

Transnationalism in the Analysis of Global Refugee Movements: The Case of the Second World War Polish Jews in Shanghai

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THE SURVIVAL OF 1000 POLISH JEWS IN WARTIME SHANGHAI DEMONSTRATES THE WAYS in which transnational theory can be enhanced by empirical testing against 'real' situations. The travails, survival strategies, and evolving identities of these refugees can be interpreted through the application of contemporary transnational theory. The only problem in such an approach is that their 'nation' (Poland) had been annihilated, their government exiled, and their identities driven as much by ethno-religious as national passions. By re-conceptualising transnational ideas to take account of the expansionary imperatives of empires, the trajectory and sojourns of the refugees more readily expose the contingent, transitory, accidental and momentary dimensions of seeking refuge. While the analysis draws on historical material from the modern past, it has significant implications for addressing the challenges in theory produced by such recent 'transnational' and 'post national' conflicts as the refugee crisis around the Mediterranean Sea. In particular, this essay explores the interest that transnational theory has paid to identity, affiliation, transgressive behaviours, questions of scale (from the personal to the global) and the problem of 'the nation' as a category of either differentiation or analysis.

Wandering or Fleeing: Transnational Movements and Jewish Survival

One of the dominant themes of European Jewish history has concerned the 'wandering Jew'. In part this alludes to the idea that the Jews would forever be homeless until they return to the Holy Land of Israel. In part it alludes to the long history of oppression and expulsion that has driven Jewish communities to flee across Europe since the Middle Ages, pushing many to settle in Poland under the protection of a medieval Polish king (Polonsky). In part it offers up an antisemitic myth drawn from a medieval German story of the Jew who mocked Christ on the Cross and was thus condemned to wander the earth for eternity until Christ's resurrection (Leschnitzer).

The idea of Jewish rootlessness which appears as condemnatory rhetoric among both Soviet and Nazi ideologues also carries multiple inflexions. Jewish rootlessness remains something allegedly to be condemned for its expression of essential traitorhood of Jews to any nation-state that gives them shelter. Jewish rootlessness epitomises on the other hand an escape from nationalism, an expression, as George Steiner has written, of an exemplary role to show that 'whereas trees have roots, men have legs and are each other's guests' (Liska 146). Such de-territorialisation of a people, while providing an escape, was also potentially fearsome and destructive (Liska). Earlier discussions of Jewish wandering, point to 'the risk of closure, essentialism', in any generalised narrative (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett).

While the escape of a few thousand Jews from Poland in 1939 has certain historical reverberations, such as evidenced in the first arrival of Jews in Poland from the German lands to escape the pogroms of the crusades (Dubnow), it also explores a specific case in which the transnational capacities of the refugees were exploited to secure, in the midst of catastrophe, the ultimate survival of a few¹. The process also reveals some of the value and limitations of transnationalism as a concept in exploring refugees and their strategies for survival.

Destabilising the Nation

The increasing movement of displaced peoples across borders once more since the Second War has focused attention on the conditions under which people seek

¹ The narrative of the escape by Polish Jews from Poland under the Nazi invasion, from Lithuania under Soviet occupation, through the USSR to Japan just before the Pacific war, and then the transfer to Shanghai, is based in part on Weyland, and also personal archives held by the Jakubowicz family. Other data was drawn from the Shanghai Municipal Archive in China, the US Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, the Hoover Archive in Stanford, in materials on-line released by the Joint Distribution Committee (JDC), Hyogo Prefecture historic archives, in Japan and the online personal and official papers of Tadeusz Rommer, held in the Canadian archives.

and actually secure refuge from violence occurring in their 'home' nations. In a world in which the universality of human rights can only be realised through actions of nation-states, the idea of the nation-state must itself be revisited (Anthias). Nation-states are usually discussed within wider systems, such as multinational and international relations (Clavin). In each of these the 'nation' remains a point of stability both as concept and as assumed reality—as a collection of similar entities, or as a relationship between like entities. However the idea of 'transnational' immediately inserts a degree of uncertainty, suggesting that the 'nation' is not so firmly grounded, and rendering both the collective and the relations between its individual members far more fragile (Portes, Guarnizo and Landolt). Transnational movement implies an ongoing and deeply important relationship between those who have departed their countries of origin, and those countries, their economies, their states and their populations. Even more so, the introduction of concepts like 'empires' and 'eradicated' or 'failing' nations, makes the boundaries far more fluid and the identities of those caught up in such situations far less determined or secure.

This article seeks to destabilise the certainties about nations in order to explore the dynamics of transnationalism in periods of global conflict. If nations in their basic cultural forms are more than but not necessarily very much more than 'imagined communities', then how does power drive the imagination, and also thwart alternative imaginaries? Where nations also include the existence of states, with their claims to sovereign control of force, how does the imaginary intersect with the realities of sustained and focused violence? When at least one of those countries dissolves and reforms, it may only become clear in retrospect whether securing or eluding a singular national identification provided the safest option.

Nationality carries with it a certain burden, which is contained within its essentialism. In his discussion of hospitality and its paradoxes, Derrida has pointed to the tenuous position of those whom are seen as guests, dependent on the hospitality of their hosts for their safety. Discussing Derrida's idea of hospitality and its links to hostility, Taberner has proposed that transnationalism can be perceived as a dangerous quality in a guest as it implies that the presence of strangers foreshadows a potential and destabilising transformation of the nation they have entered (Taberner). As we will see this apprehension amongst their Japanese hosts was one of the critical factors that propelled the remaining Jewish refugees, by then in Japan, towards their internment in Shanghai.

The narrative case study that feeds this analysis follows the journey through the period of the War of initially 30,000 refugees from Poland, 10,000 of them of Jewish faith. Some 1000 would survive the Second World War in a 'camp' in Shanghai. While many millions of Polish Jews perished in what came to be known

as the Holocaust, some few thousand travelled serendipitously through Asia to Shanghai, from where the survivors at last found refuge in post-war Safe Havens in countries across the world. They become transnational, living lives in more than one country; indeed, their first refuge, Vilna, was ruled by three nations in a matter of months. One survivor attended three schools, saluting three flags, and singing three anthems, without changing schoolrooms (Weyland).

At the outset it is important to clarify what it meant to be a Polish Jew in 1939 on the brink of the War and the Nazi invasion. Poland had only fought its way into existence in 1918, at the end of the Great War thereafter applying the new notion of Polish citizenship to its polyglot population. The Jewish communities encompassed by the new Polish state after 1921 were themselves highly heterodox. The Polish state had been formed out of the fragmented remnants of Prussian, Austro-Hungarian and Russian ruled sectors of a divided eighteenth-century Congress Poland. The various Jewish populations had experienced very different economic and political histories under the different regimes—the segregation imposed by the Tsarist regime in the Pale of Settlement, the assimilation pressed for in the modernist Prussian areas, and the traditionalism of the Galician zone in the south. For those affected by the assimilationist ideals of the urban middle and professional classes, Polish identity could be a chosen overlay, though it might also be resisted by those who held to transnational political values that separated them from identification with a nation—Communists in particular.

For the poorer villagers and working classes, religious combined with leftist political identities played a key role (Polonsky). The rise of Zionism, sponsored by western European Jewish businessmen, had also spread widely among both religious and more secular urban youth. Meanwhile in that eastern zone liberated by the Polish armies from the Soviets after the battle of Warsaw (1920) Hassidic communities long-formed around charismatic rabbis focused on sustaining their studious and long-established ritual cultures. In each of these zones the interwar years also saw the solidification of antisemitism, so that in some situations the Polish state was seen as a defence against growing prejudice and intimidation, in others as a perpetrator or protector of these same threats (Polonsky). The murder of the first Polish president, Gabriel Narutowicz, by a right-wing nationalist, had created the conditions for continuing antisemitism (Narutowicz had been supported by the Left and the National Minorities Bloc in the 1922 election) in the period to 1939. While Polish nationalists claimed that only ethnic Poles should be allowed to vote for the Polish president, a potent symbol of the new nation, in fact his election has been decided by the support of Jews, Ukrainians and Germans who comprised the minorities in the new nation's multicultural makeup (Brykczynski). From the outset then the Polish nation was rooted in a conflicted society, some sectors advancing an antisemitic populism,

others defending an uncomfortable polyethnic coalition of civic liberals, cosmopolitans and ethnic autonomists. We can ask then to what extent Poland was a nation that included Jews as natives. As it would turn out, for neither the Nazis (for whom they were a race) nor the Soviets (for whom they were a distinct nationality), nor indeed for Poland's own fascists, were Poland's Jews seen as Poles. Yet their Polish nationality would in fact prove to be crucial at various points for their survival, though the title was endlessly contested,

Refugees, Nation States and Transnationalism

Since the adoption of an international Refugee Convention in 1951 there has been an international agreement that a refugee is someone 'outside their country of nationality' or of 'habitual residence', having been displaced by 'a well-founded fear of being persecuted', who is unable or unwilling to return or avail themselves 'of the protection of that country'. Thus nationality and citizenship sit centrally as defining parameters, including where someone does not have a nationality (Malkki). Almost by definition then a refugee-seeker exists in a transnational space, one where the original nation has somehow failed in its primary duty of protection, but the seekers have yet to be safely secured by another nation (indeed this may never happen). Drawing on a time in the 1940s of disappearing nations, contesting empires, and conflicted transnational ethno-religious identities, the idea of insecure transnationalism may help us in this more systematic exploration of refugees and their struggles to mobilise their resources in pursuit of survival.

There is a sense in which transnationalism always lacks the security of a national rootedness. Because coherent nations (either of a singular ethnicity or of a multiple ethnic background) offer their citizens narratives of origin and belonging, they allow individuals to locate themselves within those narratives and tell their own stories within that overarching context. Transnational locations detach these citizens from their histories, relocating them as transients in places in which they do not necessarily feel any sense of belonging, and indeed in which they may have no rights to remain. Intensely insecure transnationalism occurs where the nations from which people are drawn quite literally melt away, and the populations can neither return to their societies of origin, nor proceed to societies of safe refuge.

While such a situational description applies today to the 21st-century conflicts in the Middle East, with hundreds of thousands of people fleeing for their lives from former national spaces characterised by failing states, this article focuses on the period from 1939 to 1946, at the end of which just over a thousand Polish Jews emerged from the Holocaust as survivors in Shanghai, China (Warhaftig). Soon after this time, they left China to find final refuge outside Europe and Asia

(Kranzler), selecting thereby how and to what extent their identities would be resolved or refocussed, becoming in the process some of the first clients of the new United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

In his initial discussion for the Transnational Communities project in the UK at the end of the twentieth century, Steven Vertovec (Vertovec) laid out a research review of key themes and intellectual models that drew on transnational concepts. He began by claiming general scholarly agreement that transnationalism 'broadly refers to multiple ties and interactions linking people and institutions across the borders of nation-state' (Vertovec 448). As with refugees, less fear-driven transnational movements require that people cross borders, and move between nation states. How then do the malleability of nations, the disintegration or failure of states, and the rise and fall of empires play key roles in facilitating or eroding the opportunities for refugee survival? Vertovec proposed six significant 'conceptual premises' which serve here as the basis for thinking about the refugees of 1939.

Under the broad heading of 'social morphology' are included the ethnic diasporas, with a triadic set of relationships—the groups where they are, the relationship to the states and places in which they reside, and their relationships to real or imagined places of origin. These points in the triad are linked through various networks of association, often demonstrated through tensions between actual networks of action and assumed networks of traditional solidarity. That is, the refugees are always in a morphing social structure, affected by internal tensions, external negotiations, and constantly challenged identities. The networks continually channel or inhibit social and material resources, sometimes providing opportunities that are enhanced by these external relations, sometimes dissolving them and fragmenting associations. Indeed, as has been said of immigrants, it is not so much individuals but networks which migrate, and this is as true in general of refugees as for more legally recognised mobility.

Secondly, Vertovec references 'types of consciousness', where dual or multiple identities characterise the migrants, much of the identity held tenuously in place through shared 'imaginaries', as Benedict Anderson described nations (Anderson). The process of imagining community draws on energy and reflects the dynamic and ongoing context in which survival is sought, importantly leaving 'a trail of collective memory about another place and time', with 'new maps of desire and of attachment' (Appadurai and Breckenridge). Thirdly, these new maps reflect the tension between the politics of desire and aspiration, and the politics of heritage and nostalgia.

The structural issues are rooted in economies of movement—where the initial pressures for economic survival are expressed through and are affected by the

political and social elements of mobility and crossing. The places they enter then are not only economic but political, new public spaces where their appearance modifies the local political balance, but also transforms their own possibilities for political participation. Refugees in particular suffer immense precariousness, operating in zones of estrangement where their social capital may be minimised by differing rules, resources and power, increasingly separated from those to which they were accustomed. Moreover, aspects of de-territorialised nationhood can persist, especially where the nation of origin has been dissolved but both the national identity and the political capacity of the refugees survive in exile. In this process refugees may re-interpret themselves, as for instance has been well-captured in narratives of the Russian communities of Northern China where ethno-national identity continues without a harbouring nation state, until the state changes and abandons the group (Moustafine).

When Malkki (1995) reviewed the then extent of the anthropological literature on refugees she noted that the field did not relate to a type of person, but rather to the contexts of displacement that many types of people experienced often in different ways. “‘The refugee’ as a specific social category and legal problem of global dimensions did not exist in its full modern form before the Second World War’, she argues (497-8). Furthermore, it was the War that created the refugee camp as ‘a standardized, generalizable technology of power in the management of mass displacement’ (498). Refugees were initially seen as a military problem, the humanitarian dimension a later and secondary aspect; they had to be placed somewhere that would not interfere with the activities associated with security.

Thus, these elements come together in examining the dynamics through which our population of interest moved, from their first arrival in their initial location of refuge, Vilna in northern Poland, to their ultimate dispersal from Shanghai in the period following the end of the War in the Pacific and the rise of Communist China.

Laying Out the Pathway through Empires

At the outset of the Second World War in Europe, heralded by the Nazi attack on Western Poland in September 1939, that part of the population of the Polish Republic that was of Mosaic faith (Mosze) was itself a diverse and divided patchwork of communities. In the West and Centre Polish Jews ranged widely in social status (Polonsky). Urban princes such as Izrael Poznanski in Lodz had developed vast textile factories which employed thousands of Christian and Jewish workers, and generated a local economy in which Russian, German, Jewish and Polish entrepreneurs, professionals, tradespeople and labourers lived in sometimes uncomfortable but essentially democratic proximity. Eastern Poland, soon to be invaded in turn by the Soviet Union, contained the remnants

of the former Tsarist Pale of Settlement, including the many major religious centres such as the Hassidic Yeshivah in Mir (Herzman). In the South the Galician villages of the former Hapsburg empire and the metropolitan cities such as Krakow housed many generations of Yiddish-speaking Poles.

Poland's re-establishment as a republic between 1918 and 1922 reversed its dissection and incorporation into the territory of its three major bordering empires—Prussia/Germany, Russia/USSR, and Austro-Hungarian—that took place in the late eighteenth century. It had been the aim of the imperial powers that Poland should disappear from the map of Europe, and its pretensions to a singular nationality be forever destroyed. However the republican ideal was sustained through language, literature, and religion (especially Polish Catholicism), while a concept of unity of the place remained alive in the Jewish imaginary of 'Polin' or 'Poh Lin'. This latter term—from the Hebrew for 'rest here', traditionally reflected a message from Heaven to the wandering Jews signifying a safe place to settle after their ejection from Western Europe.

About ten percent of the population espoused the Jewish religion (Polonsky). The new Polish government asserted a civic nationalism in which the diverse peoples and religions were all required to find a place. This element of its commitment to its citizens irrespective of faith would play a critical role in the survival of the Jews who managed to get to Shanghai. Even so, almost no Polish adult who reached Shanghai in 1941 had been born in the Commonwealth of Poland, though many had been educated in Polish-language and Polish-nationalist schools (Jakubowicz and Hadzelek).

While the Great War had destroyed the three empires that had divided Poland, the lead up to the Second War re-formed as totalitarian military machines two of the empires, arming them with complementary if antagonistic intentions. With the fascist alliance of the Third Reich to the West and South, and the communist empire to the East, escape from the pincers such as it was lay only to the North into Lithuania. While Lithuania and Poland had only recently ended their mutual hostility, the destruction of Poland at the end of 1939 and the domination by the USSR of Lithuania (and later its annexation) meant that political Poland could not operate there in exile. For the Soviets and their Stalinist perspective on nationalities, once the Polish state had disappeared Poles and Jews were deemed to be two different nationalities. The annihilation of segments of the Polish leadership (as at Katyn) was primarily targeted at the Poles, though some Jews as officers and officials were also executed. However, in Stalin's theory of nations, Jews were a nation rather than a religion, as is displayed in the creation in Siberia of the Autonomous region of Birobidjan as a homeland for the Jewish nation, and the transfer there of tens of thousands of Soviet Jews. So, as they fled the now failing Poland the Polish Jews entered a new space of non-nationality,

where they had an ethnic nationality of sorts, but not a civic one, except for those whose Zionist aspirations were centred on a Jewish state in Palestine.

Three new empires entered the story once the refugees reached Lithuania. Poland was represented in Lithuania by the British Government (Arad; Bauer); thus the British empire came into play—with its protectorate in Palestine, its role in running the International Settlement in Shanghai, and its former or current colonies such as Canada, Australia, New Zealand, India, South Africa and Tanganyika as potential places of refuge.

The Japanese empire had located intelligence officials in Lithuania for a complex set of reasons—Japan and Poland had been quite closely aligned as they shared fears for their integrity from the USSR, and the Japanese and Polish intelligence officers continued to collaborate after the fall of Poland. Furthermore Japan expected war between Nazi Germany and the USSR, unsure only of who would attack whom (Kranzler, *Japanese, Nazis and Jews*; Palasz-Rutkowska and Romer). Thus, eyes and ears on the Nazi/Soviet border would be crucial, as war in the West would mean Soviet troops moved from the East, pressure reduced along the Amur River, and the opportunity would be solidified therefore for Japan to move South. By July 1941, the Nazis had invaded the Byelorussia SSR (formerly Eastern Poland), and the Japanese then moved to take over the southern strongholds of Vichy France in Indochina.

A curious but critical factor was introduced by an outpost of the Dutch Empire, in Lithuania, during a short period after the invasion of Holland by the Nazis while its Empire still remained in place. In order to receive support in the form of a transit visa from the Japanese consul Chiune Sugihara in Lithuania, applicants needed an on-travel destination (Joint). The Dutch honorary consul, a civilian businessman Jan Zwartendijk, began issuing visas for travel to Dutch colonies in the Caribbean (Curacao in particular), which included a stamp detailing how no entry visa was needed (Levine).

Already it was clear in Lithuania that the Soviet definition of the Jews would separate them, if only for a time, from those who were Polish of other religious origins. It appears that the USSR was acting on previous agreements with Jewish organisations to allow passage to British Palestine (under League of Nations mandate), possibly in order to intensify pressure on the British militarily and diplomatically. In this period of very great danger some 10,000 Polish Jews were registered in Vilnius with the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (hereafter referred to as the Joint), a global relief body based in New York. About two and half thousand people also registered with the Japanese consulate and were given transit visas, usually with the Dutch addendum. The imperial tails were providing exit paths of comparative safety, usually because of a specific and

idiosyncratic reading by imperial agents, of what it meant to be a Polish national and a Jew (Arad; Bauer). However the Soviet pressure on the Polish Jews of Vilnius to become Soviet citizens intensified, a fate that would doom local Jews who were caught up in the Soviet annexation, when the Nazis arrived later in 1941, to wide-spread slaughter (Zuroff).

The Sugihara and Zwartendijk stamps were issued during July and August. The USSR incorporated Lithuania in mid-August 1940; the deadline for Soviet citizenship was March 1941. By February 1941 those who decided to use the passes were joining trains across the USSR to Vladivostok and then onward to Tsuruga in Japan by sea. Most carried identity cards issued under the name of the Commonwealth of Poland but over stamped by the British embassy. Their Japanese transit visas, often hand-written by Sugihara, secured their transfer to Japanese shipping at Vladivostok (Sugihara). However, it did not guarantee entry to Japan, a situation not resolved for the earliest arrivals until the Jewish community in Kobe guaranteed the financial support, and the refugees agreed to move on at the end of their visa term. While the transit visas had been issued through the Japanese foreign office, the entry permits were Home Affairs constructs with the new conditions specified (Tokayer and Swartz).

Entry into the heart of the Japanese empire was thus a complex process where the Japanese government sought to ensure the refugees would not linger in the home islands. JDC documents demonstrate that about half of all arrivals into Kobe were able to move on fairly quickly, a significant group departing for Canada where the men would become part of the Allied War effort in the British Empire. Others with relatives made it to the USA, some more to Australia and New Zealand, often transiting the International Settlement in Shanghai.

The International Settlement had been created after the 1842 'Opium War', in which the British Empire had suppressed the Chinese Empire, and then expanded its presence in Shanghai; other European empires and proto-empires also established outposts, with the French securing their own concession, and the Americans creating their own settlement, later taken over by the Japanese. The imposed rules of 'extrality' essentially allowed all European countries to operate as colonial powers under their own laws (Heppner; Ross; Fiszman).

Transnational Realities in Shanghai

Within a few days of the Nazi invasion of the USSR and the immediate focus of the USSR on its Western Front, Japanese forces occupied the Indo-China territories of the French Empire, seizing them without resistance from the Vichy-commanded forces then in place. In response the USA banned all shipping from Japan to North America, a ban extended by the Allies to their ports. In addition,

no more funds could be transferred from the USA to Japan for support of the remaining refugees there. Within days the civil authorities in Japan started to ship the refugees on three national line ships to Shanghai, a task accomplished in August 1941, the only avenue to expedite their exit from the home islands to an international port for potential onward sailing. A few hundred however remained in Kobe, their options for North America terminated by the Japanese government withdrawal of recognition of their Polish papers. In September the final group, their access to North America thwarted this time by the Japanese, were sent to Shanghai where in the International Settlement they would once more have freedom of movement, for a time, as Allied nationals (Altman and Eber).

In a bizarre twist, the Japanese government, which had long been friends to Poland but now as a member of the tri-partite alliance with the Nazi Reich and Italy accepted that Poland had disappeared, broke off relations with Poland in 1941, closed its embassy in Warsaw, and expelled the Polish ambassador from Tokyo, while still according him full diplomatic courtesies. Meanwhile the USSR, now allies with the British, French and other exiled empires, recognised the Polish government and its citizens. The refugees, transformed from a stateless status under the Soviets in Lithuania to Polish nationals in Japan, were transformed once more into stateless persons in Shanghai under the Japanese, while being recognised once more by the Soviets as Polish citizens. Moreover the presence of the former Ambassador Romer as Consul General in Shanghai (from October 1941 until August 1942) held off the formal dissolution of their Polish nationality, which they kept in practice until February 1943 (Palasz-Rutkowska and Romer; Engel). It was only the Japanese declaration of the Poles as stateless refugees under the February 1943 edict ordering them to relocate to the designated area for stateless refugees, that presented them with an ultimatum that sought to classify them as though they were Austrian or Germany refugees., a notion most rejected.

If identity is in part constituted by how groups conceive of and describe their 'others', then the Polish Jews were well served with possibilities. As Europeans they were distinct from Asians; as Jews they were distinct from Polish Christians and other European non-Jews; as Polish Jews they were distinct from German, Austrian, Czech or Hungarian Jews. As enemy-of-Japan civilians they were, in their own eyes, distinct from stateless and Axis civilians. Internally there were those who identified primarily through their religion, while others far preferred the national label or political identities. They saw themselves as Ashkenazi Jews, close to the Russians, because in eastern Poland, Russia had been the cultural and political overlord until the Soviet revolution. At War's end they would later found onward refuge primarily in the either the British Commonwealth and its former colonial or protectorate possessions, or in the United States. Few would

live again in their nation of origin, which had once more been subsumed into an empire, this time Soviet.

With the Polish State no longer in place and the German government withdrawing citizenship from all German Jews living outside Germany, the Japanese authorities created a refugee camp in Shanghai, in much the way analysed by Malkki (1995). The Designated Area was defined as a zone for stateless people, locating in physical proximity people already defined politically under military rule, constraining their mobility, but not assigning them to the somewhat protected though restricted category of interned enemy civilian.

Cosmopolitanism and Transnational Migration

Pre-war Shanghai has often been described as 'cosmopolitan'. The debates over cosmopolitanism have been fed from many different perspectives, though most contain some sense of trans-cultural understanding, and global social concerns (Jakubowicz and Hadzelek). Ulf Hannerz proposes that cosmopolitanism refers to a world-view in which concern for the well-being of people apart from one's own ethno-cultural group must be present, and even predominate (Hannerz). Whether such a sense could be discerned in the habitus of the Shanghai bourgeoisie in relation to the homeless or impoverished Chinese population of the time remains unlikely.

In her analysis of how transnational experiences contribute to cosmopolitan world-views and practices, Van Den Anker (Van Den Anker) draws on Hannerz' claim about cosmopolitanism, that transnational movement of populations breaks them loose from their own environment and through interactions with 'others' opens them to possibilities of concern for the well-being of those others (Hannerz). Hannerz, she suggests, requires transnational movement as a precursor for cosmopolitan sensibility, though that sensibility can emerge from the dynamic of the subject in question moving to a new society, or the subject's society being invested by people from other societies. The next step would be that the specific 'other' awareness and concern becomes more generalised and extends into a more broadly-based sensibility that no longer requires a specific engagement with a particular Other. Here Hannerz could well have a significant problem, namely that interaction with others may be necessary but it definitely is not a sufficient condition for cosmopolitanism.

Transnationalism will be based on some cross-border links and engagements, but these contacts may be conflictual and reduce rather than increase global justice. However, wherever transnationalism exists it tends to be closely related to transformation of consumption, so that globally-sourced goods enter the local environment, and are often flagged as higher status as a consequence of their

origins. This might be dubbed 'aspirational consumer cosmopolitanism'. Such aspirational drivers can be attached to a desire for re-location to a place in which many different others predominate, liberating the subject as it were from the conservative unity of their domestic space. Even so their outsider status in the new space of the multiple others can intensify their identification with their place of origin, while leaving them open to having this status exploited by both their ethno-similar, and exo-others in the society they have entered. We will return to this fascinating and tense dynamic in our examination of the Polish Jews in Shanghai.

A second meaning of transnationalism proposed by Van Den Anker relates to the decomposition of original ethno-national identities generated in transnational movement, where in lieu of either a dogged persistence of an original identity, or a cataclysmic assimilation into a wholly new national identity copied from the new society, identities modulate and reform into something more fluid and context-dependent. Such a model supports notions of complexity, hybridity and autonomy, but also stresses loneliness, homelessness and rootlessness (as in Stalin's totally untrustworthy 'rootless cosmopolitans' which had a specific ethno-religious referent, his hated Jews).

Thirdly there can be a moral evaluation implicit in the use of cosmopolitan as a description of someone's sensibility, where the transnational transformation of self occasioned by the purported dislocation in time and space prepares the modern protagonist to engage more richly and creatively with a constantly changing global reality. Whether there is moral betterment to be found in transnationalism clearly depends on the nature and quality of the movement. Whether one is being driven as a refugee (you know not to where, though it could in the end be Shanghai) before the dive-bombing Stukas along the guttered highways of Poland in 1939, or sailing in a first class state-room to Shanghai to explore the East will surely affect one's appreciation of that International City, and help shape the nature of the transnational experience and the likelihood of a cosmopolitan sensibility. Surely then cosmopolitanism becomes a variable affected by social class, and ethnic 'niche'.

Glick Schiller distinguishes anthropologically between ways of being transnational, and ways of belonging transnationally, especially in relation to societies of origin and societies of sojourn. Importantly, Waldinger points to the confusion of 'state' and 'nation', and even there he identifies tension between nation as ethno-political collectivity, and nation as settled territorial location (Waldinger). One's connection to others does not in itself imply a collectivity of endeavour and of wider interaction.

As we will see all of these ideas provide rich stimulus for thinking about refugee processes in times of war. When refugees find refuge, where are they 'really'? Have their identities accepted displacement, and thus seek local identification, or some alternative place of greater refuge? Are their identities still firmly embedded in their locations of origin, so that while they seek refuge they see themselves far more as émigrés awaiting a future return and re-integration with their society of origin? Or do they already identify with an imagined community to which they aspire, but to whose place they are prevented from reaching? How do they consider themselves in relation to their momentary place of refuge – what sorts of engagement should they invest in, what linguistic skills, what social intercourse, what political alliances? What should or could be the coincidence of territory and identity? Where the country of origin has ceased to exist, what effect does this have on identity and aspirational identification? Where the place you are sojourning is not a country but an occupied zone dominated by an 'enemy', how does that affect identity? Where benefits come from different identities can be strikingly disparate, what shapes choice? Where information about country of origin is untrustworthy (in Shanghai because of Japanese censorship and the ideological bending of any information coming from Soviet sources), the political becomes very local and can be intensely self-interested.

Yet Waldinger points to another phenomenon, where nation may not be significant but transmigrated local associations can be: thus, among Eastern European Jewish communities the establishment of 'landsmansschaften' (associations of people from the same place of origin) was often the first step taken in the settlement in other lands, with a two-fold purpose. First, they aimed to provide common services and resources to people who already may well have known each other or been kin. Secondly, they were designed to provide aid to the 'landsleit' communities left behind, thus demonstrating both a highly local and strongly transnational quality.

Waldinger points us towards how the various layers of transnationalism are activated among immigrants—from the familial, to the economic to the political. This framework provides a very useful template to impose on the refugees in order to grasp the complexity of their identities, and the changing dynamics of their aspirations.

We are not concerned here with the arguments about the moral order that an egalitarian cosmopolitanism might produce, but rather what relationships are likely under what conditions for refugees travelling from Europe to Asia, from a multicultural city like Lodz in Poland, to a multicultural city like Shanghai in China? What transnational historical connections might be mobilised in these more strained times, among a people with a long history of transnational and global economic connections among kinfolk and co-religionists?

Transnationalism in Shanghai

The Polish Jewish refugees had almost all arrived in Shanghai by late September 1941, though a few still made their way south from Manchuria during 1942. Many barely stopped in Shanghai, continuing their travels to more secure locales, some of the last arriving in Sydney Australia by the Dutch ship MS Ruys via Batavia and Brisbane, in mid-November, two weeks before Pearl Harbour.

The Polish Jews, after months in the clean and ordered world of Kobe, were thrown into the maelstrom of Shanghai. It was a city packed with Chinese refugees, on the brink of a Pacific War that would overturn the imperial order of the previous century. In the Japanese Settlement area over fifteen thousand German and Austrian Jews, all now stateless, lived in cramped and crowded conditions, many of their 'heime' poorly organised, with hardly any disposable income (Margolis). They were serviced by the Joint, and had established their own community organisations. The Japanese were anxious to create a productive economic zone in the area, drawing on the skills and expertise of the refugees.

The main Japanese adviser in Shanghai on Jews, Captain Koreshige Inuzuka, had developed close relations with the Hongkew groups, shaping his philo-Semitism to echo the Central European habitus of these now stateless people. For Inuzuka the incoming and late arriving Polish Jews, were 'undesirable', a term in common circulation among the Shanghai Municipal Police (Kranzler). They represented for him a pre-modern and disorganised Judaism, and would only create problems if they arrived in strength: he was finding it hard enough to recruit the Westernised Jews into his economic plans.

The arrival of the Polish Jews was heralded in March 1941, soon after the main group landed in Japan, by a visit to Shanghai by Zorah Warhaftig (later Israeli Minister of Religious Affairs) and a colleague seeking to set up the conditions for the Poles whom they believed would probably have to leave Japan before long. Warhaftig's main concerns were the 300 or more orthodox rabbis and students mainly associated with the Mir Yeshiva. In strenuous arguments with the Joint representatives, Warhaftig (representing an organisation claiming to defend the interests of Polish and Lithuanian Jews, which used the telegraphic address name of East Jew Comm, as the Kobe Jewish community had named itself Jew Comm) demanded better living conditions and higher financial allocations for his people, arguing that they were the carriers of the religious traditions of Eastern European Orthodox Jewry upon whose shoulders the future of the core Judaic traditions rested (Kranzler *Japanese, Nazis and Jews*).

The Polish Jews in fact included members of all three main segments mentioned at the outset of this paper—the rabbinicals and religious students, the business people and the tradespeople. Each segment was ‘transnational’ in both its orientation and experience, yet in rather different ways (Zuroff).

The religious grouping was in many ways the most inward looking and traditional. Even so they operated in at least four languages, maybe more, including Byelorussian, Polish, Yiddish and classical Hebrew. They were supported by members of a transnational network, some of whom were resident in Palestine, some in Switzerland and some in the USA. This network was economic, providing funding for their survival and travel costs, political in terms of pressuring various institutions for support and negotiating with the Polish Government in exile, and cultural as a focus for sustaining religious and cultural practices. In many ways their ideology was resolutely counter- cosmopolitan, asserting both the uniqueness and the primacy of their belief system, even though their skills were cosmopolitan in effect. Their champion, Warhaftig, was a skilled Warsaw lawyer and a devout religious follower, committed to their survival. An example of their shared mindset can be found in a petition made on their behalf by American rabbis to the Joint, calling for special treatment and privileges for the Polish Jews, including a request they not be housed with the Germans. Far from being undesirable, the argument was made that the Polish Jews were sociologically distinctive and should be recognised, and protected from the low level of life accepted by the Germans, until they could leave Shanghai (Seltzer et al.).

In their plea to the Joint to intervene, their American rabbi supporters demanded that it:

treat the problem of the refugees separately [that is from the German and Austrian refugees] because of the special phases [sic] involved, that it recognises as the agency for these refugees, the Polish Lithuanian Committee called East-Jewcom...

The basis for this plea, was a situation ‘a temporary one’, and,

to throw these refugees in the existing homes for German refugees and under the supervision of the local committee will physically and morally undermine these refugees. Because of religious, communal and language motives, these refugees, mostly Rabbis, Yeshiva students and religious persons, cannot sociologically be established with the others. (Seltzer et al.)

There is a sense in which the rabbinical group drew on exactly the definition that Stalin might have used to define Jews as a nation, that is a network of shared cultural and political perspectives, sustained through shared rituals, constantly enacted through prayer and related festivals of celebration, but not 'located' spatially in any particular place. They also shared a common relationship to the means of production, in so far as their method of survival (often trading in gold or precious stones) was a means of production. In this sense they fractured the *gemeinde* (community) concept of nation, where it refers to the link between 'blood' and 'soil'. Of course Palestine serves as the overarching location for the imagining of the people, but it does not require per se the state of Israel; indeed, the Holy land might well be better imagined as a place removed from the exigencies of European national conflicts.

For the civilian Zionists and Bundists, the nation remains in the imagination to be realised (Polonsky). The Zionists, from traditional to revisionist, seek to escape their national origins in Poland and temporary location in China, in order to create the nation required by the people: Israel. The growth of Zionism among all the Jewish groups in Shanghai during the War was quite a significant phenomenon. The Zionists had already abandoned Poland, seeing in it a ruin and a death camp for Jewry. In their imaginations the ethno-religious nation required an exclusive state to defend them, given that no state had defended them in effect during the War. While the Polish exile government had tried to help, it was in effect in league with the enemy of Zionism, the British empire and its exclusionary mandate over Palestine.

The Bundists, tradespeople mainly and culture workers such as journalists, were opposed to the Zionist goal of a Jewish state. The Bund was much more committed to a socialist struggle against capitalism, and the release of Jewish workers in their homeland of Polin, from the shackles of authoritarian government and capitalist regulation of life. The Bund had already been deeply traumatised by the Stalinist attack on Polish leftist refugees in the USSR, where many both Communist and not had been seized and executed. In Shanghai though the Bund played a critical role in the establishment of Yiddish theatre, and the production of Polish left-wing press. While Bundists had seen the Commonwealth of Poland and Lithuania as their natural home, harking back to the pre-imperial destruction of Poland, and forward to a post-war socialist utopia, the experience of Stalinism and the destruction of the Holocaust left them without a clear sense of a future politics—other than perhaps a return to Poland at War's end.

The third segment, made up of business-people and professionals, tended to be less closely aligned with the orthodox rabbinical group, and somewhat distant from the socialist Bund and the radicalism of the Zionists. They were the group

most likely to harbour secularist and assimilationist values, if not intentions. One of their leaders had been a hero of the Polish defeat of the Soviets at the battle of Warsaw, leading the group of War veterans identified in the documents of the Polish Consulate in Shanghai in 1942. These were the key participants in the attempts by Romer to link the Jewish and non-Jewish Poles. They sustained the links with the Russian Jewish community, and best fitted, on the grounds of class, education, language skills and capacity, the idea of cosmopolitanism.

One group of the Polish Jews was arrested by the Japanese authorities in 1943. These five men, all Sugihara survivors, had attended the Japanese Secret police head-quarters in Bridge House, to press for their recognition by the Japanese as Polish nationals and to reject orders to move to the Designated Area in Hongkew. They were held and died of malnutrition and illness soon after their release from the cellars of Bridge House.

Transnationalism and Survival

As it turned out those Polish Jews driven to escape the first onslaughts of the Nazis and the Soviets by moving north to Polish Vilna (soon to be Lithuanian Vilnius) had taken one of the few roads to survival. While it is not clear how many of the 30,000 people who fled to Vilna in 1939 survived the War, it is clear in the group who survived in Shanghai (nearly all of whom had escaped through that route) that their access to transnational networks and their cosmopolitan dispositions (for some) were valuable resources. The survivors represent significantly different sets of resources, drawn on in different ways, yet ultimately 'fitting' the circumstances in which they found themselves.

Membership of the Jewish nation and the Polish nation served equally important roles, even though neither nation had a state or a land for most of the War. Yet each nation contributed to the transnational bonds that Waldinger, Vertovec, Van Den Anker and others have identified.

The Mirrer Yeshiva was the only such institution to survive the Holocaust intact, its history demonstrating its strong group identity (locality and ecclesiastically secured) and its self-centred drive towards cultural survival of the group, and through the group their vision of an essential Judaism sustained through group religious practices. For the Mirrer men (from the town of Mir in Byelorussia) nothing was more important than the survival of the group; often, members who could have escaped, abandoned their tickets and visas to stay with the group. The Polish national identity they held was relevant but not foregrounded. Their choice after the war was clear: they would not and felt they could not return to what was now an atheistic USSR. Some went to the USA and established their centre in Detroit; others set up a parallel collective in Israel after 1948; they

were now part of a transnational Hassidic movement that floated above any specific nation in which they had settled.

By late 1945 the remainder of the Polish Jews in Shanghai knew they would have to leave: the Chinese nationalists who returned to Shanghai warned all stateless residents in November to depart. The Kielce pogrom in Poland in mid-1946 acted as a warning to any who were considering a return there. For those who had been working for the Americans after the liberation from Japan, the USA and Canada beckoned, though shipping was hard to access, and visas in short supply. Australia for a short period provided access, with the differences within the community in Shanghai soon to be re-invigorated in Australia (especially in the beginning between Bundists and Zionists) where widespread antisemitism and xenophobia still pervaded public life (Rutland, “‘Waiting Room Shanghai’”; Rutland, ‘Subtle Exclusions’).

The various interpretations of Judaism—as a race, a nation, a culture or a religious belief—each played a role in the ways those states and empires with which they had contact would enhance or limit the refugees’ opportunities for survival. The existence of the idea of a republican and civic Polish nationalism, promoted by Romer, played a critical role in bridging communities (Jewish and non-Jewish Poles in China) and sustaining positive personal identities during the Shanghai sojourn if not thereafter. However, the Soviets once more invaded Poland in 1944, not long after which Poland ceased to be civic or republican. With the defeat and decomposition of the Japanese empire, the victorious expansion of the Soviet empire, and the resurrection of the Chinese empire, it was to the empires of the West that many of the refugees finally turned. It would be the increasingly failing, even if at the time victorious, British empire that enabled their first post-war voyage, to its former colonies. The re-emergence of the refugees as ‘nationals’ protected by yet another state, was located within a renewed global network of transnational linkages, some driven by their Polish pasts, some discovered through the surviving fragments of the families blasted by the Holocaust, some by their Jewish religious links, and some by the Zionism that emerged from the destruction of European Jewry. Most found a new national identity under the protection offered by liberal democracies to those at the time grudgingly accepted as refugees under what would soon become a global Refugee Convention.

Refugees as Transnational Subjects

When people join movements to escape their homelands, they do so most often with the hope of a return when circumstances have once more become safe. Refugees are not initially then emigrants, already decided in their goals and confident about their pathways forward. Rather they exist in a state of insecurity,

sucked into a transnational space where they live off rumour, opportunity and the networks they can access or activate. The Polish Jewish refugees who paused for half a decade in Shanghai drew on their transnational networks, recognising they were now dependent on the vagaries of that wartime transience. They escaped Poland with a range of cultural capital.

The religious groups carried their religious books and artefacts, but most importantly they travelled as a community of believers, sustaining each other. Their leaders and supporters were able to draw on transnational links between Europe and North America, already a global web of surviving institutions. Their ideology of group superiority gave them a strong sense of a common fate, and moreover, a belief in their right to survive on their own terms.

The business people were already well-versed in global trade relations, with many doing business with suppliers and customers throughout Europe and elsewhere. The professionals, such as the doctors, were also part of transnational knowledge communities, with a number having been trained outside Poland. Most spoke a number of languages fluently, enhancing their capacity to communicate and negotiate their situations. A number as well had been military officers in their younger days, thus accruing skills in planning, discipline and intelligence assessment which were of value as they moved through the interstices of the empires they had to navigate.

For the tradesmen and artisans, whose linguistic skills were more restricted (though even they were at least bi-lingual), their camaraderie and political perspectives kept them linked to their diasporic networks. These dispersed nodes could provide both financial support, and political intelligence about events in Europe and the possibilities for finding sanctuary in British Palestine, or joining their comrades in the USA, Canada or Australia (where a Bundist group had formed in Melbourne) (Zylberman).

Ultimately the 1000 or so survivors were finally forced to move on from China by exactly that combination of hospitality and hostility that Derrida has identified and labelled as 'hostpitality' (Dufourmantelle and Derrida 45). With the defeat of Japan, the Chinese sought the return of their nation, so the international city of Shanghai, already returned by the Allied powers in 1943 to the Chinese nationalist regime in Chungking through the ending of extraterritoriality, was in fact handed to them; an early first act was to demand the refugees depart.

Increasingly scholars recognise the role that seeking refuge plays in defining nations, often through the putative host nation developing stronger ideologies of exclusion and strategies of separateness and closure. Both the Japanese after 1943 and the Chinese after 1945 implemented policies that were designed to

constrain the freedoms of the refugees, and in the process define the boundaries and formations of the refugees' own identities. For the Japanese the Polish Jews, once citizens of an allied Poland, became de-nationed, then stateless, the leaders who had tried to push back against this fragmentation arrested, then allowed to die of disease. For the Chinese, their reinstatement as sovereign in their own nation with American help after 1945 was in part signalled by their capacity to expel non-nationals over whom they reclaimed absolute power.

In reflecting on the contemporary re-assertion of Europe's internal and boundary borders in the face of Mediterranean and West Asian immigration pressures Daklakoglou comments that control over entry to lands and access to property rights have been critical planks in national resistance to refugee arrivals (Daklakoglou). The militarisation of national borders that prevents the movement of individuals to places of safety echoes Malkki's understanding of the idea of the refugee as a category that threatens the integrity of the nation state (Malkki). As the refugees make sense of the dynamics of their own exclusion and containment, so too their identities are reformed and given new though often transient meanings within a fluid grid of transnational contestations.

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