bund* that he write a special foreword for its Yiddish translation of the *Communist Manifesto*.⁶⁰

The unmistakable esteem in which Jewish socialists held Kautsky was reciprocated. In a congratulatory greeting written by Kautsky in 1901 for the twenty-fifth issue of the *Bund's Arbetershtime* Kautsky described the intolerable conditions of the Russian Jewish worker. "It is bad enough", Kautsky proclaimed, "to be a Russian", worse to be a proletarian, and even worse to be a Russian proletarian.⁶¹ It is bad enough to be a Jew, and thereby to belong to a stock which is despised. But to be at the same time a Russian, a proletarian and a Jew is to unite all afflictions within you. The Russian Jewish proletariat is the pariah among pariahs, and is subjected

⁵⁷ R[aphael] Abramowitch, "Doyres sotsialistn hobn gelernt fun zayne verk", in: Jewish Daily Forward, January 30, 1949, second ed., p. 4, cc. 1-8.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ Henry J. Tobias, *The Jewish Bund in Russia. From its Origins to 1905* (Stanford, 1972), pp. 88, 93-94.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 93.

⁶¹ Karl Kautsky, "Der paria unter di proletarier", in: *Di arbetershtime*, October 1901, p. 5.

to all of the abuses of a hard-hearted, all-powerful, greedy, murderous regime.

But therefore it is even more marvelous and lofty that the Jewish proletariat in Russia, which has to struggle even harder than all others, has been successful, this need to struggle harder notwithstanding, in raising itself from its degradation and in developing a movement which has already become a powerful factor in the international social-democratic movement and also in Russia's inner politics.⁶²

At the Socialist International's Amsterdam Congress of 1904 Kautsky, as a member of the International Socialist Bureau, the executive committee of the International, helped to adjudicate a dispute on the seating of the Russian delegation which revolved around the *Bund's* voting rights. In the course of this dispute Kautsky noted that "I feel very warm sympathies" for the *Bund*, "and stand for the same principled point of view as it does."⁶³ Kautsky also exhibited his support for the *Bund* by sending a congratula-

⁶² *Ibid.*

⁶³ *Vestnik Bunda*, November 1904, pp. 27-28, quoted in J. S. Hertz, "Di ershte ruslander revolutsie", in: *Di geshikhte fun bund*, ed. by G. Aronson, S. Dubnow-Erlich, J. S. Hertz, E. Novogrudsky, Kh. Sh. Kazhdan and E. Sherer (5 vols; New York, 1960-81), II, p. 128. His sympathies for the *Bund* notwithstanding, Kautsky felt obliged to vote against the *Bund* at this time. The statutes of the Socialist International accorded each delegation two votes at Congresses of the International. However, the Russian delegation was split three ways. There were representatives of the Russian Social Democratic Workers' Party, of the Socialist Revolutionaries and of the *Bund*. The RSDWP and the SR representatives each claimed one of the two Russian votes. The *Bund* therefore decided to ask for a third Russian vote, and, later, when this proved to be an impossible request given the statutes of the International, it claimed the seat which had also been claimed by the SR. It was this dispute which was adjudicated by the ISB. Kautsky voted with the majority of the ISB in favor of the SR representatives, and explained his position by noting that though he was politically closer to the *Bund* than to the SR, "I do not have the right to vote according to sympathies or antipathies. I must vote in accord with" the rules of the International. Hertz, *loc. cit.*, pp. 126-28; Vladimir Medem, *The Life and Soul of a Legendary Jewish Socialist*, ed. by Samuel A. Portnoy (New York, 1979), pp. 324-27.

In a letter dated October 26, Vladimir Kosovsky, writing on behalf of the Foreign Committee of the *Bund*, requested more information from Kautsky about his position vis-a-vis the *Bund's* voting rights. The underground Russian press claimed that the ISB voted against the *Bund*, because the ISB did not want to support the purportedly nationalistic tendencies of the *Bund*. Kosovsky therefore asked Kautsky whether this was in fact the case, how Kautsky had voted, and also asked him to inform the *Bund* as to the basis of his vote. To Kautsky, October 26, 1904, K D XIV 274. The statements by Kautsky published in *Vestnik Bunda* in November were almost certainly made in response to Kosovsky's letter. My attempts to gain access to items 1138 and 1148 listed in *Sotsial-demokraticheskie listovki 1894-1917 gg.*, ed. by B. P. Birman, G. J. Kramolnikov and I. Sennikowsky (n.p., 1931), pp. 222, 224, which contain additional information on Kautsky's position vis-a-vis the request of the *Bund* for a vote at the Amsterdam Congress, have been unsuccessful.

tory letter to its seventh congress in 1906,⁶⁴ and another public letter of support to the *Tsayt* (an organ of the *Bund*) in May 1914.⁶⁵ Kautsky's letters of support were of enormous propaganda value to the *Bund* in its battles with other East European political movements.

These letters, however, were only one of the ways in which Kautsky demonstrated his sympathy for the *Bund*. For Kautsky also gave the *Bund* access to the international socialist movement by regularly printing articles by Bundist leaders in *Die Neue Zeit*. Among those whose works were published in the pages of Kautsky's journal were Boris Frumkin,⁶⁶ M. Nachimson,⁶⁷ Vladimir Medem,⁶⁸ Lippe Rosenmann,⁶⁹ J. Pistiner,⁷⁰ and Vladimir Kosovsky.⁷¹ Significantly, Kautsky did not publish articles by the *Bund's* socialist opponents in the Jewish world.⁷² The publicists of the Jewish Socialist Workers' Party, the Zionist Socialist Workers' Party and the Jewish Social Democratic Workers' Party *Poalei Tzion* were, therefore, virtually forced to publish in the revisionist-oriented *Sozialistische Monatshefte* (the only significant alternative to *Die Neue Zeit*) when they wanted to reach a West European socialist audience. Independently of the

⁶⁴ "Brif tsum 7tn tsuzamenfor fun 'bund'", in: *Folkssaytung*, September 13-26, 1906. Kautsky was invited to attend this congress by Kursky, writing on behalf of the Central Committee of the *Bund*, to Kautsky, August 29, K D XIV 354.

⁶⁵ "Brif fun k. kautsky", in: *Tsayt*, May 1914, p. 2. This message from Kautsky was solicited by the Foreign Committee of the *Bund*, K D II 140.

⁶⁶ Rosin, "Die zionistisch-sozialistische Utopie", loc. cit.

⁶⁷ M. [Nachimson], review of *Die Judenpogrome in Russland*, in *NZ*, XXVIII (1909-10), 2, pp. 90-91, and of *Die Nationalitätenprobleme der Gegenwart*, *ibid.*, pp. 646-47.

⁶⁸ W[ladimir] Medem, "Ein nationalistischer Vorschlag", *ibid.*, pp. 748-51; *id.*, "Der moderne Antisemitismus in Russland", *ibid.*, XXIX (1910-11), 1, pp. 259-63.

⁶⁹ L[ippe] Rosenmann, "Ostjudenfrage, Zionismus und Grenzschluss", in: *NZ*, XXXIV (1915-16), 2, pp. 305-09; *cf. id.* to Kautsky, February 11, 1916, K D XIX 560.

⁷⁰ Jak. Pistiner, "Die Juden im Weltkrieg", in: *NZ*, XXXIV/2, pp. 449-54.

⁷¹ W. Kossowski, "Die Aussichten der russischen Revolution", in: *NZ*, XXVI (1907-08), 1, pp. 916-22. According to Kursky, *Gezamlte shriftn*, *op. cit.* p. 305, a young woman active in the *Bund* named Shenberg also wrote for *Die Neue Zeit*. I have been unable to locate this article. Among the articles dealing with the *Bund* or written from a Bundist perspective published in *Die Neue Zeit* were "Der Allgemeine Jüdische Arbeiterbund in Litauen, Polen und Russland", *ibid.*, XXII (1903-04), 2, pp. 536-40, and the series of articles signed A.L.: "Der Poalei-Zionismus. Eine neue Strömung im russischen Judentum", XXIV (1905-06), 1, pp. 804-13; "Die prinzipielle Stellung des Jüdischen Arbeiterbundes", XXIV/2, pp. 702-05; "Der Jüdische Arbeiterbund", XXVI/1, p. 144; "Der siebente Parteitag des Jüdischen Arbeiterbundes", *transl. by A.L.*, XXV (1906-07), 1, pp. 100-05.

⁷² When confronted by a leader of the *Poalei Tzion* who wanted to publish a piece in *Die Neue Zeit*, Kautsky argued that its readers had little interest in the Jewish question, and that articles by labor Zionists were better suited for the socialist press of Poland and Russia than they were for the Western press. Though he grudgingly agreed to consider an article written from a labor-Zionist perspective, no such article ever appeared in Kautsky's journal. Kasriel, "Karl kautsky un wurm iber der yudenfrage", loc. cit., p. 1.

pros and cons of their proposed solutions to the Jewish question, these Jewish socialist rivals of the *Bund* were thus associated with revisionism in the minds of the West European socialists and unable to gain support in orthodox Marxist circles, precisely because of Kautsky's editorial policy.

Kautsky did publish articles critical of the *Bund* written by activists in the Russian and Polish socialist movements. These activists were themselves frequently of Jewish origin, and attacked the *Bund* from an assimilationist perspective. Kautsky was hesitant about allowing himself or his journal to be drawn into internecine struggles. Nevertheless, on at least one occasion he allowed the Bundists to state their objection to a charge which had been made against them in the pages of *Die Neue Zeit*. On the occasion in question, Kautsky had received a number of such objections. The *Bund* was the only group given space to respond.⁷³

Though Kautsky did publish articles in *Die Neue Zeit* which were critical of Jewry, there was a line beyond which he would not go. In the early 1890's, for example, Max Zetterbaum, an assimilationist of Jewish origin active in the Galician Social Democratic Party, submitted an article to *Die Neue Zeit* in which he suggested that the capital of all Jews who possessed more than 100,000 fl. be confiscated. Kautsky rejected the article, and wrote to Zetterbaum that this suggestion

stands in the sharpest contradiction to the principles for which our party stands. We ought to be least likely to demand exclusionary laws against any particular stratum of the population.⁷⁴

Kautsky had words of support not only for the *Bund*, but also for the Jewish socialist and labor movements of England and America. He contributed an article to a Yiddish-language socialist periodical published in London (and named after his own journal),⁷⁵ greeted the New-York-based United

⁷³ "Die Dumawahlen", in: NZ, XXXI (1912-13), 1, pp. 843-44; cf. W. Kossowsky to Kautsky, January 21, 1913, K D XIV 275.

⁷⁴ Kautsky to Zetterbaum, (October 30, 1893.) Kautsky Family Archive, Portfolio 8, Folder 5, Internationaal Instituut voor Sociale Geschiedenis.

⁷⁵ K. Kautsky, "Di oyfgabn fun dem yidishn proletariat in england. a bagrisung artikl tsu di 'naye tsayt'", in: Di naye tsayt, April 1, 1904, p. 5, cc. 1-3. This article was reprinted under the title "Kautsky on the Problems of the Jewish Proletariat in England" in Justice (London), April 23, 1904, p. 4, and under the title "Karl Kautsky über Judentum und jüdisches Proletariat" in Die Welt, December 15, 1905, pp. 4-5. It also appeared in a Russian-language organ of the Bund, Vestnik Bunda, June 1904, pp. 20-21. Kautsky wrote this article for Di naye tsayt at the request of Theodore Rothstein, who was already known to Kautsky as a contributor to Die Neue Zeit, Rothstein to Kautsky, March 10, 1904, K D XIX 585. It was Rothstein who gave the Bund permission to reprint Kautsky's article, to Kautsky, April 7, K D XIX 586.

Hebrew Trades on its fortieth anniversary,⁷⁶ and sent fraternal messages to the *Forverts*⁷⁷ and the *Veker*⁷⁸ on several of the anniversaries of these American Jewish social-democratic periodicals.

Kautsky's messages to the Jewish socialists frequently had the same theme: that Jewish socialists have a specific role to play in furthering the socialist cause. Addressing himself to the Jewish socialist workers of England, for example, Kautsky noted that each nationality displays a specific psychic character. The English have been characterized by the love of freedom. They have, on the other hand, not prominently displayed some of the characteristics needed by the proletariat in order fully to liberate itself from bourgeois thought, i.e., the ability to think in the abstract and the ability to think critically. It is, however, precisely these latter qualities which have predominated among the Jews. Thus

the Jewish proletariat possesses this capacity which the English proletariat lacks. [. . .] The Jewish worker [. . .] through his example shows the Anglo-Saxon worker that the theory of socialism [. . .] not only does not hinder a

⁷⁶ Karl Kautsky, "Amerikanische und europäische Arbeiter", in: Arbeiter-Zeitung, September 23, 1928, p. 3. Cf. K A 149; B. C. Vladeck to Luise Kautsky, November 28, D XXII 435; M. Feinstone to Karl Kautsky, May 21, X 332.

⁷⁷ Karl Kautsky, "Di oyfgabn fun di yidishe sotsialistn in amerika", in: Jewish Daily Forward, April 23, 1922, Section 2, p. 6, cc. 1-8, cf. A. Cahan to Kautsky, January 10 and March 16, K D VII 1-2; Karl Kautsky, "Bagrisungn tsum 'forverts'", *ibid.*, April 24, 1927, Section 4, p. 1, cc. 6-8, cf. Luise Kautsky to Baruch Charney Vladeck, February 10, Vladeck Papers, Tamiment Library, New York: "My husband had a letter of [sic] Comrade Cahan asking him to write a short article for the jubilee number of 'Forward'. Though Karl is deeply immersed in his big theoretical work on historic materialism, yet he will send something to the 'Forward' one of the next days. He feels that for 'his Jews' he must make an exception."; "Teyere verter tsu unzer yontef fun unzer libn lerer karl kautsky", *ibid.*, April 25, 1937, Section 2, p. 1, cc. 1-8. The original German-language manuscript version of Kautsky's greeting to the Forward on the occasion of the paper's fortieth anniversary has been preserved: "Zum 40jährigen Bestehen des 'Jewish Daily Forward'", K A 219, cf. A. Cahan to Kautsky, March 29, D VII 15.

⁷⁸ "A bagrisung tsum 'veker' fun karl kautsky", in: Der veker, October 30, 1926, p. 14.

On p. 421: first page of Kautsky's draft of his greeting to the *Jewish Daily Forward* on the occasion of its fortieth anniversary (corrections by Luise Kautsky), April 1937, K A 219, IISG. The paragraph at the bottom reads: "Diese Aufgabe des 'Vorwärts' [the struggle against the oppression of the Jewish proletariat in Russia] hat ja doch schon 1917 aufgehört. Heute ist nicht mehr Russland, sondern Deutschland das Land, das seine Arbeiter zu Parias macht und seine Juden zu Parias unter den Parias. Der Kampf gegen diese Nichtswürdigkeit ist die wichtigste Aufgabe für die Sozialisten, aber auch die Juden aller Länder geworden."

real, practical, class politics, but, on the contrary, that it is the socialist view which first affords the possibility of such a politics.

In that they give the Anglo-Saxon worker such a practical lesson in socialism – as comrades not as tutors – the Jewish workers pursue a more productive propaganda than theoretical speeches and writings are in a position to achieve.⁷⁹

Kautsky made similar observations about the tasks of the American Jewish labor movement. Whereas in an earlier day German immigrants to America had had the task of “fertilizing” the class struggle of the American proletariat movements, this, Kautsky thought, had now become the task of the Jewish immigrant workers.

The Jewish worker ought to form the bridge between the labor movement of America and that of Europe.⁸⁰

Kautsky saw the English and American Jewish socialist and labor movements not merely as branches of the international movement of the proletariat, but as branches capable of playing a key and distinctive role.⁸¹

Kautsky received – and answered – requests for endorsements from socialist movements and periodicals throughout the world. The fact that Kautsky’s statements on the Jewish socialist and labor movements were not merely standard “comradely greetings”, but rather indicative of a more

⁷⁹ “Di oyfgabn fun dem yidishn proletariat in england”, loc. cit.

⁸⁰ “Amerikanische und europäische Arbeiter”, loc. cit.

⁸¹ Kautsky did not believe that the Jewish workers of the Soviet Union also had a unique role. These workers, he wrote in 1923, certainly had a particular interest, both as proletarians and as Jews, in equal rights and in protection for national minorities. However, “the Jewish proletariat does not have a class interest separate from that of other proletarians”, and thus does not have a distinct role to play in the Soviet Union. K. Kautsky, “Di oyfgabn funm yidishn proletariat in sovet-rusland”, in: *Dos fraye vort*, June 20, 1923, p. 1. This article is unusual in that Kautsky wrote it for a Jewish periodical which (unlike *Di arbetershtime*, *Di naye tsayt*, *Tsayt*, *Forverts*, *Der veker* and *Tsukunft*) was not explicitly social-democratic. *Dos fraye vort* was close to the Social Revolutionary tradition and was, in general, unable to attract Bundist and Menshevik contributors. Its editor, Ben-Adir (Avrom Rozin), who had been prominently associated with *Vozrozhdeniye*, *SERP* and the United Jewish Socialist Workers’ Party, visited Kautsky and convinced himself that Kautsky’s socialism had the same ethical foundation as did his own, Gregory Aronson, *Rusish-yidishe inteligents* (Buenos-Aires, 1962), p. 222; my thanks to the late Hillel Kempinski for pointing out this passage to me. Kautsky may also have had contact with another Jewish periodical which was not explicitly social-democratic. An undated note from Kautsky to the left SR and territorialist I. N. Shteinberg indicates that Kautsky had agreed to write an article for a periodical with which Shteinberg was associated: Shteinberg Collection, file 279, YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, New York. The periodical is unnamed. However, Shteinberg was editor of *Fraye shriftn – farn yidishn sotsialistishn gedank* from 1926 to 1937.

deeply rooted concern with the Jewish question, is attested to by those Jewish socialists who met with Kautsky. John Mill, a leading representative of the *Bund*, reports that he visited Kautsky in Friedenau-Berlin at the end of 1903 to discuss the possibility of Kautsky's writing a special introduction to the Yiddish edition of the *Erfurt Program*. Mill expected that the meeting would take no more than fifteen minutes, but found, to his surprise, that Kautsky was very interested in discussing the form and content of the Jewish socialist movement. For several hours Kautsky questioned Mill about these matters, about the pogroms in Russia, and about the relationship of the *Bund* to the other socialist groups in the Russian Empire.⁸² Kautsky was aware of the differences among the various Jewish political movements, endorsed only those with which he agreed, and displayed an unusually strong interest in the Jewish socialists and their problems.

It is, of course, true that Kautsky's strong support for the *Veker*, for the *Forverts* and for *Tsukunft* (a literary journal published in New York by Jewish social democrats) cannot be explained entirely on the basis of his position on the Jewish question. In the wake of the Bolshevik revolution virtually every Marxist-oriented movement in the world split into pro- and anti-communist factions. When the dust settled, the *Veker*, the *Forverts*, *Tsukunft* and Kautsky were all firmly in the camp of the anti-communist wing of the social-democratic movement. The Jewish socialists in America associated with these institutions were supported by Kautsky *primarily* because they supported his anti-communist stance.

On a more mundane level, Kautsky also fostered good relations with the Jewish social democrats in the United States because he was partially dependent on the income he received from writing for their periodicals. Kautsky's strong condemnations of the Soviet Union made it relatively difficult for him to publish his work in the Austrian socialist press, whose editors tended to disagree with Kautsky's view on this critical issue. Kautsky therefore needed the anti-communist social-democratic Jewish periodicals both for monetary reasons and because he had few other outlets for his literary work during the 1920's and 1930's.⁸³

⁸² John Mill, *Pionern un boyer*, II (New York, 1949), pp. 135-36.

⁸³ Luise Kautsky expressed Karl's thanks to A. Cahan of the Jewish Daily Forward in the following terms: "It is of the greatest value to him that the Forward is one of the rare mouth-pieces from where he is able to influence the brains and minds of so many thousands of readers. You can easily imagine how sad it is for such an old writer and fighter to see himself bereft at the end of his days of nearly every tribune wherefrom to speak to his public." To A. Cahan, November 26, 1934, A. Cahan Collection, YIVO Institute for Jewish Research.

However, none of these factors explains Kautsky's continued support for the *Bund*. Kautsky was well aware that much of the *Bund* was substantially to his left during the Weimar years. In January 1920 the Menshevik Martov wrote to Kautsky that the *Bund*, "which, during the War and Kerensky periods, stood on the right wing of the Party", was supporting the system of Soviets and was threatening to split from the party.⁸⁴ "The split", Martov wrote, "appears in any event to be unavoidable."⁸⁵ The Bundists "speak an altogether 'communitic' prose without noticing it."⁸⁶ Similarly, the editor of the *Forverts*, Abe Cahan, wrote to Kautsky at the end of 1931 that "The Bund in Poland has very few followers among our people" in New York.⁸⁷

Still, some of the old time Bundists living in America are apt to confuse what is practically the Bolshevist theory of the present Bund with the glorious doings of the old Bund during the first years of the present century. This Bund teaches the children of the Jewish workmen in Poland to celebrate and hold sacred the October Revolution of 1917.⁸⁸

Cahan refers to a purportedly "Bolshevist" speech by H. Erlich, a leader of the *Bund* in Poland, which Erlich had made at the Congress of the International in Vienna, and concludes by requesting from Kautsky that "If you do write the article for us [. . .], please don't mention the Bund."⁸⁹

In light of these criticisms of the *Bund* by men with whom Kautsky was allied, Kautsky's continued support for the *Bund* is especially striking. Kautsky manifested this support in no uncertain terms in an article written in 1937 on the occasion of the fortieth anniversary of the founding of the *Bund*. Kautsky's article was entitled "From a Glorious Past to a Magnificent Future", and specifically noted the *Bund's* "courageousness and intelligence and its solidarity with the entire non-Jewish working class of Poland and the world".⁹⁰

Just as he did in attacking anti-Semitism, Kautsky was following in the tradition of Engels when he supported the Jewish socialist and labor movements of the early twentieth century. Engels encouraged his supporters to work among the East European Jews living in London, spoke highly of the work of the Jewish socialists, and even wrote for them. There is,

⁸⁴ To Kautsky, January 28, 1920, Nicolaevsky Collection, 17, Box 1, Hoover Institution, Stanford University.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

⁸⁷ To Kautsky, December 12, 1931, K D VII 7.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

⁹⁰ Karl Kautsky, "Fun a rumfuler fargangenhayt tsu a herlekher tsukunft", in: *Naye folkssaytung*, November 10, 1937, p. 10. Cf. the letters from the Central Committee of the Bund to Kautsky dated October 12 and 22, December 29, K D VI 740-42.

therefore, nothing surprising about Kautsky's support for the *Bund* during the early years of its existence. However, the dominant ideology of the Jewish socialist movement changed markedly between the time of Engels' death and the beginning of the First World War. Whereas the early Jewish socialists (including all of those supported by Engels) had been cosmopolitan and had organized as Jews solely in order to facilitate the work of the movement as a whole, the *Bund* and its supporters gradually became more nationally conscious, and eventually began to demand national rights for Russian Jewry. During a later period, the Bundists living in independent Poland actively fostered and encouraged the development of a secular and progressive Jewish culture in the Yiddish language.

Kautsky's words of praise for the *Bund* thus raise at least two important questions: did Kautsky think of the Jews as a nation, and did Kautsky's support for the *Bund* include support for its national program? During the first part of his career, Kautsky tended to think of the Jews as a race with the vestiges of national characteristics. In 1885, for example, he wrote:

The uneasiness, indeed, the despair, of declining classes could make the Jew out to be a scapegoat only where he is still *nationally* separated from the rest of the population. Where he has merged into the rest of the population, as in Western Europe, it could not occur to anyone to start a class struggle against a *race*.⁹¹

Again, in his article on the Jewish question written in 1890, Kautsky described the Jews as a race on one page and as a nation on another.⁹²

The single most important statement by Kautsky on this issue is contained in his letter to the seventh congress of the *Bund* and was written on August 31, 1906.⁹³ The nation, Kautsky wrote at that time, is not something which is fixed by nature once and for all. It is, rather, a historical organism, and thus changes and takes on various forms at various times. Nations which exist at the same time, moreover, have somewhat different characteristics because they have different paths of development and because they exist at different levels of development. There are, Kautsky continued, at least three types of nations in existence at the present time.

In the West European type, the state and the nation are one and the same. This is true, for example, in the case of the Swiss nation, despite the existence of distinct language groups within that nation. The East European type of nation is characterized first and foremost by language. In Eastern Europe, those who speak the same language normally live within a

⁹¹ "Der Antisemitismus", loc. cit., p. 100. Emphasis added.

⁹² "Das Judentum", loc. cit., pp. 25, 27.

⁹³ "Brif tsum 7tn tsuzamenfor fun 'bund'", loc. cit.

given territory, but do not necessarily live within the same state. In every state of Eastern Europe, more than one nation inhabits a given state. The third major type of nation is best exemplified by the Anglo-Saxon world. Here, Kautsky claimed, one finds one nation broken up into a number of states. Are the Australians a nation or a part of the English nation? In the Anglo-Saxon world, it seems, the Australians may not be a nation despite having a state of their own. However difficult it may be to answer the question of whether the Australians are a nation,

it is even more difficult to answer the question of whether the Jews form a nation of their own. To be sure, the Jews are not a nation like the other nations which we have mentioned here. Jewry differentiates itself from all of them in that it has no territory which encompasses even the major mass of the nation. In addition to this Jewry also differentiates itself in that we do not find in commensurate proportion among the Jews all the classes which make up modern society, as we do among the other nations. Moreover, we frequently do not find among the Jews a common language. The Holy Tongue has ceased to be a living language. Jews in various lands have adopted the language of the people among whom they live, or speak a German which has been slightly altered. From the other side, one can manifestly not deny that Jewry is a distinct societal unity with a culture which is peculiar to itself, and that it differentiates itself from the nations of Eastern Europe among which it lives. There is no great difference between saying to us that Jewry forms a separate type of nation, which differentiates itself from all other national types, or saying to us that Jewry has ceased to be a nation in the sense of the other nations.⁹⁴

A similar discussion appears in Kautsky's article "The Question of Nationalities in Russia", first published in April 1905. "The French, the Irish, the Austrian, the Jewish, the Armenian nation each signify something altogether different from the others", Kautsky proclaimed in this piece.⁹⁵ In general, the capitalist mode of production calls forth national strivings among individual nations which are divided between different, adjoining, countries. Economic development leads such nations to strive to unite their people in one country.

Where such national tendencies still have to struggle for recognition, every modern party, including the representative of the proletariat, the Social Democratic Party, must take this necessity into account. Just as it must support the striving for a democratic configuration of the state, so must it support the striving for concentration of the state and the striving for self-

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Karl Kautsky, "Die Nationalitätenfrage in Russland", in: *Leipziger Volkszeitung*, April 29, 1905, 4. Beilage.

determination of the individual nation in which it works. In this sense it must therefore be just as national as it is democratic.⁹⁶

However, it may not be necessary for nations such as the Poles and the Ukrainians to form self-governing states wholly separate from Russia – if certain changes can be made in the structure of the Russian state. If Russia can be democratized, then the striving of these nations for self-determination can be satisfied by a transformation of the Empire into a “United States of Russia”. Much depends on the extent to which the proletariat participates in the Russian revolution. The greater the extent of proletarian participation, the more likely will it be that the nations which now make up the Empire will be willing to remain in a free league with each other.

These articles imply that Kautsky thought of *Russian Jewry* as having nation-like characteristics, and as being fully worthy of the same national rights as were nations such as the Poles and Ukrainians. They thus also imply that Kautsky was willing to accept the national program of the *Bund*.⁹⁷ For the Bundists did not make claims on behalf of a world-wide Jewish nation, but rather restricted their demands to the Jews of the Russian Empire.

If Kautsky had any doubts about the program of the *Bund*, these doubts were probably connected to the question of party organization rather than to the national question. Kautsky believed that the unity of the proletariat was of the greatest importance. Insofar as he feared that the position of the *Bund* on the question of the organization of the RSDWP isolated Jewish workers from non-Jewish workers, Kautsky probably opposed the position of the *Bund*. In fact, Kautsky’s article on Kishinev was written at least in part in order to discourage the *Bund* from isolating itself. However, Kautsky never condemned or directly criticized the *Bund*. He merely stressed the importance of diminishing isolation – and re-iterated this stance in many of his messages to the Jewish socialists. Thus, in sum, Kautsky’s position may be said to have revolved around consistent support for the work of the *Bund*, tacit support for its national program, and gentle prodding on those occasions when he feared that the Jewish socialists were isolating the Jewish proletariat.

Kautsky’s apparent tacit support for the *Bund*’s national program might, on the face of it, appear to contradict his “support” for the assimilation of the Jews. However, the superficial contradiction between these points is

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ I have been unable to determine whether or not Kautsky also supported the program of the *Bund*’s sister party in Austria-Hungary, the Jewish Social Democratic Workers’ Party in Galicia, which was founded in 1905. He certainly knew of the existence of such a party (Hilferding to Kautsky, May 27, 1905, K D XII 590), but never wrote about it.

easily reconciled. For Kautsky believed that it was only after Jews had gained the freedom to develop their culture, only after they were treated like other people, that assimilation would set in.

The productions and resources of an active national life on the part of the Russian Jews will become progressively greater and stronger as long as the struggle for Jewish freedom advances. But that which we call the Jewish nation can achieve the victory only in order then to disappear.⁹⁸

In this important sense, Kautsky's view of the Jewish question was a logical extension of the view first presented by Marx in *Zur Judenfrage*. Marx had insisted that the Jews must be granted equal civil rights. Whereas Bauer maintained that Jews ought not be granted political rights equal to those of Christians until and unless they ceased to be Jews, Marx argued that the Jews would only cease to be Jews once they had been granted such rights.⁹⁹

Kautsky, stripping Marx's argument of its anti-Semitic terminology, and extending it from the realm of civil rights to that of national rights, followed in Marx's footsteps insofar as he argued that assimilation was a result of equal treatment. He sincerely supported the Jewish socialist movement, and thought of it as a necessary phenomenon, but also believed it to be a transitional phenomenon. Kautsky hoped for the success of the *Bund*, fully recognizing that such a success would have entailed the flowering of a secular Jewish culture. But he also hoped and believed that over a long period of time Jewish socialist institutions, including those of the *Bund*, would disappear as the conditions which had brought them into being themselves disappeared.

It has frequently been contended that Kautsky's ideas are overly deterministic. Kautsky certainly had his failings – including, notably, an uninspiring writing style and a tendency to write too much. However, his writings on the Jewish question were by no means mechanistic or deterministic. Kautsky hoped that anti-Semitism would decrease. He did not believe that it necessarily must do so. Similarly, Kautsky hoped that the Jews would eventually assimilate, but he also recognized that they might not do so under certain circumstances. In this sense a study of Kautsky's writings on the Jewish question raises doubts as to the criticisms which have been made about his general theory. It may well be that Kautsky's democratic Marxism, which has been all but squeezed out of existence, retains more validity than is currently recognized.

⁹⁸ Are the Jews a Race?, p. 243.

⁹⁹ Shlomo Avineri, "Marx and Jewish Emancipation", in: *Journal of the History of Ideas*, XXV (1964), pp. 445-50.

The decline of Kautsky's reputation in the world at large has been mirrored by the decline of his reputation in the Jewish community. The decline of the anti-Zionist Jewish socialist and labor movements, assimilation, the Holocaust and the rise of Zionism have virtually eliminated Kautsky's base of support within the Jewish world, and have also greatly diminished interest in his ideas. Just as Kautsky's works on capitalism and socialism have come to be seen primarily through the eyes of his opponents in the socialist world, so have his works on the Jewish question come to be seen through the eyes of his Jewish opponents. In the post-Holocaust world Kautsky's anti-Zionist, pro-assimilationist perspective has been misinterpreted even by scholars of enormous erudition.¹⁰⁰

In his own day a number of factors – including the fact that Kautsky's grandfather had owned a house in the Jewish ghetto in Prague, that Kautsky repeatedly attacked anti-Semitism, that he was manifestly interested in the Jewish question and devoted considerable time to the study of it, that both of the women he married were Jews,¹⁰¹ and that two of his three sons married Jewish women¹⁰² – contributed to the widely-held impression that Kautsky was himself Jewish. An indication of just how widespread this erroneous impression was may be inferred from the fact that Eduard David, a prominent figure in the SPD, thought that Kautsky was Jewish as late as 1915.¹⁰³ In the years after the First World War Kautsky

¹⁰⁰ Recently, for example, Yehuda Eloni, "The Zionist Movement and the German Social Democratic Party, 1897-1918", in: *Studies in Zionism*, V (1984), p. 194, described the argument which Kautsky made in his article "Das Massaker von Kischeneff und die Judenfrage" as "close to an ideological legitimization of pogroms".

¹⁰¹ There is virtually no published biographical information available on Kautsky's first wife, Louise Strasser. Kautsky's second wife, Luise Ronsperger, though certainly not religiously observant, considered herself to be a Jew. She did not maintain particularly close ties with the Ronsperger family after she married Kautsky, but all of her closest friends were of Jewish origin. In the late 1930's, Luise was very involved with other Jewish refugees living, as she did, in the Netherlands. Ilse Kautsky Calabi to Jack Jacobs, August 31, 1981. She was deported to Auschwitz, and died there in December 1944, "Tod einer Emigrantin – wie die Witwe Karl Kautskys starb", in: *Sie flohen vor dem Hakenkreuz*, ed. by Walter Zadek (Reinbek bei Hamburg, 1981), pp. 117-18.

¹⁰² John Kautsky to Jack Jacobs, December 1, 1981. In another letter, Professor Kautsky discusses the extent to which Karl's sons identified themselves as Jewish, and notes that "obviously they detested anti-Semitism and hated and feared the Nazis and they 'identified' with German Jewry, in the sense of complete sympathy, in the Nazi period. But I'm not 100% sure that they would have 'identified' themselves as Jewish – or as non-Jewish, for that matter. They were totally divorced from Jewish religion and largely from Jewish culture (e.g. they had no knowledge of Jewish customs or holidays). [. . .] Jewishness was simply not an issue in the Kautsky family." To Jack Jacobs, March 2, 1982.

¹⁰³ *Das Kriegstagebuch des Reichstagsabgeordneten Eduard David 1914 bis 1918*, ed. by Erich Matthias and Susanne Miller (Düsseldorf, 1966), p. 136.

was often assumed to be Jewish, and often attacked, by anti-Semitic propagandists.¹⁰⁴

Kautsky was well aware of this mistake, and mentions it in a memoir written in 1936: "Not in order to prettify myself, but only in order to pay due tribute to the truth, I must confirm my purely Catholic descent."¹⁰⁵ He refers explicitly to the reports that he was a "child of the ghetto of Prague", and responds: "If that were the case, it would not particularly trouble me."¹⁰⁶ In so doing, Kautsky summarized his own attitude towards the Jews. He identified with the plight of the Jews, and fought their enemies throughout his career. He believed that it was the task of the social-democratic movement to be

the most tireless champion of the freedom of all who [are] oppressed, not merely [of] the wage-earner, but also of women, persecuted religions and races, the Jews, Negroes and Chinese.¹⁰⁷

He asked of the social-democratic movement no more nor less than he asked of himself.

¹⁰⁴ *Deutsches Judentum in Krieg und Revolution 1916-1923*, ed. by Werner Mosse (Tübingen, 1971), pp. 30, 217; Karl Paumgarten, *Judentum und Sozialdemokratie* (Graz, n.d.), p. 30; Donald L. Niewyk, *Socialist, Anti-Semite, and Jew* (Baton Rouge, 1971), p. 84.

¹⁰⁵ Karl Kautsky, *Erinnerungen und Erörterungen*, ed. by Benedikt Kautsky (The Hague, 1960), pp. 36-37.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 36.

¹⁰⁷ Karl Kautsky, *The Dictatorship of the Proletariat* (Manchester, n.d.), p. 90.