

Identities and Politics at the Vienna Jewish Film Festival¹

Jérôme Segal

It can be assumed that besides presenting unknown films to movie buffs, film festivals linked to diasporas serve two main goals: consolidating a sense of solidarity within a community, on the one hand, and shaping the image of that community in the city or country hosting the festival, on the other. The goals of sponsors and institutions supporting such festivals are not very different, since their approach is clearly linked to their policy towards minorities. The decision to support a festival depends on the relationship with a given diasporic group, as well as on the open-mindedness they seek to display.

Two more specific questions arise in the case of Jewish film festivals. First, the validity of the concept of diaspora, which is related to ethnicity, has to be established, since it lies at the core of the eternal question of Jewish identity. Secondly, the relationship to Israel, the country being defined as a Jewish state, quickly crops up as a major issue.

Dealing with the issue of Jewish film festivals as diasporic festivals therefore needs clarification. It is not our task here to compare the Jewish diaspora to others. Usually, a diaspora is related to an ethnicity. If this ethnicity is not directly bound to an existing nation-state, as in the case of the Kurds or the Roma, this represents an important political issue. The same could be said of the Jewish people, although they have a special relationship with Israel. Far from the essentialist genetic definitions of Jewishness based on biology, be it that used by the Nazis or by orthodox Jews ('those who are born of a Jewish mother'), Jewishness here is seen in terms of an open definition: Jews are those people who define themselves as

such. In this respect, we endorse Shlomo Sand's view of the 'Jewish people' as a social and historical construct (Sand 2009). Sand takes a firm stance against the danger of an essentialist definition of the Jewish people: 'Validating an essentialist, ethnocentric definition of Judaism', he wrote '[encourages] a segregation that separates Jews from non-Jews — whether Arabs, Russian immigrants or foreign workers' (Sand 2008).

In order to focus on the case of the Vienna Jewish Film Festival (VJFF, www.jfw.at) without losing a fruitful comparative approach, three main topics will be covered: the foundation of the festival, its cosmopolitan aspects and, finally, its recent developments. This way, we should be able to understand how a film festival might sometimes shed light on complex identity issues which have political consequences.

A Non-hereditary Genesis

Nowadays, there are more than 100 Jewish film festivals throughout the world, about two-thirds of them in the U.S. In many cases, these festivals are conceived as spin-offs of official Jewish organisations. Their film programme is governed by institutions which promote a strict and conservative definition of Jewishness. Three main criteria dominate in the selection of films: religion, life in Israel, and the extermination of the Jews during WWII. These Jewish film festivals, which consequently have restricted curatorial freedom, rely heavily on the goodwill and sponsorship of Jewish community centres. The inauguration of these festivals can be considered as a kind of 'hereditary genesis' since they are practically mouthpieces of the communities.

The VJFF, which was established in 1991, does not belong to this category. It was never directly linked to the Israelitische Kultusgemeinde (IKG or Austrian Jewish Community), which was

established by Austrian law in order to represent the Jewish religion.

In this sense, the VJFF compares directly with the very first Jewish film festival, which began in San Francisco a decade earlier, in 1981, with an open-minded outlook. Deborah Kaufman, the law school graduate and political activist who conceived the San Francisco Jewish Film Festival (SFJFF), saw it as a means 'to challenge Hollywood stereotypes of Jews in the public at large' (Kaufman and Plotkin 2007: 110). She explained the situation in a 2007 paper written jointly with Janis Plotkin, Artistic Director of the SFJFF from 1994 to 2002:

Influenced in part by the counterculture, supported by an expanding economy and upward mobility, and with this new sense of entitlement as American Jews, many in this post-1960s generation began experimenting with alternative modes of secular Jewish expression outside of the mainstream Jewish establishment. Although the establishment was predominantly characterized by Jewish Federation bureaucracies, fundraising drives for Israel, and social service delivery, the younger upstarts were forging a different path. New literary and political publications, experimental theaters, and klezmer and avant-garde music groups were sprouting across the country. Young Jewish filmmakers outside of Hollywood were using the medium of film to begin to express themselves about contemporary Jewish identity. (Kaufman and Plotkin 2007: 109)

The SFJFF secured three sponsors from early on: the Judah L. Magnes Museum, the American Film Institute in Washington, D.C., and the University of California, Los Angeles Film Archives. Moreover, it played a crucial role in the development of Jewish film

festivals worldwide, first in the U.S. (Philadelphia in 1982, followed by Boston and Washington, D.C.) and then in Europe.² In 1996 the SFJFF organisers published a 'resource guide' on Independent Jewish Film that opened with a chapter entitled 'Producing a Film Festival – A Checklist for Programming' (Plotkin et al. 1996). On the webpage of their festival they recall that 'in 2000, [they] played host to the first National Conference of Jewish Film Festivals, organized by the National Foundation for Jewish Culture, with 31 participating Jewish Film Festivals'.³

The VJFF is the oldest Jewish film festival in Europe still in existence.⁴ It works in the spirit established by the U.S.-based festivals discussed so far. The idea to have a Jewish film festival in Vienna came from Kurt Rosenkranz (born 1927), who was at that time the President of the Jüdisches Institut für Erwachsenenbildung (Jewish Institute of Adult Education) in Vienna.⁵ Rosenkranz was an Austrian Jew who, like the former Chancellor Bruno Kreisky, had survived WWII in exile and had managed to return to Austria in the aftermath.⁶ The Jewish Institute of Adult Education served the purpose of improving knowledge among non-Jewish Austrians regarding various aspects of Jewish culture. Since Rosenkranz was not closely familiar with cinema, he asked a cameraman, Frédéric-Gérard Kaczek (born 1949), to realise his project. A Belgian citizen who grew up in Brussels, Kaczek had close ties to Austria: his parents were Viennese Jews who had escaped from Austria in 1938. When Rosenkranz approached him with the idea of establishing a Jewish film festival, Kaczek had already been living in Austria for almost 20 years and working as a cameraman. He had written a script for a film, *A Journey via Vienna*, about the emigration of two young Jews from Galicia, the Eastern province of the Austrian-Hungarian Empire, to the U.S. While seeking funding for this project, in 1982, he had created the Österreichische Gesellschaft zur Erhaltung und Förderung der jüdischen Kultur und Tradition (Austrian Society for

the Preservation and Promotion of Jewish Culture and Tradition), sponsored by the Austrian government, the City of Vienna, Eastman Kodak and two other film-related companies. It was on behalf of this society that Kaczek signed an agreement with Viktor Billek, whose Volkshochschule Margareten (Adult Education Centre), located in Stöbergasse in Vienna's fifth district, was equipped with an auditorium for film screenings. Thus the three men — Rosenkranz, Kaczek and Billek — became the three persons responsible for staging the first VJFF in 1991 (it was called Jüdische Filmwoche in German, or Jewish Film Week).

In unpublished interview notes that were prepared for the seventh VJFF in 1997, Kaczek described his involvement in the festival:

When Kurt Rosenkranz approached me in 1991 to find out whether I could imagine a Jewish Film Week, I found the idea attractive, particularly as I saw the opportunity to use my knowledge of the medium of film and my experience as a manager for another very meaningful task. It seemed to me a special challenge to be able to employ film as a weapon against anti-Semitism and intolerance, but also — in Vienna of all places — to illustrate the normality of being Jewish and Jewish life in film. Moreover, I think that every minority must be able to experience its own culture, so that it can cultivate and consolidate its identity. Hence, the Jewish Film Week appeals to both non-Jews interested in Jewish topics and the Jewish community, which is given the opportunity to reflect on their film culture. For me, however, organizing the Jewish Film Week ultimately implies giving my parents evidence that you do not need to hide in Vienna any more as a Jew.

Hence, issues surrounding the festival were politicised from early on. This was exemplified by the concurrent photo exhibition on Israel entitled 'People of Israel', by Alex Levac, which took place at the same location at the Stöbergasse and at the same time as the film festival, in 1991. Whilst the film festival wanted to highlight 'the normality of being Jewish and Jewish life in film', the exhibition predominantly stressed Israel and its self-perception as a vulnerable state. In the exhibition leaflet, Israel is presented as 'a multicultural state in which the diversity of Jewish cultures from Europe and the East converge in a hostile environment and with a conservative (from a 'Western' point of view) government — a state with all the problems that come from such a constellation'.⁷

The orientation of the festival was clearly to the left of the political spectrum, with little interest in Jewish religion. The newspaper announcing the festival and photo exhibition was the *Arbeiterzeitung* (*Workers' Newspaper*), historically the main organ of the Austrian Socialist Party. Regarding religious observance, the festival organisers did not mind opening it on Saturday 5 October at 18:30h, shortly before the end of the Sabbath (during which strict observers are not allowed to attend such events).⁸ As far as the programme of the festival was concerned, Kaczek managed to obtain 16 films (including six Austrian premières) from seven countries: Czechoslovakia, Germany, the USSR, Switzerland, the U.S. and Israel. Kaczek managed to gain the support of the Israeli Embassy for the shipping of Israeli films. For the first festival, he invited Israeli film directors, including Avraham Heffner, who presented *Ahavata Ha'ahronah Shel Laura Adler* (*Laura Adler's Last Love Affair*, Israel, 1990), a film on the shift of the traumatism of deportation to the next generation a portrayed through a mother-daughter relationship. The other Israeli film, *Ha-Kayitz Shel Aviya* (*The Summer of Aviya*, Eli Cohen, 1988), dealt with the insidious way state officials in the country decided to eradicate the Yiddish language in favour of

Hebrew in the early years of the state of Israel. In the press release sent to the Austrian media, Kaczek wrote:

The three last days of the festival are devoted to Israel: the film *Tema*, which was controversial in its production country, the USSR, deals with the conflicts of a Soviet immigrant; *Bread* tells about the daily life of a Northern African Jew in Israel, and in both *The Policeman* and *Sallah Shabati*, the director Ephraim Kishon satirises the ways of life of his fellow countrymen.⁹

The first festival was successful, both in terms of audience participation and budget, since the Austrian Ministry of Education and Culture and the City of Vienna generously sponsored the event. The Israeli airline El Al also donated ATS6,000 (€436, which would today correspond to €628 allowing for inflation). By comparison, the Ministry and the City each donated ATS180,000.

A Cosmopolitan Festival Engaged in Politics

The success and the leftist orientation of the VJFF quickly created unease in the official Jewish community. Yet the more opposition the festival encountered in Vienna, the more cosmopolitan and international it grew.

First, the festival prioritised original programming and decided to have a special topic every year. In 1992 the programme focused on 'European Jews after the War' and expanded to nine days instead of six days, as had been the case the year before. Over this period, more than 4,300 viewers attended the 27 screenings. Bolstered by this positive result, the organisers moved to a better-known movie theatre in the first district of the city and chose 'Jewish Women in Film from the Yiddish Films of the 1920s to the Present Time' as

the topic for the 1993 festival. The innovative women's cinema programme comprised of 34 films (organised in 32 screenings), including 17 premières. This time there were fewer viewers: only 3,037 spectators came to the screenings, but the loss of income was made up by additional support from the Ministry of the Environment, Youth and Family, due to the gender specific topic. The festival was part of a larger programme sponsored by the City of Vienna and entitled the Jüdische Kultur in Wien (Jewish Culture in Vienna).

'This time it will be necessary to invite specialists for presentations and to co-operate with international Jewish film festivals', Kaczek wrote in his festival notes. 'The Jewish Film Week must be a forum for discussions and be competitive with the Jewish film festivals in London, the U.S. or France'.¹⁰ Three experts were invited to take part in discussions: Ronny Loewy, a specialist in Yiddish film from the German Film Museum, Sharon Pucker Rivo, an expert on the role of women in Jewish films from the National Center for Jewish Film in the U.S., and Liz Magnes, a score composer for silent movies heralding from Israel. The festival was beginning to establish itself on the international scene.

The search for a complex Jewish identity always stayed at the core of the programming effort. When, in 1994, Kaczek decided to focus on 'Jewish Humour', he approached celebrities who were invited to the festival's opening with a letter that read:

We try not just to collect films from Jewish artists or authors (and it was a difficult decision to forgo the Marx Brothers, Billy Wilder and many others), but we also prefer to choose films dealing in some way or other with Jewish identity at a specific time or in a specific society.¹¹

This credo probably pleased the officials of the City of Vienna, as in September 1994 the Stadtschulrat (Vienna School Board) sent

a memorandum inviting all schools to take their pupils to see films on the programme (they particularly endorsed the 1990 Polish film *Korczak* by Andrzej Wajda).

In 1995 the topic was 'Long is the Road', a theme that dealt with migration. The City Councillor for Culture, Ursula Pasterk, wrote in the catalogue:

The word 'migration' is a key concept in understanding the tragic history of this century. Forced treks, often of whole peoples, leave their marks on the psycho-geographical landscape of an era in which displacement and industrial mass murder have been sophisticated and perfected. Just how the euphemistic notion of 'ethnic cleansing' is abused to deprive people of their homes and homeland can be observed today in hostilities in the former Yugoslavia. (Festival Catalogue 1995: 4)

The festival also won recognition for its efforts to deal with important issues illustrating the universal dimension of Jewishness. In this respect, its counterpart in San Francisco had inspired the VJFF once again. The leaders of SFJFF had ventured into Madrid a couple of years earlier in an effort to establish a Jewish film festival there. Deborah Kaufman and Janice Plotkin of the SFJIFF recall:

[1992] was to be the quincentennial of the Columbus voyage from Spain to the 'new world'. For Jews, it was also a quincentennial that triggered different memories — of a Golden Age that had been wiped out in what was to be the prototype of 'ethnic cleansing'. In an attempt to highlight Jewish Arab cooperation in medieval Spain and to put a spotlight on Sephardic and Mizrahi Jewish culture [communities of the Middle East, Central Asia and

the Caucasus] that had been marginalized by Ashkenazi and Eastern European Jewish elites, the Festival went to Spain [...] [It] reached sold-out audiences, mostly students in their twenties and thirties, who stayed on for electrifying discussions about the meaning of multiculturalism, at a time when a bloody, new war in the former Yugoslavia was creating its own short-hand for genocide — yet again using the language of 'ethnic cleansing'. (Kaufman and Plotkin 2007: 115-16)

Following in the footsteps of this pioneering move by SFJIFF leaders, Kaczek and his assistants made very similar points, emphasising the history of the Jews as a metaphor for the fatal consequences of racist ideology and nascent nationalism. At a time of rising Austrian nationalism, with nationalist leader Jörg Haider's popularity growing by the month, they insisted on the importance of personal courage and condemned the persistent anti-Semitism in Austria. In a programme section entitled 'Propaganda', they also chose to show how some films are abused to propagate racist ideologies. The festival team capitalised on the importance of this topic and took the opportunity to seek support at European level. It was awarded funds from the Council of Europe's programme 'All Different, All Equal'. The famous Austro-American film director Fred Zinnemann also encouraged the festival on a more symbolic level in a letter printed in the catalogue, in which he declared: 'As to expressing an opinion on fighting the increase of xenophobia and anti-Semitism I am as helpless as anyone else and it would only sound pompous for me to offer advice beyond saying: "Stick to your guns if you can, no matter what happens"'.¹²

As if expanding the international importance of VJFF, 1995 saw also the launch of a Jewish film festival in Berlin. There is even a striking parallel in the biography of Nicola Galliner, who founded

the festival in Berlin, with that of Frederic-Gérard Kaczek. She was born in London in 1950 and had later on moved to Germany where she had been living for more than 20 years by the time she established the Berlin Jewish Film Festival (BJFF). She relied, like the Viennese, on support from an Institute of Adult Education (which she had headed since 1988). This festival was also conceived with an educational purpose and, since its inception, the concern with Jewish identity has been at its core. A book published in 2004 for the festival's 10th anniversary, features a series of six discussion pieces under the heading 'What Makes a Film Jewish?' (Galliner 2004).

Gradually, a range of major domestic and international festivals came to collaborate with the VJFF. The 1995 event took place with collaboration from the Viennale (www.viennale.at), a mainstream festival that had been the largest in the country since 1960. Likewise, BJFF took place with the personal involvement of Ulrich Gregor, programmer of Berlinale's International Forum of Young Cinema and director of the Arsenal cinema, which hosted BJFF. At this time the Berlinale (Berlin International Film Festival, www.berlinale.de) served as a meeting place for the directors of many European Jewish film festivals. Kaczek remembers that when he went to the Berlinale to select films, he could also meet his colleagues from other festivals and enter exchanges that occasionally resulted in joint initiatives and proposals for Europe-wide projects.¹³ One such attempt at collaborating was made in 2006, when Jack M. Weil, Director of the Amsterdam Jewish Film Festival, invited his counterparts from Denmark, Germany, Hungary, Spain, Sweden, the UK and Austria to a workshop. The meeting aimed to achieve three goals: developing better marketing strategies to raise financial support, arranging a film circuit among the Jewish film festivals for the transfer and shipping of film copies (e.g. 16 or 35 mm, tapes) between festivals, and, finally, using the MEDIA programme of the European Commission. As Jack Weil recalls, no significant progress

was achieved on the last point for two reasons: the overwhelming amount of paperwork and the quota of 70 per cent EU-made content, which would have impinged on curatorial freedom.¹⁴

Recent Trends at the Vienna Jewish Film Festival

On 14 November 1995 Frédéric-Gérard Kaczek filed an application to patent the name and the logo of his festival and received the licence in January 1997. Kaczek was concerned that his leftist politics and unorthodox views on the matter of Jewishness may not be liked by the conservative IKG. He also feared that the community may decide to create a new Jewish film festival that would compete with his own. His request was supported with a six-page document recounting the history of the VJFF. In it he explained that with the recent opening of Vienna's Jewish Museum (in November 1993), the City authorities had sought to integrate the festival into the Museum's activities. With funding redirected from the film festival to the Jewish Museum, the festival saw its very existence under threat. In addition, Kurt Rosenkranz, the initiator of the film festival, relinquished his position at the Jewish Institute of Adult Education (JIAE). A new deputy, Leo Auerbach, came to replace him, and there was soon a clash of personalities with Kaczek, resulting in a breakdown of relations between Kaczek and the JIAE. Kaczek feared that he might lose control of the festival and felt that he needed to ensure the continuity of his tenure.

The 1996 festival was officially organised in collaboration with the Viennale and the Jewish Museum, and tackled yet another controversial topic: Jews and Politics. Reportedly, on receipt of the festival's programme, the director of the Jewish Museum, Georg Haber, became enraged. In a fax dated 14 October, addressed to Kaczek, he decided to put an end to the relationship.

What concretely triggered this reaction is not clear. Looking through the film selection, however, there seem to be three possible

factors: the approach taken by Kaczek, who, as he wrote in his introduction, was interested in showing 'Jewish people not only as persecuted victims, but also as actors of the times, as political beings who, despite of or because of their very Jewish identity, deliberately shape and influence their own lives and those of others' (Festival Catalogue 1996: 3);¹⁵ the programming of a documentary on the Jewish gay activist, Harvey Milk;¹⁶ or the selection of a Palestinian film by Rashid Masharawi on life in refugee camps. The catalogue even mentions an independent Palestinian state ('The Palestinian film industry is still in its infancy — as is Palestinian independence', one reads on p. 8).¹⁷

Monika Kaczek, Frédéric-Gérard's wife, whose views on these matters were even more radical, joined the small festival team toward the end of the 1990s. In the 1998 catalogue she would write a long article on Israeli and Palestinian films. In November 1999 she invited festival friends to a demonstration against the upcoming coalition between rightist and ultra-rightist parties. Since it was scheduled for Friday evening, she managed to get support from Chief Rabbi Eisenberg, who sent a fax explaining how to participate in the demonstration without breaking the rules of Sabbath.

This increasingly radical political orientation did not please the mainstream Jewish community but fitted in well with Austrian policy in the Middle East. In a letter dated 18 May 1998, the Minister of Science and Transport, Caspar Einem, not only granted his honorary protection to the coming festival but also stated:

Here, the power of images is employed to promote the vision of a peaceful world. Thus, the Jewish Film Days follow the best Austrian tradition, that of Bruno Kreisky, who was the first to realise that if the people in Israel want to find themselves, they will have to learn to speak to one another.¹⁸

In 1999 VJFF was associated with the Polish Film Week. In 2000 funding cuts led the Kaczeks to structure the event around a selection entitled 'The Best of 10 Years of the Jewish Film Week', a programme with which they subsequently toured several other Austrian cities in 2001. Then the festival was put on hold for two years until 2004, when it found new sponsors in the form of the cell phone company A1. One of the selected films was seen as particularly controversial by the IKG: the production *Al-Nakba: The Palestinian Catastrophe 1948*, by director Benny Brunner (Israel/Netherlands, 1997). It dealt with the hushed up matters related to the displacement of 750,000 Palestinians following the creation of the state of Israel in 1948.

An even deeper public rift with the IKG came about as a result of the programming for the following year, which included *Paradise Now* (Hany Abu-Assad, 2005), a film co-produced by the Occupied Palestinian Territory, France, Germany, the Netherlands and Israel and nominated for a foreign language Oscar. The film was widely reviewed across Austrian media. It received the audience prize at the Berlinale and had been co-financed by the Israeli Film Fund (Edlinger and Griessemann 2005: 198). Raimund Fastenbauer, general secretary for Jewish affairs at the IKG, asserted that this 'scandalous film' legitimised 'the killing of innocent people in Israel' (ibid.).¹⁹ In response the Kaczeks took the spotlight by making the following statement:

This Dutch/French/German/Israeli co-production touches highly sensitively on the issue of the motives of suicide bombers. But *Paradise Now* also asks us questions in Europe, not least how we here deal with racism, anti-Semitism and fundamentalism. Such films, which provoke and provide food for thought, belong to the Jewish Film Week, which presents not just a nostalgic image of the Jews in the Shtetl or playing

Klezmer music, but also the humanistic picture of Jews facing the problems of today's world.²⁰ (Website of the festival, www.jfw.at/2005/popup.htm)

There again, clearly at odds with IKG's position, they chose to extend their international contacts. On occasion of the 60th anniversary of Israel, in 2008, the Kaczek's attempted to raise the traditionally hushed issue of the Nakba (the 1948 displacement of Palestinians). This again led to a furious reaction by Fastenbauer, who, writing in the community monthly magazine, criticised the fact that the programme had not been approved by the IKG. He also suggested that the festival should be renamed 'Palestinian Film Festival' (Fastenbauer 2008).²¹ Ironically, however, the VJFF had to defend itself not only against the attacks of the IKG but also against anti-Semites, who tried to remove the German-language Wikipedia article on the festival on the basis of arguments reminiscent of the usual regurgitation of Austrian anti-Semitism.²² Interestingly, the decisive argument in favour of retaining the article by Wikipedia was the subsidy of €70,000 granted by the City of Vienna.

Faced by many hostile sentiments, the VJFF is today an endangered event, although it is approaching its twentieth anniversary. Conceived as an independent festival, both in terms of the quality of the films selected and its relationship to the Jewish community, the festival is also threatened by a new, more politically correct 'Jewish Cinema Club' that enjoys the approval of the IKG.

The difficulties faced by the VJFF in finding not only stable partners but also sufficient sponsoring are probably due to the demanding definition they make of Jewish films. Screening a film on sexual abuse in an Israeli religious school and one on a homosexual love relationship between two orthodox Jews in Jerusalem on the same evening, as happened at the last festival (November 2009), might provoke animosity or unease.²³ It is, nevertheless, an

interesting way of challenging Jewish identity. Discussing the Jewish Film Festival in San Francisco, the fiercely independent pioneers Deborah Kaufman and Janice Plotkin had claimed that their festival 'affirmed that secular culture could play a significant role in defining Jewish identity' (Kaufman and Plotkin 2007: 112). It is this very belief on which the VJFF bases its forward-looking work.

Notes

- ¹ This article was completed in the framework of research grant No. 215747 awarded by the 7FP Social Sciences and Humanities Programme of the European Communities for the project 'Art Festivals and the European Public Culture'. All German language material included in this essay was translated into English by the author.
- ² Amy Stone made a similar statement regarding the importance of the Jewish movie: 'America reshaped Judaism and created the magic of movies. Left with made-in-America Jewish institutions offering little to feed the soul, how appropriate that we respond to the power of film. Jewish filmmakers are using film to explore their own issues of Jewish identity, and they're finding a ready audience' (Stone 1997: 48).
- ³ History of the San Francisco Jewish Film Festival, 1980-Present (fest.sjfff.org/about/history).
- ⁴ A Jewish and Israeli film festival existed in Montpellier, France, from 1986 to 1998. The Mediterranean Film Festival, which took place in the same city, gradually took over the programming of Israeli films.
- ⁵ A book in which two pages cover the VJFF was published in conjunction with the 10th anniversary of the institute (see Stifter, Stecher and Bailer-Galanda 2000: 67-8).
- ⁶ A recent study gives interesting insights into Austrians' lukewarm welcome to the homecoming of Jewish exiles (see Reinprecht 2000).

- ⁷ Archive of the Jewish Film Festival, privately owned by the current directors of the festival. Original text of the quote: 'Es ist ein "multikultureller" Staat, in dem die Vielfalt jüdischer Kulturen aus Europa und dem Osten zusammenkommen, in einer feindlichen Umgebung und mit einer (aus "westlicher" Sicht) konservativen Regierung; ein Staat mit all den Problemen, die eine derartige Konstellation mit sich bringt'.
- ⁸ *Arbeiterzeitung*, 5-6 October 1991, reproduced in Stifter, Stecher and Bailer-Galanda (2000: 106). Sabbath times for any day can be calculated at Chabad.org (www.chabad.org).
- ⁹ Press release, no date, signed F. G. Kaczek. The mentioned films are *Tema (The Theme)*, Gleb Panfilov, USSR, 1979), *Lehem (Bread)*, Ram loewy, Israel, 1986), *Ha-Shoter Azulai (The Policeman)*, Ephraim Kishon, Israel, 1970) and *Sallah Shabati (Sallah)*, Ephraim Kishon, Israel, 1964).
- ¹⁰ Festival archive, 1993.
- ¹¹ Festival archive, 1994.
- ¹² The letter was sent to the organisers of the festival by fax on 29 August 1995, reproduced in the catalogue of the 1995 festival, p. 6.
- ¹³ Interview by the author with Frédéric-Gérard Kaczek, 15 September 2009. The archive of the festival also contains faxes exchanged with other Jewish festivals, like that of Montpellier (France), discussing a possible European project together with the BJFF (8 July 1996).
- ¹⁴ Interview by the author with Jack M. Weil on 23 September 2009. A webpage refers to the meeting (www.jewishfilmfestivals.eu).
- ¹⁵ Original text: '[...] jüdische Menschen nicht nur als Opfer und Verfolgte, sondern auch als Akteure in ihrer Zeit, als politische Menschen, die trotz oder wegen ihrer jüdischen Identität sehr bewußt ihr eigenes Leben und jenes anderer gestalten bzw. beeinflussen'.
- ¹⁶ The catalogue of the 1996 festival also included a page entitled

- 'Twice Blessed', by John Clark, a representative of the Association of Austrian Gay Jews.
- ¹⁷ Original text: 'Das palästinensische Filmschaffen steckt noch in den Kinderschuhen — ebenso wie die palästinensische Unabhängigkeit'.
- ¹⁸ Original text: 'Die Macht der Bilder wird hier eingesetzt, um die Vision einer friedlichen Welt zu fördern. Damit befinden sich die Jüdischen Filmtage in der besten österreichischen Tradition, in jener eines Bruno Kreisky, der als erster erkannt hat, daß die Menschen in Israel, um zueinander finden zu können, miteinander reden lernen müssen' (Caspar Einem, Minister of Science and Transport, letter dated 18 May 1998, festival archive).
- ¹⁹ Original text: 'Unter dem Titel "Jüdische Filmwochen bringen Skandalfilm" verurteilt Raimund Fastenbauer, Vorstandsmitglied der IKG: 'Die für die Verbrechen der Täter Verständnis hechelnde Ideologie des Filmes' legitimiere "die Ermordung unschuldiger Menschen in Israel".'.
- ²⁰ Original text: 'Diese holländisch-französisch-deutsche-israelische Koproduktion berührt auf äußerst sensible Weise die Frage nach den Motiven von Selbstmordattentätern. *Paradise Now* stellt aber auch Fragen an uns in Europa, nicht zuletzt, wie wir hier mit Rassismus, Antisemitismus und Fundamentalismus umgehen. Derartige Filme, die provozieren, zum Nachdenken anregen, gehören auf die Jüdische Filmwoche, die nicht nur ein nostalgisches Judenbild von Shtetl und Klezmer-Musik präsentiert, sondern auch das humanistische Bild von Jüdinnen und Juden in der Konfrontation mit den Problemen der heutigen Welt aufzeigt'.
- ²¹ Original text: 'Die Israelitische Kultusgemeinde stellt basierend auf Beschlüssen des Kultusrates fest, dass die diesjährigen "Jüdischen Filmwochen" nicht nur nicht in Kooperation mit der IKG abgehalten wurden, sondern verurteilt ausdrücklich die Vorgehensweise der Verantwortlichen der "Jüdischen

Filmwochen”—in Hinblick auf die politischen Filme hätte ihr Titel eigentlich lauten müssen “Israelisch-Palästinensischen” wenn nicht überhaupt “Palästina-Filmwochen” (see jerome-segal.de/die_gemeinde_dec08_p11.jpg, 9 November 2009).

²² The article is entitled ‘Jüdisches Filmfestival Wien’ (de.wikipedia.org/wiki/J%C3%BCdisches_Filmfestival_Wien). The discussion has been archived on Wikipedia, 27 October 2007 (tinyurl.com/na5j9t).

²³ *Sinner* (Meni Philip, Israel, 2009) and *Einaym Pkuhot* (*Eyes Wide Open*, Haim Tabakman, France/Germany/Israel, 2009).

Works Cited

Decker, Patricia (2009) ‘San Francisco Jewish Film Festival Screening Sparks Soul Searching within Community’, *The Public Press* (5 August). On-line. Available HTTP: <http://tinyurl.com/kmfxaa> (9 November 2009).

Edlinger, Thomas and Stefan Grisseemann (2005) ‘Anschlagkultur - Der palästinensische Selbstmordattentäter-Film “Paradise now” sorgt für Zündstoff - auch in Wien’, *Profil* 36, 45, 196-201.

Fastenbauer, Raimund (2008) ‘Stellungnahme der IKG zu den “Jüdischen Filmwochen”’, *Die Gemeinde*, 633 (Dez), 11.

Festival Catalogue (1995) Vienna Jewish Film Festival. Vienna, Austria.

Festival Catalogue (1996) Vienna Jewish Film Festival. Vienna, Austria.

Festival Catalogue (1998) Vienna Jewish Film Festival. Vienna, Austria.

Friedman, Jonathan C. (2007) *Rainbow Jews: Jewish and Gay Identity in the Performing Arts*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books.

Galliner, Nicola (2004) *Jewish Film Festival Berlin. Filme, Bilder, Geschichten. Die ersten 10 Jahre*. Berlin: Bebra.

Kaufman, Deborah and Janis Plotkin (2007) ‘The Jewish Film Festival’, *Jews and American Popular Culture, Vol. 1 Movies, Radio, and Television*. San Francisco: The San Francisco Jewish Film Festival, 109-22.

Koven, Mikel (1999) “‘You Don’t Have to be Filmish” — The Toronto Jewish Film Festival’, *Ethnologies*, 21, 1, 115-32.

Kurzweil, Edith (1995) ‘The Jewish (?) Film Festival’, *Partisan Review*, 62, 2, 175-8.

Plotkin, Janis, Caroline Libresco and Josh Feiger (1996) ‘Independent Jewish Film’. San Francisco: The San Francisco Jewish Film Festival.

Reinprecht, Christoph (2000) ‘Jewish Identity in Postwar Austria: - Experiences and Dilemmas’, in *Jewish Studies at the Central European University: Public Lectures, 1996-1999*. Budapest: Central European University, 203-15.

Sand, Shlomo (2008) ‘Israel Deliberately Forgets its History’, *Le Monde diplomatique* (September). On-line. Available HTTP: <http://mondediplo.com/2008/09/07israel> (9 November 2009).

___ (2009) *The Invention of the Jewish People*. London: Verso.

Segal, Jérôme (2008) ‘Jüdisches Filmfestival’, *Illustrierte Neue Welt*. Dezember, 10 (see also jerome-segal.de).

___ (2009) ‘La culture juive en Autriche, absence de présence et présence de l’absence’, *Les Temps Modernes*, 64, 654, 90-8.

Stifter, Christian H., Reinhold Stecher and Brigitte Bailer-Galanda (2000) *Bildung gegen Vorurteile: Festschrift aus Anlass des 10jährigen Jubiläums des Jüdischen Instituts für Erwachsenenbildung*. Vienna: Österreichisches Volkshochschularchiv.

Stone, Amy (1997) ‘Reel Stories: Film Festivals Serve up an Easy Route to Judaism’. *Moment*, December, 46-50.

Weisblott, Marc (2009) ‘Toronto Jewish Film Festival: 17 again’. *Eye Weekly* (15 April). On-line. Available HTTP: <http://preview.tinyurl.com/ncjb7n> (9 November 2009).