Rabbi Dr. Leo Baeck (1873-1956) was the last President of the "Reichsvertretung der Juden in Deutschland" (Reich Representation of the Jews in Germany). He was the author of a number of theological works, the best known of which is *Wesen des Judentums*. During the Nazi regime he had refused to leave Germany and, consequently, he spent several years in a concentration camp. When, in 1954, the "Council of Jews from Germany" resolved to found an institute to preserve the history of German Jewry, it was decided that it should bear Dr. Baeck's name. The Leo Baeck Institute was established in New York City, with a branch in London and one in Jerusalem. The purpose of this paper is to introduce the reader to the Library of the Leo Baeck Institute in New York.

In his preface to the Library's printed catalog, Max Kreutzberger, former Secretary of the Institute, points out the scholarly, "methodisch-wissenschaftlicher" approach to the Library's work. Moreover, as Siegfried Moses, the Institute's second President, expressed it:

... decisions on research assignments and publications are subject to one criterion — the presentation
of German Jewry must be based on scientific study and drawn from original sources. The ideas and achievements of German Jewry are to be presented in scholarly works, free from apologetic or crypto-apologetic tendencies.  

The Library's guest book lists the varied topics pursued by the visitors. Within the past three years readers have sought answers to the genealogy of Karl Marx, the composer Meyerbeer's Jewish background, information on Houston Stewart Chamberlain, son-in-law of Richard Wagner and glorifier of the Teutonic race. One visitor states in the book that he is compiling a list of "Who's Who in German Emigration"; another wants to study the photographs of synagogues for a book on religious architecture; and a third researcher is working on a book about the "non-military" Napoleon. (Probably this study would analyze the attitude of nineteenth century German Jews, many of whom saw the Emperor as an emancipator.) German students of the Holocaust state that they have come to the New York branch for original source material. Many visitors, however, seek answers to genealogical questions and information on the history of German Jewish communities which have disappeared. The major periods of research are from the late nineteenth century to 1945, with emphasis on the Weimar Republic and the Third Reich.

To be sure, there are libraries in New York City which have more books related to Jewish studies than the Leo Baeck Institute with its 45,000-volume collection.
The New York Public Library's Jewish Division has over 120,000 works devoted to Jewish history, literature, philosophy, and Hebraica (besides a comprehensive serials collection); The Jewish Theological Seminary library possesses 250,000 volumes on biblical and rabbinical literature, plus a History of Jewish Science and Medicine; Yeshiva University libraries have 300,000 works on theology, law, and Middle Eastern studies; YIVO library has over a quarter million volumes and two million archival items saved from Poland, and mostly in Yiddish. However, the Leo Baeck Library is distinguished from other libraries in New York City and abroad by a unique collection of books and periodicals dealing exclusively with Jews in Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Czechoslovakia (where German was considered the language of the cultured minority) and other German linguistic pockets in Eastern Europe. There are libraries in the countries mentioned which have duplicates of many of the books found in the Leo Baeck Institute (LBI), but they are scattered throughout many libraries and collections. Only at the LBI is the collection so highly specialized. Until the completion of the LBI printed catalog, it is still necessary for librarians from Germany and elsewhere to consult the LBI card catalog in order to fill in the gaps in their files. 

The inadequacy of the Jewish collections of German libraries is the result of the Nazi confiscation and destruction of untold numbers of "Jewish" books. During
their occupation of Europe the Germans looted the contents of more than 450 major Jewish libraries. The smaller collections of synagogues and theological academies were usually burned or sold for pulp. German agents sold incunabula and rare editions for hard currency in neutral countries. Librarians under the direction of Alfred Rosenberg, the Nazi theorist on racial affairs, scoured libraries for books dealing with the political, social, and economic history of the Jews which were to be displayed in Nazi-sponsored museums devoted to the Jewish race. The "Institute for the Study of the Jewish Question" in Frankfurt was Rosenberg's central archive, while more than two million works were collected by the Reich Security Office in Berlin. It is ironic that while the Germans abandoned their monumental Deutscher Gesamtkatalog in 1939 because of the war effort, they nevertheless had librarians cataloging Jewish books. The result is the eight-volume Forschungen zur Judenfrage (Hamburg, 1937-1943).

Among the earliest printed books found in the LBI is the Epistolae Obscurorum Virorum (1515), acknowledged as a masterpiece of Humanist satire. Written by Ulrich von Hutten and others on the eve of the Reformation, the letters in this collection aim their barbs at the Dominican friars who were arraigned in a "battle of the books" against Johannes Reuchlin, the most famous Christian Hebraist of his day. The war had been started by Johannes Pfefferkorn, a
converted Jew, who had attempted to have all sacred Hebrew writings taken from the Jews on the ground that the scriptures were anti-Christian. In the Library there are pamphlets from the sixteenth century which reflect Luther's change in attitude towards the Jews, from tolerance to hostility, when the latter resisted his call to baptism. An example of Luther's mastery in the art of vituperation is testified to in his 1542 publication *Von den Juden und ihren Lügen.*

Almost 400 years later this pamphlet was cited at the Nürnberg Trials as justification for anti-Jewish legislation.

The insecure position of Jews throughout their history in Germany and Austria is further documented in the decrees found in the LBI archives. There are *Schutzjuden-briefe* (official letters protecting Jews) permitting them to travel and conduct business. These permits are outnumbered by the laws, however, which restricted their movements and places of residence. As late as the Enlightenment special taxes were levied on Jews, and quotas existed on the number who could marry. There were laws requiring newlyweds to purchase porcelain from the royal Meissen factories. This *Judenporzellan* is on display at the LBI. And, finally, there were even taxes on the dead.

Compared with the Polish and Russian Jews, the German Jews have most faithfully recorded their social organizations. More than three thousand entries in the LBI printed catalog are devoted to German-Jewish communities. The bulk of
publications represent ordinances of congregations, hospitals, charitable and fraternal organizations, burial societies, in short, the religious and social structure of communal life. While German-speaking Jews were scattered throughout various European countries, they nevertheless considered themselves German oriented. Jewish communities existed in Hungary since 1092, and their history is recorded in the eleven-volume *Monumenta Hungariae Judaica* (A-2681)\(^6\) printed in German, Latin, and Hungarian. Similar to the Christian communities in Alsace-Lorraine, which resisted the encroachment of the French language and culture, the Jewish enclaves continued to speak German. Metz, where Jews had settled in the ninth century A.D., has records of the community in German and French, depending on the language imposed by the rulers. Since 1945 almost every major locale where Jews once resided in German-speaking areas has issued a *Memorbuch* describing the history of the former Jewish inhabitants and a list of those deported.

Over 450 unpublished "Memoirs and Reminiscences" are listed in the catalog, and the number is constantly increasing. These memoirs run from one page to many hundreds. A short manuscript by the sister of the conductor Otto Klemperer describes her upbringing in Berlin and Hamburg and her early interest in Zionism (C-200). Konrad Kaiser, an official in the Berlin police, tells of Nazi infiltration within its ranks (C-207). Fifty notebooks document Ernst Lissauer's
work as a dramatist and poet and are accompanied by photographs, postcards and theater programs (C-240). Many of the manuscripts relate to the founding and growth of world famous business houses. A 32-page paper sums up the beginnings of the "Volkskunsthaus Wallach" in Munich, which specialized in native costumes and folk arts and crafts (C-418). The founder of the Kunstmann shipping line writes of his start as a provisioner for seamen and his company's rise to becoming the largest private fleet in Wilhelminean Germany (C-226).

From World War I there are diaries kept by Jewish soldiers. A rabbi-chaplain tells of his experiences with the German army on the Eastern front. It was not the shock of war that impressed itself so much on his mind but his first face-to-face encounter with impoverished Polish and Russian Jews and the world of the shtetl (C-407). A typewritten manuscript tells of forty exiled professors from Nazi Germany who found positions at the University of Istanbul and their reorganization of that institution along European lines (C-363). The above memoirs are among the more adventurous ones, however. The majority consist of the day-to-day activities of a people, their weddings and births, portraits of a society through the centuries until its breakup under National Socialism.

Corresponding in scope to the Library's collection of German Jewish books is the variety of its periodicals. There are over 850 newspapers and magazines, some of which
cannot be found elsewhere. One of the oldest is Ha-Meassef (The Collector), a Hebrew literary journal founded in 1783 by Moses Mendelssohn in Königsberg, where a circle of Jewish admirers had gathered around Kant (B-91). The trend to reform Judaism through modern education is seen in Sulamith, the first Jewish periodical printed in German (1806) (B-362). Many late nineteenth century periodicals (especially from Eastern Europe) show the Zionist impulse to return to the soil, to get Jews out of businesses and professions and teach them trades and agricultural skills. An attempt at reconciling the Wanderlust of German Romanticism with the longing for Zionism is found in the following pathfinder journals: Der jüdische Pfadfinder (B-217) and Der jüdische Pfadfinder Makkabi Hazair... (B-218). In a similar vein the monthly Jüdische Turn und Sportzeitung (1900-1938) (B-231) states on its masthead that it is "für die körperliche Hebung der Juden" (for the physical improvement of the Jews), i.e., to change the image of the pale Jew to that of the robust German.

Anti-Jewish sentiment toward the end of the Weimar Republic is typified by the monthly Volk und Rasse (B-507) and the official organ of the Nazi Party, Der völkische Beobachter (B-506). General Ludendorff, the military genius of World War I, and his wife edited Am heiligen Quell deutscher Kraft (At the Holy Source of German Strength) (B-488), which announced a new Aryan religion and exposed plots by the
Jesuits, Masons, and Jews. It was a bellwether of the times that the General who participated in Hitler's "Beer-Hall Putsch" was the head of a crackpot magazine. In opposition to these journals, Jewish war veterans published Der Schild: Zeitschrift Reichsbundes jüdischer Frontsoldaten (B-345). The greater the Nazi persecution of the Jews, the more persistently the veterans sought to prove their loyalty to the Vaterland. Typical of the end of the Jewish press in Nazi-occupied Europe is the Jüdisches Nachrichtenblatt/Zidovské listy (B-464). Published from 1939-1942, with dual texts in German and Czech, the front page of the January 2, 1942, edition lists public places barred to Jews and announcements of special office hours for them at government offices. The times of the beginning and conclusion of the Sabbath are given with the chapter of the Torah portion to be read. Until the last, the Jews attempted to maintain through this newspaper a semblance of orderliness and reality.

Apart from its main role as a library, the LBI has been engaged in an ambitious publication program. More than sixty monographs have been sponsored by the LBI in New York. Several works deserve the designation "monumental." Volumes I and II of Selma Stern's Der Preussische Staat und die Juden appeared in 1925. All editions of the third volume, including the manuscripts, were destroyed when German authorities burned the stock of the Schocken Verlag. Dr. Stern recounts that a German woman brought to her several copies she had saved
from the flames. Under the auspices of the LBI this history of the Jews in Prussia is now complete in seven volumes. Work is still continuing on *Germania Judaica, *two volumes of which have been reprinted by LBI. Originally published in 1917 and 1934, these works chronicle the history of Jewish settlements in Germany from 321 A.D. (when Jews came to Colonia (Köln)) until the fourteenth century. Historians commissioned by the LBI are presently carrying on the project to bring the work up to the nineteenth century.

When one considers that the LBI in New York has a staff of only fourteen people (some of whom work on a part-time basis), then the achievements of the librarians in the Institute's 23-year history are most impressive. These accomplishments are due to the dedication of the staff and to their intellectual background. Mrs. Ilse Blumenthal-Weiss has contributed first-hand information on the history of the Dutch Jews during the German occupation. Helmut Galliner formerly held a position in the Jewish Community Library in Berlin and has written articles on Jewish books and libraries. Dr. Fred Grubel, the present Secretary of the former offices of the Jewish Community, is an expert on the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

An Executive Committee under the direction of the President, Dr. Max Gruenewald, meets regularly to plan and direct the Institute's projects. With its fund-raising campaigns and participation by dues-paying members in lectures and other public programs, the LBI might well be the envy of
many a library which has to make do on a shoe-string budget. The Library has received grants from the Volkswagen Foundation and the Axel Springer publishing enterprise. In 1973 the National Endowment for the Humanities donated $30,000 for the purpose of expanding and completing the serials collection, and a matching grant has been promised for the following year. Above all, it is from emigres in the United States who want to preserve their German-Jewish heritage that the Library receives constant financial support. These friends of the Library have also donated to it a large collection of Jewish ritual silver, paintings, and assorted memorabilia.

In conclusion, I question the Library's acquisition policy:

"We buy very little," one of the librarians explained to me, "only about two hundred books a year, because we have practically everything."

The librarian meant by this that nearly all German Jewish works published until the end of the Third Reich have been acquired. The Institute takes literally Dr. Baeck's statement that the chapter on German Jewry came to an end in 1933, and its constitution set the policy that only works printed up to that year were to be acquired. It has become apparent within the past few years to the Library Staff that 1933 is not a feasible cut-off point. A Library Committee composed of two members of the Executive Committee decide on acquisitions. The latest biographies of Nazi leaders
are bought but the numerous German novels, dramas, and Novellen, written after 1945 and dealing with Jewish themes, are not. What is the justification, one may ask, for not buying Die Blechtrommel (1959) and Hundejahre (1963), by Günter Grass; Rolf Hochhuth's Der Stellvertreter (1963), or the novels of Heinrich Böll and others? Since there are Jewish writers still in Germany and Austria whose works the LBI also has not acquired, who is to decide that the period of Jewish creativity in Germany has come to an end? History does not permit such arbitrary dating: 1933 or 1945. I believe that there is a need now for a basic policy regarding acquisitions of books being currently published.

The question is not whether every German work which mentions Jude between its covers should be bought, but whether significant literary contributions can be left out and the library remain truly "methodisch-wissenschaftlich." Is it wise to ignore the needs of future researchers? Should a library live on the past or should not new ideas be infused in order to strengthen its vitality? It is not too late for the Leo Baeck Institute Library to add fresh oil to the flame.
FOOTNOTES


2 See also the discussion by Max Kreutzberger, "The Library and Archives of the Leo Baeck Institute in New York," Jewish Book Annual, XXIX (New York, 1971), 47-54.


4 Max Kreutzberger, ed., Leo Baeck Institute New York, Bibliothek und Archiv, Katalog I (Tübingen, 1970). This catalog is invaluable for the lengthy annotations following most entries. In all, six further volumes are planned which will include German-Jewish history, demography and statistics, theology, philosophy, Festschriften, cultural history, and the arts.

5 For this discussion, I have used Philip Friedman, "The Fate of the Jewish Book during the Nazi Era," Jewish Book Annual, XV (New York, 1957), 3-13.

5a Concerning the Jews and their Lies. Equally virulent is Luther's Eine Vermahnung gegen die Juden (An Exhortation to the Jews) (1546).

6 (Budapest, 1903-1968ff.). The number in the parentheses in the above text will refer to the number in the LBI Katalog I.

7 A listing of the LBI New York works up to 1970 may be found on pp. 619-23 of the LBI Katalog I. The London LBI has published a Yearbook since 1956 and the Jerusalem branch a Bulletin since 1957, one of the few German language periodicals in Israel. The following titles indicate the variety of topics in the Yearbook: "Gustav Mahler and Arnold Schoenberg" (1960); "German Jews in Victorian England" (1962); "Windsor-Cassel — The Last Court Jew: Prolegomena to a Biography of Sir Ernest Cassel" (1969); "Salman Schocken and the Schocken Verlag" (1972).


10 (Neuwied am Rhein); The Tin Drum (New York, 1961).
    (Neuwied am Rhein); Dog Years (New York, 1965).

11 (Reinbek bei Hamburg); The Deputy (New York, 1964).
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