
Books Cannot Be Killed by Fire: The German Freedom Library and the American Library of Nazi-Banned Books as Agents of Cultural Memory

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ABSTRACT

This article looks at two libraries founded in 1934 as counter-symbols to the Nazi book burning: the German Freedom Library in Paris and the American Library of Nazi-Banned Books at the Brooklyn Jewish Center in New York. It describes these two libraries as agents of cultural memory, as privileged sites for redefining German, German-Jewish, and Jewish-American cultural identity in times of radical change. Created on different continents and in different social, cultural, and political contexts, they reflect the dynamics of cultural memory from 1933 through World War II and the Cold War era to the present day.

Books cannot be killed by fire. People die, but books never die. No man and no force can put thought in a concentration camp forever. No man and no force can take from the world the books that embody man's eternal fight against tyranny. In this war, we know, books are weapons.¹

INTRODUCTION

The above was President Roosevelt's message to the American people printed on an Office of War Information poster (Broder, 1942; see Figure 1). It was a few months into the war and nine years after the Nazis had set fire to thousands of books and banned the works of hundreds of authors from German libraries. This compelling poster suggests that, in times of war, revolution, and social change, books transcend their state of physical objects to become powerful symbols in a war of ideas and ideologies. A closer inspection of the poster reveals that the book towering over the bonfires looks much more like a fortress built of solid stone blocks than an object made of

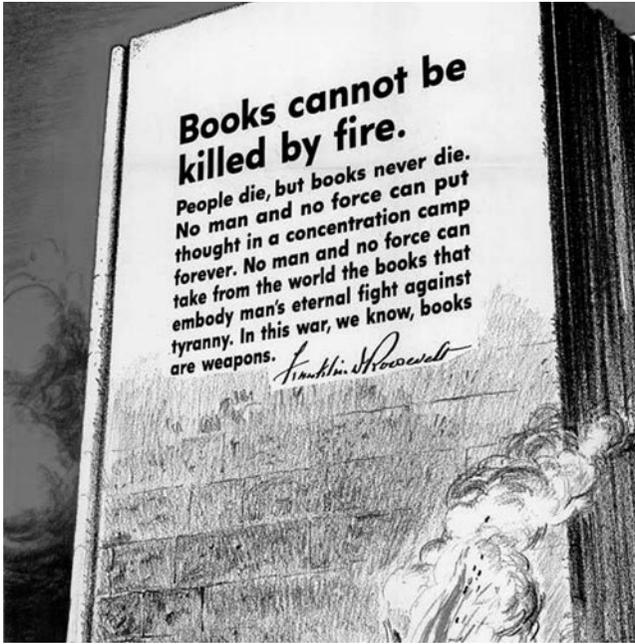


Figure 1. 1942 Office of War Information poster.

paper and ink. The image depicts the double nature of the book in times of change and crisis: it is both a fragile object threatened by destruction and a powerful symbol preserving cultural memory for future generations.

The Nazis had staged the book burning as a symbolic act. The bonfires were to “cleanse” the German spirit of the “un-German” influence of communist, pacifist, and, above all, Jewish thought. And as ever more books were banished from the shelves of bookshops and public and private libraries, the Nazis appropriated German cultural memory and denied that Jews had ever had a place in it. The international media also commented on the symbolic nature of the act. They interpreted the bonfires very differently, however, anticipating radical social change, war, and even genocide, evoking the prophetic quote by nineteenth-century German poet Heinrich Heine: “Where one burns books, one will soon burn people.”²

Intellectuals across the world were horrified by the event, but they also recognized its great symbolic potential.³ This is why, in the following year, two public libraries were founded as deliberate counter-symbols to this act of barbarism: the German Freedom Library (*Deutsche Freiheitsbibliothek*) in Paris, and the American Library of Nazi-Banned Books in Brooklyn, New York.⁴ These two libraries housed the books burned and banned in Germany, ranging from Heine and Lenin to Thomas Mann and Sinclair Lewis,

thus becoming powerful agents of counter-memories to the fascist attempt to rewrite history. They guarded the cultural heritage of a country that had once embodied the principles of humanism and was now threatening the civilized world.

United by a common cause, the two libraries of “burned books” are, however, strikingly different. Whereas the Paris library was founded largely by left-wing German émigré writers who wanted to represent the “other” and better Germany, the Brooklyn library was an initiative of liberal upper-middle-class Jewish-Americans who felt called upon both as the People of the Book and citizens of the New World. While the Freedom Library was confiscated when the German troops invaded Paris in 1940, the Library of Nazi-Banned Books in New York slowly receded into oblivion once it no longer symbolized a counter-memory. In this article I propose to look at these two libraries as agents of cultural memory, as privileged sites for redefining German, German-Jewish, and Jewish-American cultural identity. Created on different continents and in different social, cultural, and political contexts, they reflect the dynamics of cultural memory from 1933 through World War II and the Cold War Era to the present day.

THE GERMAN FREEDOM LIBRARY

Paris, the city of Freedom, Brotherhood, and Equality, which had become the refuge for many German intellectuals, seemed the perfect place to erect a counter-monument to Nazi barbarism. May 10, 1934, the day of the inauguration of the *Deutsche Freiheitsbibliothek*, was equally symbolic. It was the anniversary of the May 10, 1932, book-burning frenzy that had swept across Germany. But the library itself was very real: “more than 20,000 books and pamphlets have been gathered in a few small rooms tucked away in a corner of the Montparnasse at 65 Boulevard Arago,” the *New York Times* reported the following day. “The burdened shelves bear silent witness to the high distinction of the works which good Hitlerites must not read.”⁵ The “German library of the burned books,” as the British and American press called it, did more than preserve the works of banned authors, however. It also kept works indispensable to the study and analysis of Hitlerism, including copies of *Mein Kampf* and every issue of the Nazi “hate” newspaper, *Der Völkische Beobachter*. A collection of 200,000 newspaper clippings completed the archive, which was consulted by writers, students, historians, and journalists and used to produce informative studies about Hitler’s Germany as well as antifascist propaganda.

The German-Jewish writer Alfred Kantorowicz, founder and secretary general of the library, gained the support of distinguished French and British public figures such as the publisher Gaston Gallimard and the philosopher Bertrand Russell, who both joined the library committee. André Gide, Romain Rolland, H. G. Wells, and Lion Feuchtwanger acted as honorary presidents, and Heinrich Mann, brother of Thomas Mann, was appointed

the library's president. Together with the Society of Friends of the Library of Burned Books, established in London by the Countess of Oxford and Asquith, they helped to ensure both the public resonance of the project and the necessary funds. The inauguration was a great public event that made international headlines. Newspapers around the world proclaimed that the Library of Burned Books "stands for the fact that, although the Nazis can burn books, they cannot destroy freedom of thought or the great teaching of the past."⁶

Even the Nazi press was compelled to react to this demonstration of international solidarity. The *Völkische Beobachter* saw the Library of Burned Books as a hideous Jewish scheme, part of the Jewish-Marxist conspiracy. "The Goebbels apparatus," Kantorowicz later explained, "was busy exploiting this thesis. Labelling the exiled writers 'Jews' or 'bolshevists,' Nazi propaganda implied they were not representative either of German literature or of German thought" (1944, p. 687). An enraged journalist at the official Nazi paper described the peaceful inauguration of the library as a hate rally exuding the stench of "Ghetto air."⁷ But the Freedom Library was anything but a ghetto. Its members, most of them German émigré writers, both Jews and non-Jews, came from a wide range of social and political backgrounds; race and religion played no role in these intellectual circles. And even though the library had close ties to the Communist Party, it was not a party institution but open to all liberal minds opposing fascism. The library symbolized the unity of the German émigré community to the world,⁸ and intellectuals from around the world recognized its members as the true defenders of German culture. In his preface to a collection of essays by Kantorowicz titled *Germany Is in Our Camp*, Romain Rolland assured his German colleagues in exile, "Yes, I am with you—the representatives of the suppressed, exiled but invincible, better Germany which suffers but fights. The Germany we respect and love is in your camp."⁹

At least during the first years of the library's existence, members put all divisive forces aside to join in the fight against Nazism. They organized readings and lectures, staged exhibitions, and published books and pamphlets to inform the world of the atrocities committed in Nazi Germany and of the existence of another, better Germany represented by the cultural heritage preserved in their library.

The Library of Burned Books thus became a site for redefining and negotiating German identity and culture. This symbolic battle fought with books came to a head in November 1936, when both the official Nazi government and the *Deutsche Freiheitsbibliothek* staged book exhibitions in Paris. The Freedom Library displayed *The Free German Book*, a retrospective of German literature in exile, at the *Société de Géographie* on the Boulevard Saint-Germain.¹⁰ Indeed, the "geography" and timing of this exhibit were in no way arbitrary. On the same street just doors away, the Nazi government

was celebrating German Book Week with an exhibit of what they considered to be true German literature. The *Free German Book* was a counter-event representing the “other” Germany and denouncing the hate propaganda of Hitler’s Germany. For a week in November 1936, a single block of a Paris boulevard was thus transformed into an ideological battleground of German cultural identity as Nazi officials and writers in exile put their books on display to show the people of Paris, France, and the world the true repository of German culture.

Since it became increasingly clear, however, that the world would remain deaf to all warnings and that Hitler’s regime was not going to be overthrown from within, the social and political differences ended up eroding this united cultural front. In 1937 the Communist Party apparatus took over the library (Bores, 2000, pp. 165–75). On May 10, 1940, precisely seven years after the fateful burning of the books, the Nazis attacked the Western front, forcing the exiles to seek refuge elsewhere (Kantorowicz, 1944, p. 686).¹¹ The Freedom Library could not be saved. “When the Nazis occupied Paris, the Library and its archives were politely handed over to the Gestapo. This is the brief, honorable and very significant history of the Library of the Burned Books” Kantorowicz (1944, p. 687) observed on May 10, 1944, prophesying that this eleventh anniversary of the book burning would be “the last which will see the barbarians in power.”¹²

For decades, the library’s collections were believed to have been lost or destroyed. It was only in 1990 that H el ene Roussel mentioned “a little known source” in the Reading Room of the French National Library: a handwritten thirty-seven-page list identifying 1,400 mostly French titles confiscated by the French police department¹³ and “donated” to the Biblioth eque Nationale in February 1940.¹⁴ The heading reads: “Documents seized in 1939 and acquired by the Biblioth eque Nationale in February 1940. Including books from the Deutsche Freiheitsbibliothek founded by Willy M unzenberg around 1935, in Paris, Boulevard Arago.”¹⁵ Dorothee Bores (2000, p. 87–188), whose excellent unpublished master’s thesis documents the history of the Freedom Library, was able to match most of the titles on the list with holdings of the Biblioth eque Nationale. She also traced the provenance of a number of selected titles to the Library of Burned Books.¹⁶ Administrative obstacles, however, made a complete verification of the list and hence the preparation of a detailed catalog impossible. Whether a certain reluctance to face the Vichy past may have played a part in this cannot be known. In any case, this example illustrates that Nazi-era provenance research, which began immediately after the war, has still not been completed.¹⁷ Libraries physically preserve the cultural heritage in their stacks and storage spaces, but it is the collection management that gives us insight into the intricate working of cultural memory and the complex processes of remembering and forgetting.

AMERICAN LIBRARY OF NAZI-BANNED BOOKS

The American Library of Nazi-Banned Books was inaugurated in December 1934 and was modeled on the Paris Freedom Library. American newspapers and library journals had reported enthusiastically on the establishment of the Paris institution and on plans for a library of burned books in London,¹⁸ calling for a similar initiative in the United States (Stern, 1985). This call to spiritual arms was not answered by an American library or by German immigrants but by the Brooklyn Jewish Center, created in December 1918 by second-generation east European immigrants wishing to reconcile Judaism with Americanism (Dash Moore, 1987, pp. 297–326; Kaufman, 1999, pp. 249–57).

The American setting and its integration into a Jewish community center gave this library of burned books a very different mission from that of the Paris institution. The American Library of Nazi-Banned Books stood united with the German Freedom Library in the ideological fight against the barbarism of the Hitler regime. But given its specific Jewish-American context, it pursued its own distinctive cultural project, which is reflected in the collection itself, in the speeches given at the grand inaugural dinner held on December 22, 1934, and in the various public statements relating to the library.

In April 1934, a month before the opening of the Paris library, the *Brooklyn Jewish Center Review* launched the project of a Library of Nazi-Banned Books.¹⁹ It published a preliminary list of twenty banned authors, including Heinrich Heine, Ernest Hemingway, and Helen Keller, and called on all members and friends of the center to donate books or funds. The best way to commemorate the auto-da-fe of May 1933, the article argued, was “with the acquisition of a substantial number of the works of the twenty authors listed above.” The project soon gained wholehearted support from leading figures in American public life, both Jews and Christians, who joined the library’s advisory board, including Albert Einstein, Theodore Dreiser, Upton Sinclair, and Will Durant.

In January 1935 the *Review* reported that the works of fifty-three authors had been assembled for the library; all volumes were English translations if available, except for literary works, which were acquired both in the original language and in translation.²⁰ By the outbreak of World War II, the Brooklyn Jewish Center had assembled about 500 titles of Nazi-banned books, which stood in a special section alongside the regular collection of Judaica (Goldberg, 1946, pp. 25–27).²¹ Whereas the Paris collection of banned books was complemented by an antifascist archive containing contemporary material about Hitler Germany, this collection was firmly rooted in the timeless wisdom of Jewish Scripture.

It was this decidedly Jewish nature of the enterprise that distinguished the American library from its European counterpart. Given that the books burned in Nazi Germany were primarily by Jewish authors, the rabbi of the

Brooklyn Jewish Center, Rabbi Dr. Israel Herbert Levinthal, saw it “fitting that a Jewish publication [the *Brooklyn Jewish Center Review*], sponsored by a Jewish institution of the standing of the Brooklyn Jewish Center, should initiate such an undertaking.”²² Louis J. Gribetz argued that “[n]o people has felt so keenly the galling weight of the chains of oppression as has the Jewish people.” But the role of the scapegoat was emphatically transcended by that of the guardian of civilization: “The establishment of this library offers us an occasion to show our capacity for indignation at the attempted suppression of science and literature and the will to combat it. . . . Knowledge and intellectual achievement have at all times been the pride and glory of the Jewish people,” Gribetz continued, “and to their acquisition and diffusion they have always given their complete and consecrated support.”²³ The *Hartford Jewish Ledger* praised the Library of Nazi-Banned Books as a *Ner Tamid*, “a perpetual light,”²⁴ and Lewis Lewisohn, the German-born writer and a member of the advisory board, greeted the establishment of the library as an “extraordinary, dignified and powerful weapon in that fight for the spiritual freedom of mankind which it seems to be the special duty of the Jewish people to lead in this age” (Gribetz, 1934).²⁵

While the phoenix rising from the ashes was evoked in Paris to symbolize the library’s mission, biblical and Talmudic parallels were drawn for the collection at the Brooklyn Jewish Center. Rabbi Dr. Levinthal called to mind the legend of Rabbi Chaninah ben Teradian, who was burned by the Romans wrapped in a Torah scroll but did not despair because he knew that the destruction of Holy Scripture would be avenged. The *Jewish Examiner* hailed the Library of Nazi-Banned Books as “another Academy of Jabneh,” a worthy successor to the rabbinic academy founded after the Roman destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple in 70 AD. Almost two millennia later, the Jewish people was living up to its historic mission:

By thus affording shelter to the banned books Jewry gives the world a welcome reassurance of the truth which Nazis have yet to learn that libraries may be burnt but books cannot be destroyed because they are the bearers of ideas which are deathless. . . . The creation of this new library which parallels similar movements in every civilized country in the world is more than a gesture of contempt for modern medievalism. It is in complete accord with the centuried spirit of Israel which transfuses evil into good. . . . The library of the Brooklyn Jewish Center will be another Academy of Jabneh offering unceasing defiance to Nazi brutishness and witnessing the indestructible life of the human spirit.²⁶

Finally, at the grand inaugural dinner of the American Library of Nazi-Banned Books, attended by 500 distinguished guests, including Albert Einstein and Heinz Liepmann, author of the autobiographical concentration camp novel *Murder Made in Germany*, Rabbi Dr. Levinthal quoted a simple legend from the Talmud that told “in clearest fashion the struggle of civi-

lization": "When God gave the Torah at Sinai,—at the very moment, there came down from the heavens *Sefer Vesayof*—a book and a sword. . . . And a Heavenly Voice was heard to say: 'Choose one or the other! If you choose the book, life will be yours; if you choose the sword, death must be yours!'" (Levinthal, 1935, p. 6).

The establishment of the American Library of Nazi-Banned Books at the Brooklyn Jewish Center, he claimed, re-enacted this universal struggle of civilization, which was born with the origin of Scripture itself: "This library is our answer to the challenge of Nazi Germany," Levinthal declared. "They chose *Sayof*, the Sword; and their boast is a Hitler! We chose the *Sefer*, the Book, and our boast is an Einstein! They prefer fire, destruction, symbols of death! We take our stand on the side of thought, feelings, ideals,—symbols of Life!"

As the "People of the Book," the Jewish people saw itself predestined to act as guardian of world culture. But even though the biblical, Talmudic, and historic references situated the Library of Nazi-Banned Books within a Jewish framework, they resonated with a wide range of listeners in the New World. An anecdote perhaps best illustrates the universal appeal of the New York enterprise, which extended beyond the strictly Jewish or German cause. The March 1935 issue of the *Brooklyn Jewish Center Review* printed an article titled "A Negro Hears Heinz Liepmann."²⁷ The author, signing himself H. B., reveals how touched he was by the appeal of this banned German-Jewish author who hardly mastered the English language, and how deeply he felt the injustice of innocent people suffering because of conviction and race. He followed Liepmann in his call to arms but gave it a specifically American slant: "if we all fight together, not with weapons but with the privilege of every citizen, then, and only then can we blot this awful blur [*sic*] on history's records. Voting, keeping active in our political circles, being conscious of what's happening around us, these are our weapons. Arm yourselves immediately—Make right the wrong done" (H. B., 1935, p. 9). Invoking the civic rights defended in the American Civil War, this man supported suffering Jews and persecuted Germans alike because their cause resonated with him.²⁸ By transcending linguistic, religious, and racial boundaries, the Library of Nazi-Banned Books and the activities linked to it truly symbolized democratic American values. The fight for freedom of thought and expression was both a Jewish and an American one.

It is significant in this respect that the library was named not "Jewish" but "American" Library of Nazi-Banned Books. Whereas the Paris library of burned books was a library in exile founded by German émigrés alienated from their country, the Brooklyn library was an institution firmly embedded in a community center created by Jewish immigrants who identified with American values. The Brooklyn Jewish Center was deeply committed to reconciling Jewish traditions with the American way of life so as to forge an inclusive Jewish-American identity. It was a response to social changes experienced by second-generation immigrant Jews who wanted to embrace

American values while remaining true to their religious and cultural heritage. This two-fold desire was reflected in the center's library: The permanent collection housed religious and secular literature in English, Yiddish, and Hebrew, and the special collection of Nazi-banned books united works of world literature in the name of freedom.²⁹

Unlike the German Freedom Library, the library at the Brooklyn Jewish Center was never intended to represent the "other Germany." Nor was it meant to function as a center for political activism—least of all of a communist nature. If the center had any political ambition, it was to raise international awareness of the Nazi atrocities committed against Jews and perhaps even draw attention to the urgent need for a Jewish homeland. The center was actively involved in Zionist affairs and used the Nazi bonfires as proof of their urgency (Kaufman, 1999, p. 256). In October 1933 the *Brooklyn Jewish Center Review* quoted Thomas Mann, whose books had been banned by the Nazis: "What happened in Germany convinced me more and more of the value of Zionism for the Jew."³⁰ Rabbi Stephen Wise, who, on the day of the book burning, had led massive crowds in a march from New York's Madison Square Garden to protest Nazi persecution of the Jews, also spoke at the inauguration dinner of the American Library of Nazi-Banned Books and seized the opportunity to support the Zionist cause (Goldberg, 1935, p. 19). Rather than representing the other Germany, the burned books now called for a new Israel. The same "weapons" thus served in different wars of ideas.

REMEMBERING AND FORGETTING

Today, the American Library of Nazi-Banned Books and the German Freedom Library—once guardians of German-Jewish and Jewish-American cultural memories—have been almost forgotten. In the case of the Paris Library, the division of Germany and the Cold War can help to explain this oblivion. Whereas West Germany did not consider the antifascist movement to be part of its cultural heritage because of the communist stigma attached to it (Kantorowicz, 1978, p. 49–68), East Germany refused to commemorate the Freedom Library because Alfred Kantorowicz and other collaborators of the library were no longer in line with party politics (Kantorowicz, 1978, pp. 31–49).³¹ Forgetting these libraries seemed part of the cultural politics of Cold War Germany.

The same may be true of the American Library of Nazi-Banned Books, whose holdings were donated to the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York when the Brooklyn Jewish Center closed in the late 1970s (Reif, 1980). During McCarthy's anticommunist crusade, which brought the Cold War to the American homefront, the symbol of the book-burning was turned against the U.S. administration, accusing it of the same intolerance and barbarism American soldiers had fought to destroy in World War II. This once-powerful symbol of the American fight for freedom of speech and

expression had lost its innocence, and with it, the Brooklyn library, preserving the works of many communist writers, lost its function as a heroic counter-symbol. I suspect, however, that the Brooklyn Library of Nazi-Banned Books failed to become a part of collective memory because thoughts of the atrocities committed during World War II overshadowed the former "symbol of Life" Rabbi Levinthal had celebrated before the war. To come back to Roosevelt's quote, books may not have died, but millions of innocent people certainly did. If the library initially symbolized a common German-Jewish heritage, the Holocaust made it more than clear that this hyphenated union was nothing but an illusion.

The fate of these two libraries of burned books can, I believe, tell us something about the dynamics of cultural memory. In times of war, revolution, and social change, books and libraries gain a symbolic dimension precisely because their physical existence is threatened. As symbols or counter-symbols, they can act as a powerful force to shape identity and create community even under adverse circumstances. They become agents (and not just repositories) of cultural memory not only because they physically preserve works of the past and transmit tradition but more importantly because they represent communities and symbolize values in need of defence. Yet, at the same time, the symbolic use of books and libraries as ideological weapons makes them vulnerable because ideologies change and communities evolve and reinterpret their past to redefine their identity. Once library collections lose their symbolic function, or, worse, once their symbolic meaning no longer seems compatible with current social and political concerns, they are doomed to be forgotten. It is then the task of librarians, catalogers, collection managers, and library historians to help preserve the physical evidence, to make it available, and to reconstruct the historic and symbolic significance of these "forgotten" collections so that they may once again become agents of cultural memory.

NOTES

I wish to thank Dorothee Bores (Mainz University, Germany) for generously sending me a copy of her unpublished M.A. thesis, "*Wir hüten Erbe und Zukunft.*"

1. Roosevelt first pronounced these words on May 10, 1943, the *Day of the Burned Books*, which was commemorated by the New York Public Radio (Kantorowicz, 1970–71, p. 40). The quote served as the motto for a whole series of events commemorating the tenth anniversary of the German book burning (Kantorowicz, 1978, p. 298).
2. This famous quote is from his play *Almansor* (1821). The original German reads: "Dort, wo man Bücher verbrennt, verbrennt man am Ende auch Menschen."
3. Alfred Kantorowicz, the founder of the German Freedom Library, stressed this symbolic dimension: "Only imaginative men, 'dreamers,' those who are not content merely to note the facts but who also consider them as symbols of social, political, spiritual and human currents, have understood in time the real meaning of the 'symbolic action' of the *auto-da-fé* s. . . . They knew that those who burned the books one day would set fire to the whole world" (Kantorowicz, 1944, p. 686).
4. On the Paris library see Bores (2000), Kantorowicz (1970–71; 1978, pp. 271–293). On the Brooklyn library see Stern (1987, pp. 27, 31–32). The traveling exhibit "Fighting the Fires of Hate: America and the Nazi Book Burnings," prepared by the United States

- Holocaust Memorial Museum and curated by Guy Stern (online exhibition available at <http://www.ushmm.org/museum/exhibit/online/bookburning/index.php>), pays tribute to the American response to the book burning and shows some documents from the American Library of Nazi-Banned Books.
5. "Paris Library for Banned Books Opens on First Anniversary of Nazi Bonfire," *New York Times*, May 11, 1934, p. 10. See also "German Library of Burned Books," *Library Journal*, 59 (1934, June 1): 470.
 6. For example, see references listed in note 5.
 7. *Völkischer Beobachter* 147 (May 27, 1934), quoted in Bores (2000, p. 70). Bores (2000, pp. 66–67 and 70–71) lists more reports interpreting the library as a purely Jewish-Marxist enterprise.
 8. A unity that was, in fact, cruelly missing (Holz & Schopf, 2001, pp. 46–47).
 9. This quote, reprinted in Kantorowicz (1944, p. 688), is taken from Rolland's introduction to a volume of essays (Kantorowicz, 1936).
 10. This exhibition was documented by the Jewish-German photographer Josef Breitenbach. See the chapter "The Free German Book" in Holz & Schopf (2001, pp. 37–67) and Bores (2000, pp. 121–29).
 11. Kantorowicz observes: "The coincidence of the dates is striking. May 10, 1940, was the direct consequence of May 10, 1933."
 12. Bores (2000, pp. 178–79) observes that Kantorowicz gave contradictory information concerning the confiscation of the library's material. Since he had left Paris in February 1939 to settle in southern France, he had no firsthand knowledge of the last days of the library.
 13. The list indicates the "Préfecture de la police" as the books' origin. Bores (2000, pp. 181–82) notes that the Paris police archives reported to have no records of the library's confiscation.
 14. Bores points out that the list (call number 017 Impr. 6 Ouv.) can now be consulted in the "Salle de recherche bibliographique" (Salle X) at the Tolbiac branch of the Bibliothèque Nationale (Bores, 2000, p. 181 n. 13). There is a copy of this list at the Exilarchiv Frankfurt am Main EB 1000/250. All confiscated books were given the accession number DON 33 50 52, but they were not classified by provenance and are now stored in different locations of the Bibliothèque Nationale (Bores, 2000, p. 187).
 15. Quoted in Bores (2000, p. 181). The French original reads "Ouvrages saisis en 1939 entrés à la Bibliothèque nationale en février 1940. Entre autres : livres de la Deutsche Freiheitsbibliothek fondée par Willy Münzenberg vers 1935, à Paris, Boulevard Arago." Willy Münzenberg, a Communist Party official, was not a founding member of the library but provided some of the funds, networks, and encouragements instrumental to its establishment. See Bores (2000, pp. 26–46).
 16. The books bear the library's stamp: "DEUTSCHE FREIHEITSBIBLIOTHEK. Bibliothèque Allemande des livres brûlés. 65, Boulev. Arago, 65 Paris–XIIIe Tél. Port Royal 10–17" (Bores, 2000, p. 180). Bores also mentions a book bearing the library's stamp at the Exilarchiv Frankfurt am Main, EB 61/193.
 17. To give but one example: Following the Stolen Artwork Restitution Act of 1998, the Austrian National Library completed its Nazi-era provenance research. It produced a detailed report in 2003 and showed an exhibition in 2004 entitled "Looted Books: The Austrian National Library Faces its Past." In the exhibition catalog, Ernst Bacher (2004) explains this long delay with legal complications and sociological factors. He argues that the generational shift of the 1990s, which saw a new postwar generation move into leading position, was instrumental in allowing the confrontation with the past.
 18. For example, the *New York Times* (March 27, 1934, p. 19) published an article entitled "German Library Planned in London" and reported on a meeting at the house of the Countess of Oxford and Asquith. Despite these announcements no evidence of such a library in London has been found. London did take part in the movement, however, by founding the "Society of the Friends of the Library of Burned Books" to support the Paris library. In England, the *John Rylands Library Bulletin* ("German Library of Burned Books Formally Opened in Paris," *Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester*, 18 [1934]: 272–75), which also reported on the establishment of the Paris library, added that "England ha[d] shown keen interest in the work, and it is possible that in time the

- bulk of the library may be transferred to London" because, it was argued, the interest in German affairs was greater in England than in France.
19. "Center Review to Establish Library of Nazi-Banned Books," *Brooklyn Jewish Center Review*, 3 (April 1934). The library's name was explained in a later issue: "The words 'Nazi-Banned Books' were chosen in preference to 'Burned Books,' used by the projected English library, because it was intended that the American library should house not only the books that were thrown into the literary auto-da-fe, but all those books which were banned by the Nazi government" ("The Inauguration of the American Library of Nazi-Banned Books," *Brooklyn Jewish Center Review*, 3 [December 1934]).
 20. "Progress of the American Library of Nazi-Banned Books," *Brooklyn Jewish Center Review*, 3 (January 1935).
 21. The minutes of a library committee meeting in October 1939 state: "The number of books in the library is approximately 3200 and 3300. The books are classified as follows: approximately 500 Nazi-banned, 300 Juvenile (English and Hebrew), 100 Fiction, 250 General Science & Literature, 600 Yiddish, 750 Hebrew, 700 Judaica [*sic*] and 40 Unclassified." Ratner Center Archives, Jewish Theological Seminary, Brooklyn Jewish Center Records, 25/9. Courtesy of the Ratner Center for the Study of Conservative Judaism, Jewish Theological Seminary.
 22. "Center Review to Establish Library."
 23. *Ibid.*
 24. "More Comments of Library Inauguration," *Brooklyn Jewish Center Review*, 12 (January 1935).
 25. Gribetz adds that in "this one paragraph Mr. Lewisohn gives a fitting answer to those who profess that the erection of the library should be the concern of the non-Jewish world." This seems to suggest that the Brooklyn Jewish Center's leading role in the establishment of the library was not undisputed.
 26. "Another Academy of Jabneh," *Brooklyn Jewish Center Review*, 6 (January 1935).
 27. The author is not referring to Liepmann's dramatic speech at the inaugural dinner for the Library of Nazi-Banned Books but to his forum lecture about his autobiographical novel *Murder Made in Germany*, given December 3, 1934.
 28. The same affinity was operating—only in the other direction—when the second most popular children's book title in the Chatham branch of the New York Public Library was Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. To a journalist of the *Evening Post*, this seemed most natural: "[as] the story of an oppressed race it strikes a responsive chord in the Jewish child" ("Jew Babes at the Library," quoted in Kirshhoff, 2002, pp. 35, and Schoener & Jewish Museum, 1967, pp. 133–34).
 29. The minutes of a library committee meeting in October 1939. Ratner Center Archives, Jewish Theological Seminary, Brooklyn Jewish Center Records, 25/9. Courtesy of the Ratner Center for the Study of Conservative Judaism, Jewish Theological Seminary.
 30. "Clipped Wisdom," *Brooklyn Jewish Center Review*, 12 (October 1933).
 31. Kantorowicz himself, who had chosen to live in East Germany after the war, finally fled in 1957 (1995, pp. 68–69).

ARCHIVAL SOURCES

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