



## Dr. Gideon Reuveni

Alfried Krupp Junior Fellow

November 2010 – September 2011

**Kurzvita** Gideon Reuveni studied history, philosophy and political science at the Hebrew University Jerusalem. He is the author of *Reading Germany: Literature and Consumer Culture in Germany before 1933* (2006) and co-editor of several other books on different aspects of Jewish history. His current area of research is the intersection of Jewish history and economics. Presently he is working on a book on consumer culture and the making of

modern Jewish identity in Europe. Since September 2011 he is Reader in History and the Director of the Centre for German Jewish Studies at the University of Sussex/England.

### Verbraucherkultur und die Entwicklung der modernen jüdischen Identität

Antisemitische Stereotype von Juden als Kapitalisten haben die Erforschung der ökonomischen Dimension der jüdischen Vergangenheit geradezu lahmgelegt. Figuren des jüdischen Händlers und Bankiers durchziehen das 19. und 20. Jahrhundert. Wirtschaftliche Zusammenhänge waren indes stets zentral für jüdisches Leben und das Bild vom Judentum in der Welt. Juden haben nicht nur Geld verdient, sondern es auch ausgegeben. Meine Untersuchung ist diesem wesentlichen und bislang vernachlässigten Koordinatensystem des Konsums, der Identitätsbildung und der Geschichte der Juden gewidmet. Es sollen der Platz und die Rolle des Konsums innerhalb der jüdischen Gesellschaft erforscht werden. Ferner wird untersucht, wie das Konsumver-

halten jüdische Begriffe der Zugehörigkeit vom Ende des 19. Jahrhunderts bis zum Beginn des 21. Jahrhunderts hervorgebracht und verstärkt hat. Indem ich die Geschichte der Europäischen Juden vom Standpunkt des Konsums aus betrachte, hoffe ich, die Forschung über die üblichen zwei Ansätze hinauszutragen, gemäß denen entweder die Integration oder der Ausschluss von Juden hervorgehoben wird.

**Kurzbericht**

## Projektbericht

During my stay at the Krupp Kolleg I made significant progress with my book project now entitled "Consumer Culture and the Making of Modern Jewish Identity." I finished drafting large sections of the study and secured a book contract with the Cambridge University Press. In addition, I finally found the time to finalize the work on two separate edited volumes dealing with different aspects of the multifaceted interplay between Jews and the economy. I also finished writing two further essays, one on the concept of cultural economy to be published in a Festschrift for Prof. Moshe Zimmermann and a short piece on Jewish Bankers that is scheduled to be published in a volume on Salomon Heine.

The major parts of my study that I realized in Greifswald are a chapter of Politics of Jewish Consumption as well as the last chapter of my study Picturing the Jewish Consumer. Focusing on the interwar period, the later sections of my study examine the role and function of consumption in the framework of new notions about Jewish politics. Here I look at advertisements and marketing campaigns demonstrating how marketing practices utilize politics to promote different pro-

ducts and services. I also show how the rise of



Wir haben feststellen müssen, dass über uns und unsere Firma verleumderische Behauptungen im Umlauf sind, als seien bei uns an irgendeiner Stelle

### antisemitische Tendenzen

sei es offen, sei es versteckt, vorhanden. Es handelt sich um Machenschaften unlauterer Konkurrenz! Niemand steht bei uns antisemitischen Bestrebungen oder gar Parteien nahe! Niemals sind von oder bei uns solche Bestrebungen unterstützt oder auch nur geduldet worden. Das Gegenteil ist richtig, sowohl nach geschäftlicher wie nach privater Richtung hin.

Wir wären aufrichtig dankbar, wenn uns, um sie gerichtlich verfolgen zu können, die Urheber oder Verbreiter solcher Verleumdungen **namhaft** gemacht werden würden.

*Erich Hemann*

**Bittere Schokoladen**

Kurfürstendamm 26a    Brandenburgische Str. 17  
Leipziger Str. 82    Unter den Linden 14  
Potsdamer Str. 22    Teplitzer Str. 40  
Pariser Str. 28/29.

Anzeige Schokoladenfabrik Erich Hemann, 1930

antisemitism in pre-Holocaust Europe boosted the politicization process of consumption. In this context I do not only deal with the calls to boycotts Jewish owned businesses and the attempts exclude Jews as costumers by different providers, but also call attention to how Jews as consumers reacted to antisemitism forging

what we may now call Jewish boycotts. That is, an active attempt to alert Jewish consumer against antisemitic tendencies of certain companies, and to organize Jews as a discrete consumer group to buy only designated products or services of particular providers that explicitly express their interest in Jewish clients. This exploration demonstrates how politics informed consumer choices turning consumption to a highly charged activity, and a site for political action. This process by which political mobilization serves as the backdrop for scrutinizing how Jewish political parties—particularly the Zionist movements—utilized consumption in order to promote their political agenda. The Zionist political campaigns were grounded in marketing principles such as branding of political leaders and issues, targeted advertising, and staged media events which were all part of the commercialization processes and the emergence of a new consumer culture at the beginning of the 20th century. Thus for example the Zionist message underwent a visualization process that was reflected in the image of Herzl and other Zionist leaders displayed on a variety of objects: cigarette packets, plates and cups, carpets,

embroidery, flags, postcards, and calendars. Tourism to Palestine is a further example of how the Zionist movement appropriated the new consumer culture for its political purposes. The Zionist newspaper Jüdische Rundschau proclaimed that every returning visitor from Palestine was to become an apostle of the building of Erez Israel and to help forge a connection between the land and the Diaspora. During the interwar period, we find several examples of advertisements in the Jewish press exclusively addressing Zionist consumers, some of them even displaying consumption as a performative act in which consuming is displayed as an integral and active part of the Zionist project. The Jewish National Fund



Briefmarkenwerbung für die Tomor Margarine

distributed children's games and even got involved in the insurance business in order to mobilize new supporters thus making consumption to an important political site.

The chapter 'picturing the Jewish Consumer' is perhaps the most challenging, at least in terms of locating sources, on the Jewish world of goods and spending habits. This section of my study seeks to depict the Jewish consumer. Special research institutes like the Bureau für die Statistik der Juden and YIVO (Yidisher Visnshaftlekher Institut, or the Jewish Scientific Institute) started collecting documentation on the social and economic position of the Jews at the beginning of the last century. This material focuses primarily on the question of income as well as on the occupational structure of Jewish society. The statistical data collected by these institutions does not divulge information on the spending habits of Jews. Fortunately, other sources such as household books, family pictures, and lists of personal belongings compiled by Nazi officials comprise further evidence on the spending behaviour of Jewish individuals and groups. In this section of my study I also explore how Jews made sense of their world

of goods, and give voice to their experiences as consumers. For this purpose I use a more qualitative body of source material, including diaries and literary accounts. At the Jewish Museum in Berlin I locate the family diaries of the perfume company owner Ludwig Scherk, diaries that contain commentated lists of the presents the family gave and received over a period of more than ten years, from the end of the First World War to the mid 1930s. These kinds of personal account provide a better understanding of how Jewish middle class families conceived of themselves as consumers as well as of the meanings they ascribed to their respective material world.

Reuveni, G.: *Consumer Culture and the Making of Modern Jewish Identity* (under contract with Cambridge University Press).

Reuveni, G.: *Dan Diner, and Yfaat Weis (eds.), The Historian as Translator: Festschrift for Prof. Moshe Zimmermann* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2012).

Reuveni, G.: *The Bridge, the Door and the Cultural Economy Approach to History*, in: Gideon Reuveni, Dan Diner, and Yfaat Weis (eds.), *The Historian as Translator: Festschrift for Prof. Moshe Zimmermann* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2012).

Reuveni, G.: *Geldverleiher, Unternehmer und Angestellter Jüdische Bankiers – Ein Überblick*, A conference on Salomon Heine will be published in 2012.

Reuveni, G.: *Buy Jewish: Advertising, Jewish Ethnic Marketing, and Consumer Ambivalence in Weimar Germany*, Publications of the Center for German Jewish Studies, University of Sussex.

ausgewählte  
Veröffentlichungen