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Objekttyp: **Article**

Zeitschrift: **Judaica : Beiträge zum Verstehen des Judentums**

Band (Jahr): **61 (2005)**

PDF erstellt am: **27.05.2024**

Persistenter Link: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-960617>

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Zionist Football and Jewish Identity in Weimar Germany

by *Nathan Marcus**

1. Introduction

Berne, Switzerland 1954. West-Germany had advanced to the final round of the football world cup championship and faced the seemingly unbeatable Hungarian national eleven. With only six minutes left to play in the second half, Germany managed to score and lead 3 : 2. At the final whistle it was official: Germany had won. The words of the German commentator Herbert Zimmermann have since become legendary: "Aus, aus, aus! Das Spiel ist aus. Deutschland ist Fussball-Weltmeister!"

Germany had become World Champion against all odds. The fans who had traveled to Berne, the *Trümmerkinder* of 1945, broke out into chanting Germany's national anthem. However, careful listeners noticed that the lyrics sang unisonous by these fans were not those of the hymn of the German Federal Republic. Instead, what rose repeatedly from the ranks of the Wankdorfstadion in Berne were the words: "Deutschland, Deutschland über alles, über alles in der Welt".

The appeal of sport is unlike that of any other cultural phenomenon, for it permeates every strata of modern society. It is not confined to class, religion or ethnicity but has gained significance among all layers of modern civilization. First, sport is a game, with its own specific rules and conventions which make it stick out of the social order that surrounds it. Standards that are generally accepted do not always apply to the participants of sport events as is shown by the uninhibited expression of emotions or the indecent exposure of naked skin. Second, sport is a phenomenon that must be analyzed as a part of the society it takes place in, which it influences and by which it in turn is influenced. Through proposing specific conventions and lifestyles,

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it can foster accepted modes of behavior or promote new manners of conduct. Thus the events depicted in the prologue have been described by certain political scientists as the late birth of the Bonner Republic or the early announcement of the German *Wirtschaftswunder*.¹

Sport is such a popular trend that it manages to connect members of all groups of modern society much like religion once used to. The history of sport is therefore an exercise in social history. It analyzes a phenomenon through which the various strata of society come together and interact. When focusing on sport in Weimar Germany, the question that arises is to what extent sport was able to bring together the different groups that made up Weimar society or to what extent sport was affected by and maybe fostered the existing segregation of society along the seams of class and religion. Christiane Eisenberg has focused in her work on the middle classes and a lot of work has been done on the working class using this approach, too.² However, history of Jewish sport in Germany has been mostly descriptive, positivistic and has not really tried to analyze the integration and interaction of Jews and non-Jews in this context.³ This paper shall present some possible perspectives on how the study of Jewish sport in particular, and its interaction with German sport in general, might be able to improve the historian's understanding of Jewish life in a non-Jewish society and specifically in Weimar Germany.

Because of sport's special character, an analysis of sport can inform the historian about more than just the history of sport itself. Indeed, a careful analysis of Zionist sport can illustrate a number of larger issues about Jewish society in Weimar Germany. This paper will focus on three approaches to Zionist sport in the period, all of which will serve to show how sport played a prominent role in the evolution of Jewish-Zionist identity in Weimar

¹ E. EGGERS, Fussball in der Weimarer Republik, in: *Stadion* 25 (1999), p. 153–175, there p. 153.

² C. EISENBERG, The Middle Class and Competition: Some Considerations of the Beginnings of Modern Sport in England and Germany, in: *International Journal of the History of Sport* 7 (1990), p. 265–282. For workers sport see e. g. S. GEHRMANN, *Fussball, Vereine, Politik. Zur Sportgeschichte des Reviers 1900–1940*, Essen 1988.

³ One notable exception is the work of Hajo Bernett though he concentrates mainly on the period after 1933: H. BERNETT, Die jüdische Turn- und Sportbewegung als Ausdruck der Selbstfindung und Selbstbehauptung des deutschen Judentums, in: A. PAUCKER (ed.), *Die Juden im Nationalsozialistischen Deutschland – The Jews in Nazi Germany 1933–1945*, Tübingen 1986 (= Schriftenreihe wissenschaftlicher Abhandlungen des Leo-Baeck-Instituts 45), p. 223–237 and H. BERNETT, *Der jüdische Sport im nationalsozialistischen Deutschland 1933 bis 1938*, Schorndorf 1978 (= Schriftenreihe des Bundesinstituts für Sportwissenschaft 18).

Germany, and reflected the successes and failures of integration within that society.

1. An analysis of the coverage of Jewish football clubs (in Germany and beyond) in the German-Zionist press will reflect the assumption of an, 'imagined community' and hence of a bond between German Jews and Jews outside of Germany.
2. An examination of the language used in such articles will show how it portrayed Zionist aspirations to rejuvenate the Jewish body and to create the image of a strong and muscular Jew.
3. A scrutiny of the relations between Jewish clubs and their non-Jewish opponents will be used to indicate the kind of integration into society Zionists aspired to and the kind of integration they achieved.

This paper, and its findings, are based on a detailed scrutiny of two relevant primary sources. These are the Berlin-based Zionist bi-weekly *Jüdische Rundschau*, and the monthly publication of the World federation of Zionist sport, *Der Makkabi* which was also published in Berlin.⁴ Primary research, while potentially illuminating, also has its drawbacks. In this instance, those include the virtual absence of half of the population. Indeed, although women took an active role in sport (both Jewish and not), this paper is unfortunately beholden to its primary sources and will focus on male competitions only.⁵ Before turning to these sources, it is useful to place this discussion of Jewish sports within the larger historical picture of sports and nationalism in Germany.

2. The birth of German *Turner* movement and the foundation of the Jewish *Turnverein Bar Kochba*

The modern German sports movement has its beginning with Friedrich Ludwig Jahn (1778–1852). *Turnvater* Jahn, as he is known today, was a staunch promoter of bodily exercise which he saw as an important military education of Germany's youth, as a means to free Germany from French occupation. In 1811, Jahn formed a gymnastics association, the *Deutscher*

⁴ *Jüdische Rundschau*, Berlin, 1918–1933; *Der Makkabi, Organ des Deutschen Kreises im „Makkabi“ Weltverband*, Berlin, 1928–1938.

⁵ An overview on Jewish women in German sports is given in G. PFISTER/T. NIEWERTH, Jewish Women in Gymnastics and Sport in Germany 1898–1938, in: *Journal of Sport History* 26 (1999), p. 287–325, but it does not address the role of women in football.

Turnerbund (DT) which grew quickly in the various German states as well as in Austria. Jahn's movement was driven to no small extent by a nationalist attitude and the creation of a nation state. The German *Turner* movement was among the most active groups which helped propagate German unity from the time of the Napoleonic wars onward. Prussia's military victory over France in 1870 realized the nationalist *Turners'* goal of national unity.⁶ In the 1870's, Bismarck introduced anti-socialist laws aimed at people associated with the SPD and the nationalist gymnastic clubs began to expulse Social Democrats from their organizations. Social Democratic workers founded their own gymnastics societies which formed an umbrella organization in 1893, the *Arbeiter-Turn-Bund* (ATB) or workers gymnastics association.⁷

From the day of their foundation, the admittance of Jews to these associations was a matter of debate. Anti-Semitic policies were initiated by Austrian clubs.⁸ In 1883, of the 1,000 members of the Viennese *Turnverein*, as many as 400 were Jews.⁹ This high number led to the foundation of a competing gymnastics movement in Austria which was led by Franz Kiessling and which did not accept Jews. Anti-Semitism however was not restricted to Austria and remained a phenomenon among a certain number of German *Turnvereine*, too and an increasing number of clubs included so-called *Arierparagraphen* in their statutes which prohibited Jews from joining the clubs.

Even more outspoken against Jews were the student's gymnastics organizations which were united under the *Akademischer Turnerbund* (AkTB), founded in 1883. The AkTB, also a member of the DT, declared in 1901 the exclusion of all baptized Jews from its clubs. Other Jews had been excluded before or never even been accepted. However, despite the prevalence of anti-Semitism among these associations, of the half-a-million members of

⁶ Arnd Krüger gives a careful analysis of the complex connection between the *Turner* as well as the sport movement and nationalism, in: A. KRÜGER, *Deutschland, Deutschland über alles? National Integration through Turnen and Sport in Germany 1870–1914*, in: *Stadion* 25 (1999), p. 109–129. Svenja Goltermann has tried to revise this accepted view: S. GOLTERMANN, *Körper der Nation – Habitusformierung und die Politik des Turnens 1860–1890*, Göttingen 1998 (= Kritische Studien zur Geschichtswissenschaft 126).

⁷ J. W. STAUFF, *Political Football: The worker's sport movement in Hanover during the Weimar Republic*, doctoral dissertation, SUNY at Buffalo 1994, p. 5.

⁸ A. KRÜGER, "Once the Olympics are through, we'll beat up the Jew". German Jewish Sport 1898–1938 and the Anti-Semitic Discourse, in: *Journal of Sport History* 26 (1999), p. 353–375, there p. 362.

⁹ E. FRIEDLER, *Makkabi chai – Makkabi lebt: Die Jüdische Sportbewegung in Deutschland 1898–1998*, Wien, München 1998, p. 11.

the *DT* at the beginning of the 20th century about ten to fifteen-thousand, or roughly a bit more than 2% were Jewish.¹⁰

Just as the creation of a nationwide German sports movement was linked to the emergence of the German nation-state and the nationalist feelings of its citizens, the creation of a Jewish sports movement was initially linked to the phenomenon of Jewish nationalism, namely Zionism.¹¹

In 1898, at the Second World-Zionist Congress in Basel, the doctor, writer and Zionist leader Max Nordau called for the creation of a Jewish sports movement. Nordau wished to create a parallel movement to political Zionism. Just as Zionism wished to change the mental state of the Jews and give them a new sense of self-confidence and pride, the Zionist sports movement was to transform the Jews of its time physically, from what Nordau, and the general public, perceived to be weak and feeble human beings into strong and healthy individuals. That same year, the first Jewish gymnastics organization, the *Turnverein Bar Kochba* was founded in Berlin. Partly the organization was forced into existence by the widespread refusal of the German *Turnvereine* to accept Jews.¹² But the founders of *Bar Kochba* clearly saw as one of the organization's goals the strengthening of "the body as a medium of the rebirth of the Jewish people".¹³ This dual causality for the creation of *Bar Kochba* was apparent from the beginning of its formation. Some of the organization's founders wanted the club to be distinctively Zionist whereas others preferred a neutral outlook. The compromise reached stated that the club was to foster the "national-Jewish convictions" of its members. These national Jewish convictions did not represent aspirations of the foundation of a Jewish state but rather the fact that Jews constituted a community not only based on religion but also on history and descent that had retained a strong awareness of its unity.¹⁴ As its aims the club clearly stated the strengthening of the Jewish body, the strengthening of Jewish unity and the fight against anti-Semitism. However, many people joined *Bar Kochba* without necessarily identifying with its ideology.¹⁵ By 1913 *Bar*

¹⁰ E. FRIEDLER, *Makkabi chai*, p. 14.

¹¹ H. BERNETT, *Die jüdische Turn- und Sportbewegung*, p. 223.

¹² R. ATLASZ, *Barkochba, Makkabi – Deutschland, 1898–1939*, Tel Aviv 1997, p. 7.

¹³ B. POSTAL/J. SILVER/R. SILVER (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Jews in Sports*, New York 1965, p. 10.

¹⁴ "Unter Nationaljudentum verstehen wir das Bewusstsein der Zusammengehörigkeit aller Juden auf grund gemeinsamer Abstammung und Geschichte, sowie den Willen, die Jüdische Stammesgemeinschaft auf dieser Grundlage zu erhalten": *Jüdische Turnerzeitung. Offizielles Organ des Jüdischen Turnvereins "Bar Kochba"* [Berlin], 1/1, May 1900 and R. ATLASZ, *Barkochba, Makkabi*, p. 13.

¹⁵ F. LEWINSON, *Makkabi und Zionismus*, in: R. ATLASZ, *Barkochba, Makkabi*, p. 51–56.

Kochba had at least 15 different subdivisions and about 750 members and at the eve of the Great War in 1914, the club inaugurated its own sports field in front of 2,500 guests.

The historian of Jewish sport, George Eisen, has warned not to give Zionist sports too prominent a place in the history of Jewish sport.¹⁶ Many Jewish athletes were members of non-denominational clubs.¹⁷ Furthermore the Zionist clubs were not the only Jewish clubs. *Vintus* for example was a neutral Jewish gymnastics association of Jewish clubs all over Germany that rejected the possibility of emigration to Palestine.¹⁸ Neither were Jews the only ethnic minority to form their own clubs as the foundation of the Sokol movement by Czech gymnasts in order to counter the strong German *Turner* movement in their country, shows.¹⁹

3. Jewish Football in Weimar Germany: *S. C. Hakoah Berlin*

Towards the end of the 19th century football, track and field or swimming had become increasingly popular and found adherents mostly among the upper classes. High-schools introduced afternoon games including football and rugby which became very popular among students. The *DT* and *ATB* initially resisted this sports movement for its foreign and competitive character but by the time of the Weimar Republic, sports had become well accepted and many *DT* and *ATB* had installed sport wings to accommodate the fervent interest of their members in such activities.²⁰

Football grew increasingly popular during the Weimar Republic. Soldiers returning from the front had become used to fraternizing with fellow men. The fall of the empire forced many people to look for new identity creating communities. But most importantly the *Deutsche Fussball Bund (DFB)* emphasized from the outset its politically neutral character and classlessness.²¹ Some football functionaries went so far to claim that football had an integrating role in a society which after 1918 threatened to fall apart.²² Another

¹⁶ G. EISEN, *Jews and Sport: A Century of Retrospect*, in: *Journal of Sport History* 26 (1999), p. 225–239, there p. 229.

¹⁷ Thus for example one fourth to one third of the football club *Tennis Borussia Berlin* were supposedly Jewish: G. FISCHER/U. LINDNER (ed.), *Stürmer für Hitler: vom Zusammenspiel zwischen Fussball und Nationalsozialismus*, Göttingen 1999, p. 207.

¹⁸ A. KRÜGER, *Olympics*, p. 364.

¹⁹ A. KRÜGER, *Deutschland, Deutschland*, p. 112.

²⁰ J. W. STAUFF, *Political Football*, p. 8–10.

²¹ C. EISENBERG, *„English Sports“ und deutsche Bürger: eine Gesellschaftsgeschichte 1800–1939*, Paderborn, München, Wien, Zürich 1999, p. 188.

²² E. EGGERS, *Fussball in der Weimarer Republik*, p. 155.

important factor however was the commercialization of football, the increasing space devoted to football in print media and the transmission of games via the radio.²³

Jewish sport clubs continued to strengthen their position after World War I and were not immune to the increase in popularity of football. The most successful Jewish sport club during the postwar period was without doubt *Vienna's all-Jewish Hakoah 09* football team which became Austrian national champion in 1924–26 and 1928–29. In 1923 this legendary Viennese team visited Berlin and beat their host *Hertha BSC*. Inspired by this visit, Berlin witnessed the foundation of its own all-Jewish soccer team on May 17, 1924.²⁴

The team began playing in the fourth division and for three years in a row ended up first in its league and so moved up successfully to enter into the first division of the local championship in 1927. By 1928, the club had 800 members.²⁵ Finally, *Hakoah* joined *Bar Kochba Berlin*, which changed its name to *Jüdischer Turn- und Sport-Verein Bar Kochba-Hakoah*, to form Europe's largest Jewish sport club.

The following analysis of the interaction between *Hakoah Berlin* and other clubs shall shed light on the integration of its players and fans into, or their segregation from the rest of German society. Football as a vehicle for the construction of individual, group and national identities has received much scholarly attention over the last decade. Ron Hay has shown how Croatian football clubs played a "significant role in the creation and shaping of the self-conceptions of Australian Croatians".²⁶ And focusing on Glasgow's Celtic Football Club, Joseph M. Bradley shows how football reinforces

²³ E. EGGERS, *Fussball in der Weimarer Republik*, p. 164–166.

²⁴ Erich Gumpert, a founder of the *Hakoah Berlin* described the encounter as follows: "Als die Hakoahner mit dem Magen David auf der Brust auf den Sportplatz liefen, hüpfte mir mein Herz vor Freude und Stolz ein Jude zu sein und kräftige jüdische Gestalten von jungen Menschen sich im friedlichen Wettbewerb gleich oder sogar den anderen Sportlern überlegen zu sein", in: K. SCHILDE, *Mit dem Davidstern auf der Brust. Spuren der Jüdischen Sportjugend in Berlin zwischen 1898 und 1938*, Berlin 1988, p. 13.

²⁵ I. FISHER, *Entwicklung des Sports im Barkochba und Makkabi – Deutschland*, in: R. ATLASZ, *Barkochba, Makkabi*, p. 57–85, there p. 70. Numbers differ. Schilde states the numbers for 1924 as four men-teams (Männermannschaften), two junior, one youth and one school team: K. SCHILDE, *Mit dem Davidstern auf der Brust*, p. 14.

²⁶ R. HAY, *Croatia: Community, Conflict and Culture: The Role of Soccer Clubs in Migrant Identity*, in: M. CRONIN/D. MAYALL (ed.), *Sporting Nationalisms: Identity, Ethnicity, Immigration and Assimilation*, London 1998, p. 49–66.

the separate identity of Irish identity in Scottish society.²⁷ Though these studies emphasize the role of sport as a segregating factor through its contribution to the expression and maintenance of separate ethnic identities, sport can also serve as a vehicle of integration.²⁸

4. Imagined communities

In order to evaluate the evolution of Jewish-Zionist identity in Weimar Germany, Benedict Anderson offers a helpful framework in his book *Imagined Communities* that can help analyze the way Zionists identified with each other.²⁹ The kind and intensity of coverage of the failures and successes of clubs like the Viennese *Hakoah* in the Berlin Zionist press might be indicative of a nationalist self-understanding among Zionists in accord with the framework of Anderson's *Imagined Communities*.

According to Anderson, nationalism is imagined because a nation's members identify with millions of other members they have never met.³⁰ Anderson argues that print capitalism preceded and facilitated the spread of an imagined national community by making it possible for humans to think of themselves and identify themselves with a community of other readers. The convergence of capitalism and print technology created the possibility of a new form of imagined community, which set the stage for the modern nation.

The concept of imagined communities can be applied to analyze the football coverage of the *Jüdische Rundschau*. Like its political coverage, its sport coverage, too related to events happening far away from Berlin. However, whereas Zionist endeavors in Palestine or in anti-Semitic events in Russia are of political interest even to Jews who do not necessarily share Zionist aspirations, the interest in sport results is difficult to understand unless we accept George Eisen's suggestion that sport successes fostered eth-

²⁷ J.M. BRADLY, Sport and the Contestation of Cultural and Ethnic Identities in Scottish Society, in: M. CRONIN / D. MAYALL (ed.), *Sporting Nationalisms*, p. 127–150.

²⁸ The story of the Palwankar brothers who belonged to the caste of 'untouchables' is probably the best example. Palwankar Vithal was carried off the field on the shoulder of high-caste Hindus after he had led them to a cricket victory in the quadrangular tournament in 1923: R. GUHA, Cricket and Politics in Colonial India, in: *Past and Present* 161, November 1998.

²⁹ B. ANDERSON, *Imagined Communities – Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, London 1983.

³⁰ B. ANDERSON, *Imagined Communities*, p. 15.

nic pride and cohesion within the Jewish community.³¹ Hence whereas Jews do not need to identify with other Jews to be interested in their plight, it is hard to understand why they would be interested in their sport results if they did not identify with them. The coverage of the Viennese football-club *Hakoah* in the *Jüdische Rundschau* shall serve to illustrate this point. The strong interest in the achievements of *Hakoah Vienna* among the editors and readers of the German *Rundschau* indicates a high level of identification with the sport successes of Zionists from other countries and reflects the Zionist perception of the Jews as a distinct community.

Hakoah Vienna was the most successful of all Jewish football clubs in Europe.³² It played in the first division of the Austrian football league and repeatedly became Austrian champion. The successes and failures of the club were of significance not only to Viennese or Austrian Jews but to Jews outside of Austria as well. This interest was reflected by a continuous coverage of *Hakoah's* successes in the pages of the *Rundschau*.

Hakoah's sensational trip to the United States in 1926 received broad attention by the editors of the *Rundschau*. In April, the team on their way to New York arrived in Paris and the *Rundschau* reported *Hakoah's* victory against two of France's best teams. The article informed the reader of the spectators' expressed admiration for the team and how the press lauded the "Jewish team's masterful play in its articles".³³ One week later *Hakoah* arrived in New York and the *Rundschau* reported how the arrival caused a sensation. *Hakoah* was greeted by a reception committee and taken in cars to city hall where they were welcomed by the city's mayor James John Walker.³⁴ The interest in *Hakoah's* tour and its success can be explained by an identification of the *Rundschau's* Zionist readers with the success of this Jewish team from Vienna.

But the most striking example of how the editors of the *Jüdische Rundschau* fostered the perception of such an 'imagined Jewish community' around *Hakoah's* victories among its readers, appeared after *Hakoah's* first game in the States. Titled in bold letters reading "Jewish sport-victory in America", the article is significant for its careful choice of words. The article began with creating immediacy through writing in the present tense. The first sentence read: "As reported to us just now from New York via telegram [. . .]". This careful choice of words created nearness between the reader and

³¹ G. EISEN, *Jews and Sport*, p. 227.

³² On *Hakoah Vienna* see: JÜDISCHES MUSEUM WIEN, *Hakoah. Ein jüdischer Sportverein in Wien 1909–1995*, Wien 1995.

³³ *Jüdische Rundschau* no. 29/30, 16. 4. 1926, p. 224.

³⁴ *Jüdische Rundschau* no. 31, 23. 4. 1926, p. 233.

the events on the other side of the Atlantic Ocean. The significance of the event was emphasized through stressing the Jewish character of the team. The centre of the notice read in big letters "Victory of the Jews 4 : 0".³⁵ Not unlike the role of the newspaper in Anderson's framework, the *Rundschau* created an illusion of immediacy between the reader and the events in America and helped to create an understanding of national community among Zionists that transgressed national borders.

In the *Rundschau's* next report on *Hakoah's* America tour the Jewishness of the club was conspicuously absent. But even if now the club was called the Viennese football club and the players simply the Viennese the extensive description of *Hakoah's* "victory" over *Sparta Chicago* and the relation of how its two players, Neufeld and Grünwald, were carried from the field triumphantly at the end of the game presupposes an interest among the readers for this information which can only be explained by an identification of the reader with *Hakoah's* success.³⁶

The next article on *Hakoah* in America continued the use of creating the kind of immediacy encountered above. On June 1, the *Rundschau* reported that "according to a phone call, the Viennese Hakoah-Footballteam has beaten the Brooklyn Wandererklub 6 : 4".³⁷

Finally an unusually long note reported *Hakoah's* departure from the United States. The team was honored with a farewell dinner at which among other notables Henry Morgenthau was present and at the end *Hakoah's* successes were summed up and the author noted that out of ten games, "the Jewish team has won six, played two ties and lost two".³⁸

The *Rundschau's* extensive coverage of *Hakoah's* successes did not mean that the newspaper's editors assumed interest among the *Rundschau's* readers for *Hakoah's* victories only. In fact, *Hakoah's* America tour had devastating consequences for the team which were reported by the *Rundschau*, extensively too. Thus the coverage not only reported on *Hakoah's* victories as a way to foster ethnic pride among its readers but rather because the plight of *Hakoah* Vienna was of genuine interest to the reader in general.

In June 1928, two years after their America tour, *Hakoah Vienna* dropped out of the first into the second league. During their visit to the US, many players had been offered lucrative contracts to continue their careers in the

³⁵ *Jüdische Rundschau* no. 32, 27. 4. 1926, p. 242.

³⁶ *Jüdische Rundschau* no. 37, 14. 5. 1926, p. 284.

³⁷ *Jüdische Rundschau* no. 42, 1. 6. 1926, p. 311.

³⁸ *Jüdische Rundschau* no. 44, 8. 6. 1926, p. 326.

States. Eventually, seven players accepted these offers and left their team for the States where they founded the *All Stars Hakoah New York*.³⁹

The Viennese Zionist newspaper *Wiener Morgenzeitung*, was highly critical of these relocations. Excerpts of one of its articles covering these events were reprinted in the *Rundschau*. The author of the article accused the players of selling out and of deserting the blue and white flag. He saw in these actions a breach of "Jewish trust and soul".⁴⁰ When in June 1928, *Hakoah* dropped into the second division this merited a note in the *Rundschau* which did not refrain from using the word Jewish when referring to the club's failure to remain in the first division.⁴¹

The successful resurgence of *Hakoah Vienna* was of course of interest, too. In August 1928 the *Rundschau* reported that the club had paid its debts and changed its status from a professional to an amateur club.⁴² The *Rundschau* reported that the team had successfully won all of its nineteen second division games in a row and that *Hakoah* hence had earned the championship title of the second division and had thus gained reentry into the first.⁴³

The coverage of *Hakoah Vienna* was not the only sport coverage in the *Rundschau* that reflected the existing notion in an 'imagined community' among the Zionist readers. Sport in Palestine, though rarely mentioned, warranted the *Rundschau's* attention when football was the issue. On June 1, 1928, the *Rundschau* reported that Sir Alfred Mond had donated £ 2,000 to allow a team made up of "Palestine's Jewish football players to travel to England where they can compete with respected British teams".⁴⁴ The same Sir Alfred Mond also sponsored an annual Melchet-Football-Cup for the teams in Palestine. In July 1928, the *Rundschau* thought it interesting

³⁹ The new *All Stars Hakoah New York* did not go unmentioned in the *Rundschau*. On April 5, the team played St. Louis in St. Louis and won 2 : 0 in front of 21,000 spectators. The article explains that the team of *All Stars Hakoah New York* was "made up of Austrian and Hungarian players, who remained in the United States after the America-trip of Hakoah Vienna": *Jüdische Rundschau* no. 51, 12. 4. 1929, p. 185.

⁴⁰ "Die Hakoahner, die ausgezogen waren Amerika zu bezwingen sind vom Dollar besiegt worden. Nicht irgendein einzelner verlässt die blau-weiße Fahne; diese Massenflucht bedeutet den Zusammenbruch eines Systems. Der jüdische Professionalismus hat auf der Fahrt über den Atlantik Schiffbruch erlitten. Es zeigt sich, dass das Berufsspielertum jüdischen Geist und Treue weder zu schaffen noch zu erhalten vermag": Article from *Wiener Morgenzeitung* quoted in *Jüdische Rundschau* no. 52, 6. 7. 1926, p. 368.

⁴¹ *Jüdische Rundschau* no. 50, 26. 6. 1928, p. 364.

⁴² *Jüdische Rundschau* no. 69, 31. 8. 1928, p. 497.

⁴³ *Jüdische Rundschau* no. 32/33, 24. 4. 1929, p. 211.

⁴⁴ *Jüdische Rundschau* no. 42/43, 1. 6. 1928.

enough to report that the Jewish sport club *Hapoel* had won the Melchet-Cup and that a team was traveling to England in October to measure itself against one of the best English teams.⁴⁵

But Anderson's framework of imagined communities is maybe most appropriate when we analyze a regular column of football results that appeared in the *Rundschau* during the year of 1926. Usually at the end of the sport section, the newspaper printed the football results of various Jewish football teams under the title "Fussballspiele".⁴⁶ This was not intended solely for fans who wanted to know how their team had played. The *Rundschau* appeared only twice a week and by time of the *Rundschau*'s publication, real enthusiasts would already be aware of the result if they had not attended the game in person in the first place. Rather this column allowed the Zionist readers to see how well the Zionist football clubs in other places were doing. It reflected an interest of the readership in being informed about the failures and success of other Jewish football clubs. All knowledge that could be gained from these short columns was if a Jewish team had won or lost.

The football coverage of the *Jüdische Rundschau* reflected the intensity of how much Zionists identified with the plight of other Jews living in other communities. Usually such a statement would have to be made cautiously since such interests could be motivated by political interest, too. However, the keen interest taken in the sport results of teams like *Hakoah Vienna* by Zionist readers in Berlin and other parts of Europe points to a perception of the Jewish population as a community that transgressed the borders of the modern nation-states and connected its members. It is hence reflective of a distinct Jewish-Zionist identity among Zionists in Weimar Germany.

5. The new Jewish body

The language used in the coverage of football games reflected the generally perceived similarity between football and the experiences of war.⁴⁷ This fact becomes of particular interest if we take anti-Semitic stereotypes such as the unworthiness of Jews to serve in the Army into account as well as Zionist's aspirations to destroy the validity of such stereotypes. The need to refute these stereotypes shows how Jewish-Zionist identity in Weimar Germany was influenced by the anti-Semitic discourse it encountered and how it accepted the masculine and militaristic norms of Weimar society.

⁴⁵ *Jüdische Rundschau* no. 60, 31. 7. 1928.

⁴⁶ *Jüdische Rundschau* no. 60, 31. 8. 1925, p. 518; no. 34, 2. 5. 1930, p. 241; no. 40, 23. 5. 1930, p. 281; no. 44/45, 6. 4. 1930; no. 50, 27. 6. 1930.

⁴⁷ C. EISENBERG, „*English Sports*“ und deutsche Bürger, p. 190–191.

Like all national movements, Zionism stressed the importance of physical education. Only a strong and healthy people would be able to build its own state in Palestine as well as refute anti-Semitic arguments that Jews were a weak race. At the second Zionist congress Max Nordau called for the rejuvenation of the Jewish body through the creation of a muscular Judaism. Nordau's leadership gave impetus to new Jewish sport clubs throughout Europe and paved the establishment of the Zionist Maccabi movement. By 1913 there were twenty-nine clubs in Europe with a membership of 4,500.⁴⁸ As a result of this increase in sporting activities, the 13th Zionist Congress at Karlsbad in 1921 witnessed the foundation of the World Maccabi Union, an international umbrella organization for Zionist Jewish sport. The aim of these Zionist sport clubs was to make Jewish boys into strong muscular men. As Nordau put it:

"We must again create a strong, muscular Judaism (Muskeljudentum). We shall renew our youth in our old age, and with broad chest, powerful limbs and valiant gaze – we shall be warriors. For us Jews, sport has a great educational significance. It has to bring about the health not only of the body but also of the spirit".⁴⁹

Sander Gilman has shown how this attempt to destroy the image of the feeble Jew and replace it by a strong and athletic one instead must be understood as a response to the anti-Semitic stereotype of the Jew.⁵⁰ Anti-Semites saw the Jews as physically different from gentiles in almost all bodily aspects. Gilman situates the discourse on Jews in sport of that period within the discussion of the inability of the Jews to serve as citizens.

In the context of football, Gilman's research on the Jewish foot is of special interest.⁵¹ Gilman shows how the Jewish foot was perceived as unique and how the Jew's 'bad foot' made him unfit to become a 'foot soldier' and hence to become a citizen, since to function as a citizen within a state meant to participate in full military service. The discourse of the Jewish foot was prevalent in the Weimar Republic, too and was linked to the unfitness of Jews to serve in the Army.

There are two major ways these concerns were reflected among the sport-coverage of the *Jüdische Rundschau*. First there was a continuous discussion on the importance of sport for the rejuvenation of the Jewish body. During the twenties this discussion focused on the question of how much the Zion-

⁴⁸ A. HUGES, Muscular Judaism and the Jewish Rugby League Competition in Sydney, 1924 to 1927, in: *Sporting Traditions* 13/1 (1996), p. 61–80, there p. 62.

⁴⁹ Preamble, in: B. POSTAL/J. SILVER/R. SILVER (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Jews in Sports*.

⁵⁰ S. GILMAN, *The Jews Body*, New York, London 1991.

⁵¹ S. GILMAN, The Jewish Foot, A Foot-Note to the Jewish Body, in: S. GILMAN, *The Jews Body*, p. 38–59.

ist sports movement should also get involved in the mental education of its members alongside their physical rejuvenation. But more subtly, and more important in light of Gilman's research on the Jewish foot, the coverage of football used a bellicose language which turned football players into soldiers, the football pitch into a battlefield and the game into a fight. Thus Jews, through playing football, more than through any other kind of sport, refuted the notion of their inability to serve as foot soldiers or become full-fledged citizens.

An editorial on the Makkabi page of the *Rundschau* in 1926 praised the Jewish sports movement for its success in proving that Jews could compete with non-Jews in a way few people would have thought this possible in the past.⁵² However, unlike some non-Zionist sport clubs the article noted that the Makkabi movement had to strive for the physical and mental education of its members. According to another Makkabi editorial published in the *Rundschau*, the aspiration of the Zionist sports movement could not be to create a superhuman. Rather the aim would have to be the physical and spiritual education of Jewish youth.⁵³

The language used when reporting on the games of *Hakoah Berlin* used many terms that would be immediately associated by the reader with war. In this the *Rundschau* reflected a general trend in Weimar Germany to use bellicose language when referring to football.⁵⁴ But Nordau had already made a clear connection between war and the name Bar Kochba in 1898 and his quote was reprinted in the special edition of the *Jüdische Rundschau* on *Bar Kochba's* thirtieth birthday in 1928:

“Bar Kochba ist die letzte weltgeschichtliche Verkörperung des kriegsharten, waffenfrohen Judentums. Sich unter Bar Kochbas Anrufung zu stellen verrät Ehrgeiz. Aber Ehrgeiz steht Turnern, die nach höchster Entwicklung streben, wohl an”.⁵⁵

When *Hakoah Berlin* joined *Bar Kochba* a short article gave an overview of the short history of the football club. Football, noted the article, was appropriate for Jewish youth since it taught “community spirit, discipline and comradeship”, words clearly reminiscent of the foot soldier's ideal attri-

⁵² H. KUHN, Viel Lärm um . . . , in: *Jüdische Rundschau* no. 16, 26. 2. 1926, p. 119.

⁵³ A. CAHN, Die jüdischen Sportvereine in Deutschland, in: *Jüdische Rundschau* no. 24, 26. 3. 1926.

⁵⁴ Eisenberg shows that the origins of these termini lie in Imperial pre World War I Germany: C. EISENBERG, „English Sports“ und deutsche Bürger, p. 191.

⁵⁵ M. NORDAU, quoted in 30 Jahre Bar Kochba, in: *Jüdische Rundschau* no. 85, 26. 10. 1928, p. 595.

butes.⁵⁶ Matches were usually referred to as fights (*Kampf*) and only rarely as games (*Spiel*). Games were usually not only won but the enemy was defeated (*geschlagen*) and fans traveling with the team to away games occasionally referred to as “Schlachtenbummler”.⁵⁷ A good example of this kind of coverage is the report on a game played by *Hakoah Wiesbaden* against the unnamed champion of the South-German championship. The report evoked clear associations with war and described the different parts of the game as scenes of battle. Furthermore, according to that report, *Hakoah Wiesbaden* “beat” *Germania Wiesbaden* “on its turf” so that *Germania* had to “bow” to the *Hakoah* eleven. It described *Hakoah*’s players as superior in “elasticity” and “vigor”. Though *Germania* was superior in “routine” and “force”, *Hakoah* was the “victor” of the game.⁵⁸

Another example is the report of the game between *Hakoah Berlin* and *Concordia-Wilhelmsruh* which is of the better teams of the Berlin league. *Concordia* was “defeated” and the “victory” was due to *Hakoah*’s “fighting power”. *Hakoah* had resisted the “enemy’s onslaught” who tried with all its “might” to regain the lead.⁵⁹

The use of bellicose language in the coverage of these football games by the *Rundschau* and the *Makkabi* can be seen as the attempt to refute the anti-Semitic stereotypes of the Jews as weak and feeble. The clear associations with warfare which these reports evoked portrayed the Jewish footballers

⁵⁶ “Für die jüdische Jugend schien das Fussballspiel durch seine den Gemeinschaftsgeist, Disziplin und Kameradschaftlichkeit fördernde Wirkung besonders geeignet”: I. FREUND, Zur Fusion Bar Kochba – Hakoah Berlin, in: *Der Makkabi* no. 3/4, March/April 1930.

⁵⁷ *Der Makkabi* no. 12, December 1930, p. 13 or *Jüdische Rundschau* no. 44/45, 6. 4. 1930.

⁵⁸ “Hakoah, Wiesbaden greift in den Verbandsspielen der obersten Liga im Süddeutschen Fussball- und Leichtathletikverband ein und schlägt Germania, Wiesbaden auf des Gegners Platz 4 : 1 (0 : 1). – Was niemand erwartet hätte, wurde Tatsache: der F.V. Germania, Wiesbaden, musste sich vor seinen [*sic!*] Lokalgegner, der jungen Hakoahelf, beugen. Die Elastizität und grössere Spannkraft bezwang die grössere Routine und Wucht des Meisters. Blitzschnell wechselten die Kampfbilder, aber Hakoah hatte meist die besseren Chancen”: „Derby“ in Wiesbaden, in: *Jüdische Rundschau* 73/75, 21. 9. 1928, p. 573.

⁵⁹ “Unsere Mannschaft konnte trotz aller gegenteiligen Voraussagen dem Spitzenreiter und Favorit unserer Abteilung eine 3 : 1 Niederlage beibringen. Dieser Sieg ist in allererster Linie auf die Kampfkraft der Mannschaft zurückzuführen. In ganz grossartiger Weise konnte sie dem Ansturm des Gegners, welcher beim 2 : 1-Stand für uns mit aller Kraft versuchte aufzuholen und das Spiel für sich zu entscheiden, standhalten”: Das erste Mal auf dem Rasen, in: *Der Makkabi* no. 10, October 1930, p. 13.

as fighters and contested the labeling of Jews as unable to bear arms and serve as soldiers. Hence the sport coverage in the Zionist press during the Weimar era reflects the general preoccupation of Zionists with the stereotypes prevalent in the non-Jewish society that marked them among right-wing circles as unworthy of citizenship. Sport was a way to refute such assertions and sport successes were seen by readers and players as rebuttals of such allegations and were hence of relevance beyond the sphere of sport itself. The discourse represents the aspiration of Zionists in Weimar Germany for Jews to become accepted as full-fledged members of society.

7. The football pitch: meeting place or battle field?

Finally, the historian can try and analyze the integration of minorities into society by looking at the way such minorities interact with representatives of the majority when encountering them on the football field.⁶⁰ The successes and failures of integration of Zionists within the society of Weimar Germany can be evaluated by the interaction of the Zionist football club *Hakoah* and its non-Jewish opponents.

During the Weimar period, there were two regional championships in Berlin, a worker-league and a bourgeois-league. The *S. C. Hakoah Berlin* played in the latter. The fact that *Hakoah* took part in the local bourgeois championship shows that anti-Semitic feelings among bourgeois football players were not strong enough to keep the *S. C. Hakoah* out of the league.

This does by no means mean that anti-Semitism was not present on the football pitch. In October 1926, the General Assembly of the Jewish Sport Association in Austria presented the Austrian Football association with a resolution protesting anti-Semitic attacks against Jewish teams, asking the federation to ensure that Jewish teams would be able to play without interference.⁶¹ In Berlin it was important to have strong men on the team since when *Hakoah Berlin* played in smaller localities, they would often be attacked by anti-Semites.⁶² Does that mean that in the town there were no such

⁶⁰ Anthony Hughes has provided such an analysis for Australian Jewry: A. HUGHES, *Muscular Judaism*, p. 61–80.

⁶¹ *Jüdische Rundschau* no. 82, 19. 10. 1926, p. 587. The resolution said: “Der Jüdische Sportverband Österreichs ersucht den Allgemeinen Österreichischen Fussballbund in Hinkunft zu veranlassen, dass die den verschiedenen Landesverbänden angehörenden jüdischen Vereine ungestört ihre Fussballtätigkeit ausüben können.”

⁶² K. SCHILDE, *Mit dem Davidstern auf der Brust*, p. 14: “Wir brauchten auch starke Männer, denn, wenn wir in den kleineren Ortschaften spielten, und oft mit Erfolg, wurden wir von Antisemiten angegriffen. Wenn sie uns nicht im Fussball meistern konnten, versuchten sie es mit Schlägereien, aber auch dies meisterten wir.”

attacks? At least none are mentioned in the newspaper. In fact, *S. C. Hakoah* was playing non-Jewish teams regularly and developed friendly relationships with some of these teams.

The relationship between *Hakoah Berlin* and its non-Jewish opponents is often described as cordial. In fact, *Hakoah Berlin* was not a social outcast but developed friendly relations with some of the non-Jewish clubs in the city. This is shown by the fact that *Hakoah* did not only play against non-Jewish clubs in the framework of the regional bourgeois championship but played non-Jewish teams outside this framework, too.

On May 17, 1925, *Hakoah Berlin* celebrated its anniversary and invited three non-Jewish bourgeois clubs to play five of its own teams.⁶³ On May 29, 1930 *Hakoah* and a number of non-Jewish bourgeois clubs, (among them *Hallay Concordia* and *Norden Nordwest*) took part in a cup-competition organized by the club *B. Feder*. *Hakoah*'s first team won the competition 7 : 1. *Hakoah*'s third team reached a tie with *B. Feder*'s second team. The article relates how nevertheless the "sportsmanlike" opponent receded the cup to *Hakoah*.⁶⁴ Not a likely gesture if anti-Semitic feelings were strong among the players.

On June 22, 1930 *Hakoah* competed against the bourgeois team *Weissensee 1900* for a cup donated by the "friendly side".⁶⁵ And the *Rundschau* reported that *Hakoah* managed to organize social games with *Halley Concordia* for August 10, 1930 as well as with the bourgeois team *Helgoland* for the following Sunday.⁶⁶

The friendly relations between *Hakoah* and at least some of its opponents is an indicator for the level of acceptance and integration Jews had reached in bourgeois circles during the Weimar Republic. This is especially significant if we accept the general assumption that many Zionists were Jews of East-European descent and hence more prone to being attacked or ostracized by society. Further research would have to show why *Hakoah* decided to join the bourgeois-league and not the workers-league and if maybe there can be made a distinction of class between the members of the two clubs *Bar Kochba* and *Hakoah*. However the friendly relations are a sign of an unproblematic relationship between Jews and non-Jews in Weimar Germany which, as we shall see further on, initially even withstood the new anti-Jewish policies after 1933.

⁶³ The clubs were *B. S. C. Vorwärts 1890* and *D. F. C. Schwarz-Weiss: Jüdische Rundschau* no. 37, 12. 5. 1925, p. 345.

⁶⁴ "Auch hier überliess uns der Gegner in sportlicher Art den Pokal", in: *Der Makkabi* no. 7, May 1930, p. 16 and *Jüdische Rundschau* no. 44/45, 6. 4. 1930.

⁶⁵ *Der Makkabi* no. 7, May 1930, p. 16.

⁶⁶ *Jüdische Rundschau* no. 62, 8. 8. 1930 and no. 64, 15. 8. 1930.

But *Hakoah Berlin* also strove to have good relations with the other all-Jewish football clubs in Germany. On Pentecost 1928, the *S. C. Hakoah* organized a cup competition which *Bar Kochba Hamburg*, *Bar Kochba Dresden* and *Bar Kochba Leipzig* attended.⁶⁷ The games were reported by the *Rundschau* without using the usual bellicose language and instead the newspaper referred to the games as having been nice.⁶⁸ In 1929 the championship did not take place for technical reasons but on Pentecost 1930, the Jewish football teams of Dresden, Leipzig and Hamburg again met at this tournament to play in what the author of the article hoped would be a “fair and comradeship kind of way”.⁶⁹

Just like with Pentecost, Christmas seems to have been a good occasion for Jewish teams from all over Germany to meet, too. In 1929, the Football teams of *BK Hamburg* and *BK Hannover* met in Hanover. The first game, on the day of arrival of the Hamburg team, was to be a friendly against the reserve of the non-Jewish *Eintracht Hannover* team. The second day the two teams played against each other.⁷⁰

Even though *Hakoah Berlin* had good relations with at least some its non-Jewish opponents, the Zionist club tried to develop and foster relations with other all-Jewish football clubs in Germany. Thus above analysis shows a twofold identity among the sportsmen of *Hakoah*. They were well integrated into the non-Jewish bourgeois Berlin football community and had friendly ties to their non-Jewish opponents. On the other hand their Jewish or Zionist identity made them identify with other Jewish sportsmen from other parts of the country and this strong feeling of belonging made them travel extensive distances to attend friendly matches on their holydays such as Pentecost or Christmas and can be interpreted as fostering segregationary Zionist tendencies.

8. Conclusion

A thorough analysis of the German Jewish football would have to include other than just the above approaches to the sources. It is important to note, that though *Hakoah Berlin* was a football club, it served more than just a community of sport enthusiasts. Rather it created a social life around the

⁶⁷ Fussballpokalwettpiele des S.C. „Hakoah“ Berlin, in: *Der Makkabi* no. 6, June 1928, p. 15.

⁶⁸ *Jüdische Rundschau* no. 44, 5. 6. 1928.

⁶⁹ Aschheim-Pokalturnier, in: *Der Makkabi* no. 7, May 1930, p. 16.

⁷⁰ *Der Makkabi* no. 2, 1929, p. 14.

matches that served its players, fans as well as their spouses and friends which would have to be analyzed, too. But what has been shown is how a careful analysis of such a 'banal' phenomenon as sport can inform the historian of general social structures and sentiments which are reflected in the attitudes and perceptions of sportsmen in particular. The extensive coverage of *Hakoah Vienna* is a sign of the strong bond felt among Zionist Jews from around the world. Zionist Jews identified with the sporting successes of other Zionists and were proud of their victories no matter what their national origin. The bellicose language used in the articles must be seen in the context of the Zionist endeavor to rejuvenate the Jewish body which in itself is a 'reaction' to the widespread anti-Semitic stereotypes among members of non-Jewish society. Finally, the friendly relations between *Hakoah Berlin* and its non-Jewish opponents indicate a high level of acceptance of the Zionist club into the sport world of bourgeois Weimar Berlin and should be further analyzed in relation to the general debate of Jewish integration and assimilation during the Weimar period. An analysis of Jewish sport in Weimar Germany can hence reflect existing knowledge on this period or in return revise accepted perceptions through offering a different angle of approach. At the time of the national-socialist's seizure of power in 1933, there were 25 Maccabi clubs with approximately 8,000 members, 90 Schild clubs with about 2,000 members and 18 Vintus clubs.⁷¹ *Bar Kochba-Hakoah* was at that time the strongest Jewish football team in Germany. Given the total number of 40,000 Jewish sportsmen at that time, organized Jewish sport was the pastime of at least one quarter of Germany's Jewish sportsmen.⁷²

On June 2, 1933, all Jews were banned from non-Jewish sport clubs but the German football association had already introduced these measures voluntarily by April 19.⁷³ The law now stated that Jewish teams could only play other Jewish teams. However, on July 6, 1934, the *Jüdische Rundschau* reported that *Bar Kochba-Hakoah* played the bourgeois *Teutonia-Nordstern* and won 2 : 0. Its second team won against *Teutonia's* second team 6 : 2 and *Hakoah's* schoolteam lost 1 : 8. One month later *Bar Kochba-Hakoah* reportedly played the bourgeois *BSC Eintracht Borussia 1893*. At the same time the new Jewish *Hagibor* team played the bourgeois *B. F. C. Meteor 06*.⁷⁴

Encounters such as these between Jewish and non-Jewish teams were forbidden and might serve as a further indication of the good integration of Jewish football teams into Berlin's football society during the Weimar peri-

⁷¹ A. KRÜGER, *Olympics*, p. 355.

⁷² G. FISCHER / U. LINDNER (ed.), *Stürmer für Hitler*, p. 188.

⁷³ G. FISCHER / U. LINDNER (ed.), *Stürmer für Hitler*, p. 190.192.

⁷⁴ *Jüdische Rundschau* no. 66, 17. 8. 1934.

od. It would be rash to conclude that these games should be seen as acts of resistance.⁷⁵ However, they, like many other aspects of sport history, must not be ignored by the historian dealing with the relationship of Jews and non-Jews in Weimar and Nazi Germany.

The reader will pardon me if at the end of this article I venture into the unorthodox sphere of virtual history.⁷⁶ Football was a popular sport in Weimar Germany and like in all other areas of cultural life, Jews took an active part in it. *Hakoah Berlin* was only one manifestation of this interest and many Jewish football players were active in non-Jewish teams and Jews were prominent in Hungarian, Czech and Austrian football, too. Thus we might hypothesize that if soon after 1933 the Nazi party would have lost its power and modern European history would have taken another course, then maybe on that eventful day in Berne 1954, what would have sounded above that football pitch at the end of the World Cup final would not only have been the German national anthem. Rather a number of the players and a number of the fans might have been inclined to sing their own club's anthem, the Zionist *Hatikwa*.

⁷⁵ Matthias Marshik offers an interesting article on Austrian football under the Nazi regime and its role as a safe heaven for the expression of a distinct Austrian identity but is careful to point out that these acts should not be seen as resistance: M. MARSHIK, *Between Manipulation and Resistance: Viennese Football in the Nazi Era*, in: *Journal of Contemporary History* 34 (1999), p. 215–229.

⁷⁶ For an introduction into this field see N. FERGUSON (ed.), *Virtual history: alternatives and counterfactuals*, New York 1999.