

## **Social Democrat to the end**

### **Friedrich Stampfer, his life and activities**

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The Stampfer family is not and never has been an ordinary family. Actually, one might well refer to this family as a tribe, meanwhile checking its geographical dispersion, first within the boundaries of the Habsburg Empire and then all over the world.

However, our interest now is not in the history of this family, fascinating as it may be. Our interest now is focused rather on one of this tribe's sons who attracted my attention simply because of his family name - Stampfer. This name must reverberate in the mind of anyone who knows even a little of the history of Zionist activities in Palestine during the end of 19th and beginning of the 20th century. It must reverberate even more strongly in the mind of the auditor if he belongs to the same tribe as I do.

The second half of the 19th century witnessed stormy developments of the histories of most European nations. It started with the famous string of nationalist revolutions, often called the "Spring of Nations". A national spirit conceived in, and inspired by the bourgeois class stirred Nations that lived under politically divided frameworks, ruled by Empires from medieval times. Moved by this spirit, people began to fight for political independence and national self-determination. The same spirit also stirred the peoples of the Balkans; most of them governed by the Habsburg Empire, better known by this time as the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, ruled by its last Emperor, the Kaiser Franz Josef.

An ongoing debate in Zionist history deals with the essence of Zionism. Is Zionism motivated by "positive" or "catastrophic" reasons? In other words, did Zionism receive its motivation mainly from problems faced by Jews, the pogroms and other blood lettings, or did the motivation come from the "positive" influence of the European national movements; movements which, by referring to the "Jewish problem" as a national-political one, wakened the will to solve it the same fashion as manifested by the "Spring of Nations".

It was especially the Balkan and the Habsburg Empire that supplied important material to confirm this "positive" attitude. It was not by chance that people like Rabbi Alkallai began their activity in this region and contributed meaningfully to the Zionist movement in general and to religious Zionism in particular. It was not a coincidence that the words of Rabbi Zvi Hirsch Kalischer found eager ears in that region.

Jehoshua Stampfer absorbed Kalischer's influence while living in Hungary at St. Istvan with his uncle, Eliezer Raab, who corresponded with Kalischer.<sup>1</sup> It is perhaps then no coincidence that Jehoshua Stampfer, one of the first pioneers of the Religious Zionism activities in Palestine and one of the first pioneers and builders of the "Mother of Colonies" - "Petach Tikva" received his first Zionist motivation there.

One must bear in mind when reviewing Jewish history of that period that one can find there more than one crossroads. Jews faced not only the question of whether to remain loyal to religious tradition and continue awaiting the coming of the Messiah rather than placing their faith in emancipation and assimilation. They also faced another major defining moment: Nationality (Zionism) versus Socialism. Each of those roads carried with it the promise of a real solution to the "Jewish Problem". In this study, we will try to show how these crossroads did, in fact, cut straight through the Stampfer family, placing Jehoshua Stampfer, a son of one branch of the tribe, on the national road which led to Zionism while putting Friedrich Stampfer, son of another branch of the family, on the road to socialism.

Perhaps this is the place to say something about the Stampfer family.

There is no doubt about the source of this name. It stems from the town of Stampfen. This town, or rather this little town, lies within present day Slovakia bordering the northern outskirts of Bratislava, and it is now called

"Stupava". As in many other cases, when citizens of the Empire, Jew and non-Jew, had to add a second, family name, the Stampfers choose the name of their home town, just as people who came from Berlin called themselves "Berliner" or those who came from Vienna called themselves "Wiener". The process of choosing family names, (or accepting the imperial clerk's choice of them), began in 1787 as a part of the reforms instituted under Kaiser Josef II.<sup>2</sup>

The Stampfer family, following the general trend, suffered geographical dispersion during the second half of the 19th century and the dispersion grew wider like waves in a pond. Jehoshua Stampfer's parents eventually immigrated to Hungary, to a little town called "Stein am Anger", today called Sombóthi, in the western part of the country. (Sombóthi, by the way, means Sabbath) In the manner of many clergymen, following their economical prospects, Rabbi Benjamin Stampfer and Hanna, his wife, came to live in Stein am Anger while looking for work in a Jewish community and there he became a "Dayan" - a Judge - of the Jewish community.<sup>3</sup> Many other Jews left their villages for altogether different reasons. In the territories of Bohemia-Moravia, where only one son in a family was allowed to marry, many moved to Galicia or Hungary, just across the border, so they would be able to marry and start a family. In that fashion, many of the Stampfer family moved to the territories of the Czech republic of today, especially to the small town of Koloděje nad Lužnicí, or Kalladei as it is pronounced in German. In the citizens' census of the year 1721 there were 65 Jewish Families living in the town and, in fact, formed the majority of the town's inhabitants. In the town's Jewish graveyard, many stones carrying the name of Stampfer can be found. It is in this town that the story of our hero, Friedrich Stampfer, begins.

Edward Stampfer, Friedrich's father, was born in Koloděje. In the list of Koloděje's inhabitants from the years 1870 and 1880, stored in the police archive of the city of Brno, Edward appears under his Hebrew name - Ezekiel. He was born in Koloděje in the year 1823.<sup>4</sup>

In an attempt to follow Ezekiel Stampfer's genealogy we come repeatedly upon names that even the Stampfers of today recognize as common family names: Benjamin, Abraham, Shlomo (Salomon). The Jewish birth lists of Koloděje of 1817-1839 list Ezekiel's father as Abraham Stampfer, his mother's name was Maria (probably Miriam) and his grandfather who witnessed his grandson's circumcision was Benjamin.<sup>5</sup> Jewish inhabitants' lists of that town from the year 1793 list this grandfather, Benjamin, as the son of Moshe Stampfer and his wife Sebila.<sup>6</sup>

Many Jews in Koloděje have the family name, Stamp, and it may very well be that Stamp is simply a shorter version of Stampfer.

The lists from Brno demonstrate the high mobility mentioned above. Friedrich Stampfer's three older brothers, born during their father's first marriage to Rosalinda Fleishman; were each born in a different place. The first son, Bernhard, was born in a small town called Hodonín, (about 50 Km east of Prague), in the year 1865.

The second son of Ezekiel Stampfer, Adolph, was born in Kralovo-Pole, not far from Brno, in the year 1869. The third son, Theodore, was born in Brno itself in the year 1871.

After his first wife died, Ezekiel Stampfer married his second wife, Bertha, who was born in Prague. Bertha was Friedrich's mother. He was born in Brno in the year 1874.<sup>7</sup>

## **Friedrich Stampfer's Family**

Abraham STAMPFER

& Maria

|         Ezechial Edward STAMPFER\* (17 Jul 1823 - )

| b. 17 Jul 1823, Kolodeje (Kalleday), Bohemia

| & Rosalia FLEISCHMANN

| b. Vienna, Austria

| m. 19 Jul 1864, Vienna, Austria

| | Bernhard STAMPFER (23 Dec 1865 - )

| | b. 23 Dec 1865, Hodonin, Czech Republic

| | Adolph STAMPFER (29 Aug 1869 - )

| | b. 29 Aug 1869, Kralovo-Pole, Czech Republic

| | Theodor STAMPFER (8 Apr 1871 - )

| | b. 8 Apr 1871, Brno, Czech Republic

| Ezechial Edward STAMPFER\* (17 Jul 1823 - )

| b. 17 Jul 1823, Kolodeje (Kalleday), Bohemia

| & Bertha HIRSCH

| b. Prague, Czech Republic

| | Friedrich STAMPFER (8 Sep 1874 - )

| | b. 8 Sep 1874, Brno, Czech Republic

| | | Marianne STAMPFER (1924 - )

| | | b. 1924

| | | & LORING

Four years before Friedrich Stampfer's birth, young Jehoshua Stampfer reached Palestine,<sup>8</sup> after walking through the Balkans to Saloniki and from there by boat to Sidon and to Safad and Jerusalem, once again on foot.<sup>9</sup>

In Friedrich Stampfer's home, however, Palestine had probably never been mentioned. Friedrich's father Edward, or Ezekiel Stampfer, was a Jurist; <sup>10</sup>as Friedrich Stampfer writes in his autobiography, "Erfahrungen und Erkenntnisse, Aufzeichnungen aus meinem Leben". The father's profession required secular academic studies and we may easily assume that this fact did not help to bring him closer to Judaism. Therefore, it seems quite clear that Friedrich's parents had moved away from the practice of Judaism and questions of Jewish religion and tradition did not play any significant roll in the family's life.<sup>11</sup> As F. Stampfer writes, other issues altogether filled the family's agenda. Memories of the 1848 revolution were very vivid in the family. His father and two of his mother's brothers had joined the Academic Revolutionary Legion in 1848. The mother was then just a little girl, but she was able to tell many stories concerning that period.<sup>12</sup> To what extent these childhood memories were vivid and meaningful is clearly delineated in Stampfer's autobiography relating to his days in Berlin, when at the age of fifty, he heard the revolutionary German song: "Pulver ist Schwarz, Blut ist rot. Golden flackert die Flamme,"<sup>13</sup>. He remembered hearing it for the first time while sitting on his mother's knees as a child.<sup>14</sup>

Concerning revolutionary emotions, one of Stampfer's childhood memories was from the age of 11 when he witnessed, together with his father, a violent breaking by sabres, of a Czech workers' demonstration, in his hometown, Brno. As a child he hated the wrong done to the workers and the image of the workers chased by the dragoons kept coming back to him during his life as an adult.<sup>15</sup> In any case, from that time on he regarded workers with a sort of amazement and interest. In his younger years he had many opportunities for observing them as the street where he lived served also as a meeting place for workers during evening hours, while a parallel street served at the same time as a meeting place for young people from the "better" parts of the town.

Brno was an industrial town in which the social division paralleled the national one. The proletariat was composed mainly of Czech peasants, speaking only Czech, who only recently had moved into the town, while the bourgeois were mainly German. The Jews then identified themselves usually with the German language and culture. Differences were usually visible in the clothing and general appearance of the different societies. As an 11 years old boy, Stampfer was not politically sophisticated, but he could detect the fact that the workers' situation was bad.

As an adult, he would write that the economic reality of the industrial town was responsible for the fact that he became a socialist. The family's revolutionary tradition together with the town's atmosphere led him to the recognition that freedom is something that one must fight for, armed, if necessary. The arms' industry of Brno and the absolute regime of the Habsburg Empire sharpened his hatred of any kind of tyranny.<sup>16</sup>

On the other hand, we must remember that in his life and political activity he did not live up to his early revolutionary ardor. Even during the years 1918-1919, when it was easy enough for a socialist to get involved

in revolutionary activity in Germany, especially within the political milieu to which he belonged, Stampfer stuck to a rigidly defined social-democracy and opposed radicals, such as the Spartakists. In 1931, he expressed himself sharply in "Vorwaertz", the newspaper of the SPD, on which he had just been offered the place of chief editor. In very clearly formulated sentences, he explained his anti-revolutionary position. He called for active economic and social reforms while being opposed to the Communists and orthodox leftists within the SPD who advocated revolution.. He defined his writing as a warning against a fatalistic faith that was, as he described it, revolutionary in theory, but could actually lead to retreat. The fight over power in the state, he wrote, must not be for the purpose of gaining control of the state, but rather a fight for democracy.<sup>17</sup>

It would seem therefore that socialist elements had been planted in Stampfer's soul in early childhood and those led him in his adolescence to be a socialist fully conscious of his ideology. Nevertheless, his childhood left him with something more; he remained purposefully secular all his life. In Edward (Ezekiel) Stampfer's family, as in many similar Jewish families of the same social milieu and in the same region, a strong identification with German culture and language was prevalent. This identification received an official shape when the family described itself, for the inhabitants' census of 1900, as belonging to the Jewish faith and speaking German.<sup>18</sup> (The definition of belonging to the Jewish faith must be understood only as formal membership of the Jewish congregation, which was demanded by law, and did not have necessarily any religious meaning). This fact expressed itself in the children's education. All four Stampfer children studied in a German gymnasium in Brno.<sup>19</sup>

It would seem, therefore, that Friedrich's father, Ezekiel, had already begun the process by which his son Friedrich would attempt to solve for himself and his family the "Jewish problem"; that is by identification with and assimilation into German culture as expressed in the revolution of 1848.

Friedrich, the youngest son, never had to debate with himself questions regarding his identity. German socialism, as we shall later see, came naturally to him. The Stampfer family atmosphere shaped the foundations of Friedrich Stampfer's personality and outlook. Ignoring Judaism was not an outcome of a personal choice based on ideological values. He was born into a family in which these decisions had already been made. Based on the German identity of the family and his German education, he later developed a very strong German national identity that eventually expressed itself in a strong and unconditional German patriotism. Friedrich testified that, influenced by Bellamy's book, "Memoirs of the Year 2000", he became a socialist at the age 17. Bellamy's book was very popular among the youth at that time. The book challenged the existing assumption that poverty was inevitable and would always prevail. It also carried the message that changing the world for the better was possible and one must act in that cause. Another source of influence was a friend at school. This friend came from a worker's family and was somewhat older. More important, he was a Marxist. Already at this early stage, Stampfer started shaping the special character of his socialism. Marx, as he said, did not make him enthusiastic. However, he was hurt by the way his friend treated him as a "socialist of the spirit". In spite of that, their friendship grew deeper with the years. This friend became later on a Social Democrat senator in Prague.<sup>20</sup> Even though Stampfer was annoyed by his friend's derogative definition of his socialism, it would seem fair to point out that his behavior then, at least at the early stages of his political development, would seem to justify his friend's opinion. Under his friend's influence, he discovered a pub popular with German workers, in which socialist educational activities were taking place. It had a small library that supplied the customers with socialist literature. There he first read Karl Kautski's book, "Marx's Economical Teaching". He noticed that readers' fingerprints marked only the first 20 pages of the book. This indicated to him how difficult the text was for many workers. He, on the other hand, easily grasped its message and that of all of Marx's other works, including "Das Kapital".<sup>21</sup> Therefore, though in memoirs published by the Akademie der Arbeit in Frankfurt am Main, it is stated that it was not reading that brought Friedrich Stampfer to socialism, it would seem that such a description of the process of his political education is inaccurate. Indeed, his childhood experiences and the particular political ambience of his family brought him early to socialism though at first it was a kind of "socialism of the spirit"; but that was only the first station of his political passage. Auto-didactically, he acquired a very broad socialist education.<sup>22</sup> That education influenced him to try and send an article to the socialist weekly in Brno, the

"Volksfreund". This weekly accepted his article; it was published under the signature - F.S. Duly impressed; Edward Rieger, the editor of the "Volksfreund", invited him to join the weekly's staff. Rieger was, as described by Stampfer, a press worker of limited education. In any case, after visiting Rieger, Stampfer joined the weekly although he was still a gymnasium student. One must remember that at that time in Germany and Austria, socialism was still looked upon, at least to some extent, as verging on illegality since the border between socialism and anarchism was unclear.<sup>23</sup> The political condition of the Habsburg Monarchy was such that the police were very sensitive to the danger to a regime poised from the left side of the political map. Therefore it is not surprising that the young student's political activity did not escape the attention of the authorities. They found it easy enough to make use of his poor grades at school (he spent almost all of his time on politics rather than in studying), and caused him to fail at the matriculation examinations. That, of course, placed an obstruction to his applications to academic institutions anywhere in the Empire.<sup>24</sup> It was only the intervention of a liberal minister from Brno, which gave the young man a second chance. Stampfer took matriculation examinations at a gymnasium in Vienna with outstanding results. He was accepted at the University of Vienna, where he studied Law and Political Economics as a full time student.<sup>25</sup> In the University's archive there are details of Stampfer's résumé as well as the fact that, as Stampfer's father was by then dead, his eldest brother, Bernhard, (then already a medical doctor in Brno) had to register as his guardian, as required by law. Stampfer's daughter, Marianne Loring, testifies that the brothers maintained close relations.<sup>26</sup> While studying in Vienna, Stampfer also took a semester course at Leipzig University with the famous economist, Karl Büchler.<sup>27</sup> As an adult, Stampfer saw those years as a time of collecting experiences and adventures that would define his destiny and political development.<sup>28</sup> Indeed, there is no doubt that a very important political cornerstone in his life had been set in place and from which he was never deflected. Though he made his entrance into politics in the Austrian Social Democratic party, Stampfer was never a radical. Marx did not convince him and later he wrote a criticism of Marx: "A great teacher, but a bad educator. His followers had in them lack of patience regarding the masses. They felt themselves to be an intellectual aristocracy and from this point on only a short way leads to sectionalism and dictatorship".<sup>29</sup>

Radical Marxists controlled the Austrian Social Democratic party at that time and the party leaders did not allow opposition. Opinions, such as those Stampfer began to develop, were not tolerated.<sup>30</sup> Under those conditions, Stampfer as a party neophyte, had to be brave indeed to adhere to his independent ideas without deferring to the pressure of the majority and the charisma of the party leaders. It was his first experience of this kind, though certainly not the last.

Close to the turn of the century, Stampfer began a voyage, and not even the wildest imagination could have predicted its end. Several meaningful changes in his personal life occurred at that time. His adolescence was over in more than one way; his parents had both died within a short time of each other and he married for the first time. Bypassing Austrian law, (his first wife was a Catholic and as a Jew he could not marry her), the marriage took place in London.<sup>31</sup> Finally, most meaningfully, he moved to Germany.

It was at that time that Stampfer began mastering the immaturity in his earlier political life. In the Austrian elections of 1897 wider suffrage was instituted; the right to vote was given to all males of 24 years and older. Stampfer himself was still a year too young to vote, however, he had already behind him a great deal of political activity and experience.<sup>32</sup> Right after the elections, Stampfer served the party as a spokesperson, mostly in small workers' meetings in various factories. In his memoirs, he admitted that his ambition then was to develop the art of manipulating the masses through his speeches. However, when he actually had the opportunity to really do so and very successfully at that, he suddenly felt ashamed. He swore never to do it again; history bears witness that he kept his promise.

His subsequent political activity could be characterized more as that of a writer than that of a public speaker.<sup>33</sup> It may be noted that his attitude demonstrated an integrity that is not always typical of politicians. His integrity is further validated by his journalistic activity during that period while editing a non-party newspaper. A newspaper, the "Bruenner Sonntagzeitung", was published in Brno and the owners did not like the editor's work. They offered the job to Stampfer. The offer led him to serious self-examination; should he,

as a Social Democrat, become the editor of a bourgeois paper? Moreover, should he accept the money proffered? For the first time in his life, somebody had offered to pay him for his writing, but that seemed to threaten corruption. After consulting his friends in the party, he accepted the job. However, it did not last long. A few months later, he became convinced that if he wanted to remain true to his principles he could not go on editing a paper dedicated to certain political values while belonging to a party espousing different standards altogether. The paper's staff respected his decision and honored him for it; he left under the friendliest conditions.<sup>34</sup>

Before chronicling Stampfer's history in Germany, attention should be paid to the outstanding political courage he so conspicuously manifested during his years in Leipzig. As a young man, making his first steps in the party, he allowed himself to speak up openly even if it meant getting involved in an open dispute with the unquestioned leader of the Austrian Social Democratic party, Dr. Victor Adler.

Immediately after the end of the semester in Leipzig, Stampfer returned to Brno for a short intermezzo before moving to Germany for good. In Brno, he continued reporting for the "Leipziger Volkszeitung". He reported about the situation in the Austrian Social Democratic Party. Since in the Habsburg Empire the Austrian Social Democratic party too suffered from the problem of a multitude of nationalities in a single framework, each trying to fulfill their separate national interests and rights. The Czechs were in the majority. It was only natural that other nationalities in the party supported internationalism and looked to the German language as their lingua franca. They chose as their leader a German, Dr. Victor Adler. The Czechs, on the other hand, had amassed by then enough strength to make them confident of imposing their national identity on the party. Adler opposed them very strongly; being very charismatic and dominant, he managed to enforce his will on the party. Stampfer reported the whole story for his paper in Leipzig and sharply criticized Adler. His exposition of the "dirty laundry" to the whole world enraged the party leaders. In reaction, Austrian party papers attacked Stampfer and at the party's convention in Brno, after suffering harsh criticism by Adler himself, he was deprived of the right to speak to the convention. The "Leipziger Volkszeitung" gave its readers a full description of the events, as did the chief editor of the Berlin "Vorwärts". As a result, the German Social Democratic party sided with Stampfer and the way became open for his acceptance into its circle.<sup>35</sup>

His move to Germany involved not only studying at the University of Leipzig; he also joined the Social Democratic newspaper, the "Leipziger Volkszeitung" of which Dr. Bruno Schönlink was then chief editor and the Breslau delegate at the Reichstag as well. Many considered Schönlink to be the pre-eminent party journalist in Germany. Schönlink and his staff warmly accepted the young Austrian as the new chief editor. This favorable reception, in April 1900, was crucial for Stampfer's acceptance into German party affairs.<sup>36</sup> It was in that manner that Stampfer began the process that would lead him to total German cultural identification, and soon afterwards, to full German national identification. His bond with the German ethos would not change until his death in spite of the upheavals in German history including those of the Nazi era, World War II, and his personal fate.

The amount of time he devoted to his studies during that period was limited. Very soon, he plunged altogether into party life.<sup>37</sup> Germany impressed him very much; sharply and concisely, he compared Vienna and Berlin, writing that Vienna had always an atmosphere of an operetta, while Berlin was always fundamentally heavy and serious.<sup>38</sup>

### **The German chapter in Stampfer's life**

His strong desire to move to Germany did not blur Stampfer's acute critical gaze even toward the object of his political identification, the Social Democratic party. He did not fail to spot elements in the party line that had been targets for Marx's sharp criticism long before his time. Referring to the party in Leipzig, he characterized it, in spite of its radical reputation, as behaving like a poodle.<sup>39</sup> He described the party's functionaries as

looking more like "petit bourgeois" than activists capable of leading a street demonstration, not to speak of a revolution.

In Leipzig, he tells us in his autobiography<sup>40</sup>, party members looked upon revolution as a natural phenomenon that must inevitably occur. They therefore saw no need to invest extraordinary efforts in order to make it happen. It is interesting to note that the new arrival, young as he was, permitted himself such a "seasoned" view of the party. In his memoirs, he wrote with a touch of mockery: "Children, children, dreaming about the dictatorship of the Proletariat while being so far from real thoughts of power".<sup>41</sup> The party's faction at the Reichstag also gained his condemnation. He saw it as too petit bourgeois and its speakers as only average. The solitary orator of any genius, Stampfer writes, was Bebel.<sup>42</sup>

He was not, of course, the only one criticizing the party; the same analysis was even heard from outside the socialist movements; the radicals within the Social Democratic party typically held that view. The fact that Stampfer, a non-Marxist, made that kind of critique demonstrates an open and non-conformist manner of thought. He never thought in fixed formulae. He described himself as one who had never been an orthodox Marxist. On the other hand, he never supported Bernstein, which is to say that he did not accept "revisionism" in socialism. He described himself rather as a pragmatist.<sup>43</sup> Pragmatist or not, he adhered to his ideas even when they were put to the test, as they were when he was invited to join a monthly magazine planned by the party's circle of intellectuals. He gladly accepted the invitation. However, when someone in the circle suggested that the group officially join the revisionist stream, he strongly opposed the proposal. He stressed that instead of waiting for the revolution to arrive sometime in the future, they must bring it closer by deeds done in the present. He said that the deeds must be in the form of an ongoing struggle to improve workers' conditions and in a constant striving for world peace within a democratic political framework<sup>44</sup>. In spite of his pragmatism, the content and ideas of socialist revisionism were far more congenial to him than were those of revolutionary socialism.

Stampfer did not criticize the party's theoretical points of view alone. Indeed, he had much to say and write regarding the party's approach to the issues of the day. Among other things, in retrospective, he criticized, after fleeing Germany, the way the party had ridiculed the Kaiser's bombastic speech before the German soldiers while sending them to China to take part in the "Boxer War". He compared it to the way many treated Hitler "

As to his stance regarding the Nazis, Stampfer did not deny that he had been mistaken, especially on the issue of Nazi Jewish policy. Before the Nazi era even some of his friends within the intellectual circle had more than once made anti-semitic comments. Nevertheless, as time passed, so he tells us, they became political radicals and, regarding the Jewish question, even philo-semitic. This phenomenon, he says, was the reason for his mistake about the Nazis. He had supposed that the same process would occur even within the Nazi ethos <sup>46</sup>

It is abundantly clear that from his first days in politics, Stampfer's main political arena was in journalistic activities; political journalism became a way of life for him.

Stampfer's political activity on the eve of World War I as well as during the war could serve as a model of the German Social Democratic party's policies during that period.

In 1920, when the war and the revolutionary interlude that followed it were already history, Stampfer wrote that the German social democratic movement always looked, under heavy pressure for correct responses although they did not always find them. The party always strove for peace not arrogant militarism, for democracy not civil war, for socialism not declining economic conditions that would eventually lead to a revolutionary solution.<sup>47</sup>

In spite of what Stampfer wrote one must consider the following: the Social Democratic party, then the largest party in the Reichstag, did not use the forces at its disposal, neither in the Reichstag nor in the streets, to prevent war. Instead, it actually linked itself to the nationalistic wave that swept Germany into the war. Only several days before the declaration of war the party began organizing a mass anti-war demonstration. The



nationalistic parties called for an anti-peace demonstration; the demonstration planned by the Social Democrats never took place;<sup>48</sup> the rest of the story is well known.

Among the Socialists, there were those who hoped that war would bring to the Homeland what the party's Struggle could not - a democratic Germany. It may be that Stampfer shared those hopes. In any case, as the war erupted, he demonstrated patriotism par excellence; though still an Austrian citizen he did not try to avoid military service, in spite of his age, forty years old, and his poor health. He even served on the Italian front. After one year, in very bad physical condition, he was discharged and he returned home to Berlin.<sup>49</sup>

As previously stated, Stampfer's attitude regarding the war, and his behavior during wartime, reflect that of his political party and, actually, the entire European Socialist movement, most especially the socialist parties in France and Germany. They slithered from elevated anti-war declarations, condemning the war as a Capitalistic exercise and delineating the methods by which Proletariat could prevent it, to a thoroughly jingoistic stance. The socialists enlisted, wore their uniforms, and on both sides defended their homelands and fell en masse on the battlefields.

### **Patriotism par excellence**

#### **On the Eve of World War I:**

On the eve of World War I, Stampfer and his friends sought for a situation in which a democratic Germany would cooperate with France and England in maintaining world peace. He was convinced that a major struggle was drawing near; he wrote an essay on that subject at the end of July 1914, which then served as a motivation for the vote of the Social Democrats on August 4 in the Reichstag. In his essay, he included a call to the workers in which he used a long-established German hatred of Russia as raw material for the purpose of further cultivation of patriotic fervor and support for the war. The majority of the party, with which Stampfer agreed, hoped that the cooperation and loyalty of the proletariat would lead to the democratization of the monarchist regime. Their demand was for peace without any annexation of territories and with no demands for compensation. Their political opposition did not accept those demands. As a result, the SPD entered the most difficult crisis in its history and shortly afterwards disintegrated. The party found itself in 1918 facing a dead end. It had to deal, on the one hand, with organizing the outcome of the defeat and, on the other hand, as quickly as possible to terminate the revolution, which it had not supported in the first place. In cooperation with the Catholic Center and the Free Liberals parties, and pitted against the radical leftists and the radical political right, the SPD founded the Weimar Republik. The republic was never, in fact, a political goal of the German Social Democratic Party. As Stampfer wrote: "The party was against the Kaiser. But it was never republican, if that meant supporting the "Republic of Capital".<sup>50</sup>

On a personal level, Stampfer had his doubts regarding the question of the party's place and duties during the war and after the defeat. About a year after returning from Italy, but still during the war, he edited the party paper, the "Vorwärts", and supported a policy of implementing peace without surrender while opposing the ultra-chauvinism of the Pan-German radicals of the political right. This approach was the cause of many clashes with the military censor. After the victory of the revolution in Russia, in the autumn of 1917, he supported peace in the east while strengthening of the western front, meanwhile expressing readiness for peace, "with no winners or losers". When, in Vienna and Budapest, mass demonstrations in support of the Russian revolution took place and the censor did not allow publication of the events, Stampfer disregarded the censor. As a result, the authorities closed the "Vorwärts" for some time.<sup>51</sup>

Stampfer even strongly opposed the party's joining the government after the war. He asserted that the party must take its place at the head of revolution rather than at the government's tail. This was a very brave statement, resembling those of his younger days in Austria. On the other hand, Ebert, who was then the leader of the SPD, managed to convince the majority of the party's leadership and party's representatives in the Reichstag to join the government. When the debate was over and it was clear that Ebert had prevailed, Stampfer shook his hand saying: "Maybe you are right".<sup>52</sup> That incident makes it clear that Stampfer was

undeniably more of a democrat than a revolutionary. Like many others in his party, he began the war with very heated anti-war proclamations but subsequently, after the war, advocated joining the government.. At the war's end, when the time came for a peace conference, Stampfer took, as we shall see, an ultra patriotic stand.

### **The peace conference of Versailles**

Stampfer arrived at Versailles as a journalist attached to the German delegation.<sup>53</sup> Even on the way to Versailles, he demonstrated outstanding patriotism in his dispatches. Their journey took them through what had been combat zones in which signs of destruction were abundant. Stampfer was convinced that the Allies had premeditated the route in order to prepare the German delegation for the compensation demands <sup>54</sup>

It is therefore understandable that his reports from the conference were written in an angry mood. He described the German delegation's position as that of an accused criminal in court. He criticized strongly the fact that the German delegation received the Allies' demands in writing and was required to respond in the same way, thus not leaving room for negotiations of any kind.<sup>55</sup> While ignoring Germany's part in causing World War I, he wrote with a great pathos about Germany's cultural tradition as compared to that of a militaristic France: "Marshal Fouché sat behind Clemenceau, while the German delegation was unaccompanied by any military representation. Behind it sat Fichte and Hegel, Lassalle and Marx. The losers are not powerless and from their spiritual tradition, new forces flow."<sup>56</sup>

Since the conference ended the way it did, it was only natural that Stampfer's first article on returning home began with the words: "I come from Versailles, the place where we were looking for peace and found war."<sup>57</sup>

Consistent in his feelings and ideas, he left his post as chief editor of "Vorwärts" immediately after the German government surrendered to "the dictate of Versailles",<sup>58</sup> only to return to the post a short time later at the request of the party's central committee.<sup>59</sup> He was again chief editor but had not changed his mind. He was always certain that any unbiased research would prove that German imperialism was not more awkward, or stupid and murderous than that of any of the other Imperial powers in 1914. Only Germany, however, suffered the consequences and alone received the blame for the outbreak of the war. As a true German patriot, he continued to argue that the day would come when Germany would demolish the legend created by her enemies; how "the sheep conquered the German wolf".<sup>60</sup>

### **The Weimar epoch**

Stampfer, along with many other party members, admitted that the Republic was not high on the party's wish list. Together with the majority in the party, he hoped for a process of democratization of the monarchy.<sup>61</sup> Scheidemann's famous proclamation "through the window" left the party, as well as all other political factions, facing a fait accompli. The fact that the party was in effect the leading component of the state, forced it to mobilize all its resources to carry the burden of the lost war, and very soon to face the choice forced on it by the radical leftists of the party; as Stampfer described it, to choose an anti- revolutionary course. The revolutionary intermezzo, the cooperation of the party with the Catholic Center and the Free Liberals, and his own political agenda cost Stampfer dearly. The revolutionaries accused Stampfer of being an accomplice in the murder of the Spartakists' leaders, Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht. On Stampfer's behalf and, judging from all we know of his personal history, planning the murder of political opponents had never been his style and certainly cannot be true regarding the murder of Luxemburg and Liebknecht. In his later autobiographical writings, Stampfer never hid his not altogether positive attitude concerning Luxemburg. One must assume that, if he had her death on his conscience, he would have certainly tried to conceal those feelings. In his autobiography,<sup>62</sup> he wrote about his suspicions regarding Mehring and Luxemburg. On the other hand, he tells us that, although many accused her of being a police secret agent, he had not believe it

and never had any doubts about her integrity. In another chapter of his book,<sup>63</sup> he tells us that it was he who succeeded in releasing Luxemburg and Liebknecht from jail during the republic's first days, saying at the time, "Three of us in government and two in jail cannot be acceptable!" and indeed they were freed.

On the first morning of the January 1919 revolution, he managed to stop the maltreatment of the first revolutionary prisoners and set free a woman who had been suspected of being Rosa Luxemburg.<sup>64</sup> In the atmosphere of bitter rivalry and suspicions between the antagonists, once members of the same political party, it is easy to understand how the Spartakists and their successors, the KPD, evolved such severe accusations against Stampfer. In fact, it may very well be that Stampfer's visit, on that morning at the barracks in the Belle Alliance Straße, gave them a good reason for it. In any case, we may think what we like about the SPD and its policy during the January revolution, however, we do not consider that Stampfer or anybody else in the party's leadership had anything to do in organizing the murder.

Another crisis, Kapp's Putsch, had to be addressed before Stampfer could begin his normal activities. On the first morning of the Putsch, the extremists of the right captured the "Vorwärts" building. When Stampfer arrived at the building, there were soldiers with swastikas on their helmets gathered at the front door. He assembled some of his staff members in a nearby restaurant, dealt them small amounts of money and determined some meeting points and underground journalistic procedures. The next meeting took place near the Potsdam rail station, which the SPD had setup as its response center. Party activists were careful not to visit their homes for the next several days, until the general strike of Germany's workers eventually put an end to the Putsch.<sup>65</sup>

Stampfer's days of "normal" Weimar activity began 1920 when he was chosen as one of the party's delegates to the Reichstag.<sup>66</sup> Additionally, since February 1920 and for many years afterwards, he functioned as the "Vorwärts" chief editor as well as a member of the central committee of the SPD faction in the Reichstag.<sup>67</sup> Yet he did not enter the Reichstag as a delegate from a local district. He was a nominee of the party's Central Committee and as such his membership in the Reichstag depended at every election on the final vote count, including the division of surplus votes.<sup>68</sup> Actually, his entering the party's Central Committee 1925 carried similar elements, as it was an outcome of his appointment as chief editor of the "Vorwärts".<sup>69</sup> Trying to define the nature of his political activity at the party as well at the national level, we can sum up by saying that he was a man of words and formulations. He was the instigator of the resignation ultimatum to the Kaiser<sup>70</sup>; in 1922, he became a member of the political programming committee of the SPD.<sup>71</sup> His journalistic work influenced his speaking activities even while he was a member of the Reichstag. As he wrote of himself, his 18 years of journalism during which he covered the Reichstag served as a very good school for his activity there, where he served as a member the foreign affairs committee.<sup>72</sup> His activity as an SPD delegate in the Reichstag was also marked by his excellent ability as a formulator of policy. On many occasions, he devised the SPD faction's decisions; in this field, he was in his element and it would seem that that was the reason that he preferred his work within the framework of the faction to that of his labour in the Reichstag in general. He defined the parliament at these times as being in a constant deterioration, mostly owing to the actions of the Nazis and the Communists.<sup>73</sup>

However, the critical problems of the SPD did not then lie within the Reichstag. It was rather in its inability to deal with the critical conditions in Germany in the years of the great economic crisis that began in 1929. A national rescue plan was necessary in order to cope with the grave conditions. Nevertheless, although the SPD had, so Stampfer thought, the best chance of implementing such a plan, it was, like most of the other political parties, paralyzed by the fear of the raging inflation and therefore could not successfully formulate a plan that would successfully convince the German working class of its efficacy. Stampfer thought that this was the main reason for the republic's collapse<sup>74</sup>

It was not only in that matter that the SPD failed during the last chapter of the republic's existence. While there is no doubt that the KPD was heavily responsible for the manner in which the Nazis took control of the state, one cannot ignore the SPD's part in the process. Stampfer himself took an active part in negotiations with the communists as well as with the Soviet embassy, aiming to reach at least a truce between the two

German parties. These negotiations took place from the end of 1931. However, as he described it, the KPD considered the SPD "the spearhead of fascism", and so any agreement was impossible right from the start. In this situation, said Stampfer: "It's up to us alone to lead the fight for freedom, as without it socialism cannot exist. We lead this fight for the whole working class, even those who at the moment opposes us".<sup>75</sup>

As the Nazis came to power, a new chapter in Stampfer's life began, one of 15 years of exile in the main. Nevertheless, just before Hitler was nominated, in a meeting of the SPD's central committee and its parliamentary faction, he formulated the party's resolve; the party would support any government, which would commit itself to act against anarchy and to defend Germany's laws. As he was about to inform the press regarding the SPD's decision, he heard loud outcries: "Hitler is appointed"!<sup>76</sup>

That was for him the beginning of a dark epoch.

## **Hitler**

In the beginning, there were those who still deluded themselves, and he among them, that they would be allowed political activities. The fact that, until February 26, it was possible to have political meetings encouraged these delusions. In fact, he himself was the speaker at a political meeting on that same day, but was arrested immediately afterwards, only to be quickly released by some embarrassed police officers.

On February 27, the party had meeting commemorating the 50th anniversary of Karl Marx's death. As Arthur Criespien, whom the party had appointed as the main speaker, was prohibited by the authorities from speaking, Stampfer replaced him. He opened by defining the difference between a Marxist and an anti-Marxist. In order to be the first, he said, one must know a great deal; to be the second, one does not need any knowledge at all. Suddenly a police officer proclaimed the meeting closed. The crowd in the hall, started shouting "down with Hitler!" and went on shouting while leaving and even on the streets. The editorial staff of the "Vorwärts" thought that what had been denied thousands in the meeting would nonetheless be allowed tens of thousands of readers. Hence, they decided to publish the speech. As Stampfer was sitting at his table to edit the speech, he received the announcement about the fire at the Reichstag. A special announcement was prepared saying that it is the party's greatest interest that the people responsible for the arson would be found as soon as possible. Later that night, trucks with police officers arrived, stopped the printing presses and took away the already printed newspaper. That marked the end of the newspaper of the SPD in Germany until after World War II. Four months after the police raid the newspaper, renamed "Neuer Vorwärts", was reincarnated in Prague.<sup>77</sup>

The SPD newspapers ceased printing on February 27 1933, but the party's leadership still functioned and Stampfer used the Vorwärts building as an alternative apartment while he closed his family's apartment and slept each night in a different hiding place. That type of existence continued until several party members came to fetch him by car and told him that the cabinet had made a decision to arrest him; they drove him to a prepared hideout. The cabinet based its decision to arrest him on a letter he had written to foreign journalists, in which he wrote that the alleged KPD-SPD conspiracy to set fire to the Reichstag was a lie. One must look, he wrote in that letter, in another direction altogether. Victor Schiff asked V. Neurath, the foreign minister, to intervene on Stampfer's behalf; the minister promised that things would settle down after a short interval. The arrest order was cancelled and Stampfer resumed his work for a while and was even again elected to the Reichstag on March 5th; being Jewish, he had already been deprived of his right to vote. <sup>78</sup>

Soon it became clear that political activists, who carried a double onus by being Jews and leftists at the same time, could not go on living in Germany as free people; certainly they could not carry on their legal political activity. Stampfer found the situation very difficult to accept. However, right after the March 23 meeting of the Reichstag, in which the SPD faction could still take part, (the communists could not do so and hence their faction was not represented at the meeting),<sup>79</sup> Stampfer saw to it that his wife and daughter were sent to safety in Prague. The issue of escape of activists, wanted by the authorities as well as others in a state of high risk, was still under debate. Stampfer was among those who opposed fleeing and he made his position known

at two SPD conferences in April and May 1933. At the first conference, on April 26, he managed, together with the rest of the party's leadership, to attain an anti-emigration decision. That decision did not last more than four days. On May 4th, the party's leadership, which had become younger during the short time between the two conferences, decided that Stampfer, together with two other members of the party leadership, should escape from Germany. The new and younger leadership considered Stampfer and his two companions unsuitable for underground activity.<sup>80</sup> Nevertheless, even after that assessment, Stampfer took a risk in coming back to Germany to take part in the party's Saarbrücken conference on May 14 1933. Two days after that meeting, he continued on to Berlin, together with another member, Hans Vogel, as delegates of the conference; their task was to try to prevent the party's faction in the Reichstag from reaching Hitler with a peace offer. <sup>81</sup>Their mission failed. An important debate took place regarding taking part in the Reichstag at all. In that meeting of the faction, only 65 out of 120 members of the Reichstag took part. Stampfer argued strongly against the SPD taking part in the Reichstag, but 48 of the members then present voted in the affirmative under the condition that the party would have the right to make public declarations. To make the disgrace even worse, Goering brutally announced that under no circumstances would the SPD be able to make public proclamations in the Reichstag. Stampfer and Vogel left the meeting quite shocked.

Two young activists waited for them by the building's entrance and drove them to the Czech border. On the morning of May 18, they safely reached Czechoslovakia.<sup>82</sup> Stampfer's 15 years of life as an immigrant began.

Writing after the war, Stampfer candidly admitted the SPD's blunders. In his book - mit dem Gesicht nach Deutschland, (facing Germany)<sup>83</sup> he wrote that the party's leadership, chosen to advance parliamentary democracy, was not ready to deal with its almost hopeless semi-legal situation. The leadership, however, wanted to continue the attempt to lead a legal parliamentary opposition. In this manner, it hoped to defend its people and their supporters from the ongoing terror; the hope proved false.

For the members of the SPD leadership in exile, as well as for Stampfer himself, the first phase of exile, in Czechoslovakia, began.

Although the SPD in the Czech exile occupied itself with anti-Nazi activity and Stampfer described that activity and its procedures in his writings, he himself was involved in other fields. He became a member and was one of the founders of the leadership in exile, the SOPADE. SOPADE operations began in June 1933; in it, Stampfer represented the traditional Social Democratic reformist line. On June 22<sup>end</sup> 1933, the Nazi regime began severe persecutions of the SPD in Germany. Any party activities were prohibited. A new wave of terror commenced in which 3000 party members were arrested, including 5 members of the Berlin leadership. From that moment on the SOPADE comprised the sole leadership and voice of German social democracy.<sup>84</sup>

Stampfer's second field of activity was journalism, which gradually became his major and favored pursuit. He founded and edited the party's new organ in exile, the "Neue Vorwärts", which continued being published by the "Graphia" publishing house in Karlsbad<sup>85</sup> until the end of 1937. But the Czech government was under constant German pressure for letting the exile SPD operate from Czech territory and in May 1938 the SOPADE had to move to Paris and take the Neue Vorwärts with them. The move was made possible with the help of the socialist Frenchman, Léon Blum. The SOPADE kept publishing the newspaper in France until 1940. German readers could find in it news from inside Germany as well as the party's publications. The weekly paper printed up to 10,000 copies a week. The weekly's main efforts were in propaganda and defense of the leadership's policy in exile. That effort, known as the "Truth Offensive", was smuggled into the Reich for the benefit of anti-Nazi activists.<sup>86</sup> Stampfer, while in exile in Czechoslovakia, in addition to editing the Neue Vorwärts, edited another party organ and completed a book, "die vierzehn Jahre der Ersten Deutschen Republik", (14 years of the first German republic). This book attempted to evaluate the period of the Weimar republic. Stampfer succeeded in publishing the book only in 1947.

Concerning leadership activities, even while in exile, Stampfer went on taking a part in the effort to reach anti-Nazi cooperation agreements between all parts of the political left. In France, they managed to build a combined framework, to which the Prague leadership could agree and to which several socialist, but not communist, groups from Germany and Austria were also in agreement. These manoeuvres enabled Stampfer, from 1938 to 1939, to join a group called "Thomas Mann Ausschuß". With regard to the communists, although he did not trust them, Stampfer continued, though without success, demanding, as he had done in Germany, a mutual non-aggression agreement<sup>87</sup> even while opposing a socialist-communist political framework.

As we have already mentioned, May 1938 marked the beginning of the second, French, chapter of the exile of Stampfer and other German Social Democrat leaders which continued until the German occupation of France in the year 1940. Those activities were not terribly striking but for the strengthening of his connections with the British Labor party. Stampfer's part was to deal mainly with building ties with the American Labor movements, especially the Jewish Labor movements, in the USA. Those connections proved to be very important when the Nazis occupied France. The occupation denoted the third chapter of the exile of the leaders and activists of the German Social Democratic party, the Anglo-American chapter. With the help of Stampfer's connections, the SPD leadership in Paris received from the Jewish Labor Committee \$ 225,000. The money was very helpful in the financing of the party's organ in France as well as its anti-Nazi activities within the Reich. Part of the money financed the emigration from occupied France of SPD activists, including Stampfer. Stampfer visited the US twice and his connections there contributed to creating American pressure, especially within the American and Jewish Labor movements, for the raising of funds which helped in the rescue operation of SPD refugees from occupied France.<sup>88</sup>

Stampfer took part in political discussions between the SPD and British and French statesmen regarding the anti-Nazi struggle. In the discussions, the SPD committed itself as a partner in the struggle. However, already at this early stage, the SPD stressed the principle of preserving, after the war, German territories within 1933 borders. Stampfer was one of the most audacious fighters for that principle. The stance served the party well in the party's propaganda aimed at the Homeland. These issues were the cause of sharp criticism, aimed at the party in general and Stampfer in particular. It tarred them with German chauvinism, refusing responsibility for the outbreak of World War I and for denying partial responsibility for the fall of the Weimar republic and rise of the Nazis to power.<sup>89</sup> On May 1st 1940, Stampfer returned from his second visit to the USA. He came back to Paris on May 9th and on May 12th he published the last Paris edition of the "Neues Vorwärts". The French authorities arrested Stampfer as well as other leaders and activists of the SPD, only to set them free in response to heavy American pressure. Stampfer and a group of other activists managed to reach Lisbon via Barcelona after crossing the Pyrenees on September 8.<sup>90</sup> Examining the details one can get the impression that we deal here with a group of adamant and experienced conspirators. However, in fact, these people were traveling with their families and we can assume that their concern for their wives and children was indeed disconcerting. The frightening news concerning the rapid advance of the German army did not make things any easier. In any case, the escape, as seen through the eyes of Marianne Stampfer, Friedrich's 16 years old daughter, <sup>91</sup>gives the impression of a group of tired, nervous and helpless men rather than an image of leaders or heroes certain of their struggle. At any rate, the happy end of the escape saw the hero of our story at the beginning of his third and last chapter of exile, in America.

In October 1940 Stampfer arrived in New York. He had benefited from the help of organizations that were active in helping Social Democrats escape from southern France. To further that aim, the organizations had collected money and arranged visas to the US.<sup>92</sup> As stated above, the American Jewish political left had exercised a great deal of influence in order to facilitate the rescue operation.<sup>93</sup>

Stampfer's endeavors in America, as always, were mainly journalistic. Yet, as one of the senior activists of the SPD in the west, he also took part in diplomatic discussions. Already in 1939, before escaping France, he was a senior collaborator in the merger of the SOPADE and the GLD (German Labor Delegation), as well as in building strong connections with American trade unions. He was also an associate in the German language group of the Social Democratic federation in the USA. He wrote for the "Neue Volkszeitung", and later became its editor in chief.<sup>94</sup>

The German Social Democratic party in exile was active principally in two major centers in the West, England and the USA. The party activists moved ceaselessly between the two western centers. Their efforts were divided between German refugees and American and British labor movements, including Jewish labor organizations in the USA. The main target of these ongoing efforts was to reach a certain level of unity, or at least an agreement to cooperate in the field of anti-Nazi activity. Those issues had a great deal of importance even beyond the political sphere. The greater were the split German exile groups, the stronger was the competition among them for their share of the American and British financial support. In the search for cooperation, Stampfer played a central role. It was mainly through Stampfer's efforts when finally, at the end

of 1941, the SOPADE and the GLD achieved an agreement that brought the two groups closer, but left the communists out. That development had importance even beyond the matter of the German exile, to wit: in the strengthening of anti-communism within the American Trade Unions.<sup>95</sup>

Stampfer played an important political role by being one of the senior, if not the most senior speaker addressing the issue of the Allies' post war attitude with regard to Germany. As became ever more clear that Germany was close to losing the war, the concerns regarding the Allies' territorial, prisoner of war, and related policies after victory, Stampfer became more concerned. Without hesitation he attacked the anti-German policies which he anticipated that the Allies would enact, especially those that put collective blame on the German people. From the British side, the sharpest attack came from Churchill's secretary, Lord Vansittart. As early as 1942, Stampfer reacted sharply to Vansittart's position. In October 1944, Stampfer published in the *Neue Volkszeitung* a strong reaction to Vansittart's statement, that he would like to see the Germans give in, "on their knees", begging for collective forgiveness. Stampfer wrote: "All of them? All of them, the Germans in Dachau and Buchenwald too? Those who were shot, decapitated, hanged? The persecuted? Those who were deprived of their citizenship? All those who were hunted by Goering like hunted animals? What of his partners in the hunt? Not even one of the Foreign Office masters? We, on our knees? After you, Lord Vansittart, after you!"<sup>96</sup>

Stampfer's words brightly illuminated his position regarding the accusation of the whole of the German people. He saw in it a deliberate failure to take into account the significant anti-Nazi struggle by German labor movements, first and foremost his own party. He regarded Vansittart's position as sinful and directed against the German victims of the Nazi persecution. Stampfer was perhaps more extreme than any of his compatriots in advancing a view supporting the significance and extent of the anti-Nazi struggle of German proletariat. In his autobiography, he admitted<sup>97</sup> that at the beginning of his exile he still believed that eventually the German people would succeed in freeing itself from the Nazi Tyranny. Consequently, he continued in the attempt to promote sympathy for those German people who had not identified themselves with Hitler. He failed to grasp that his view was unacceptable to the Allies, but persisted in its promotion even during the bitter arguments regarding the postwar fate of the German people and territories. He strongly rejected Morgenthau's plan to limit German industry; he feared the repeat of the errors of Versailles.<sup>98</sup> He fought ferociously against the planned return of territories annexed by the Germans and later against the mass deportations of Germans from those territories.

He foresaw the fate of postwar Europe quite accurately. As early as 1943, he predicted the Soviet effort to dominate Europe. "The end of war" he wrote in August 1943, "will see three winners: America, England and Soviet Russia. The US can see to it, if she wishes, that none of the three would gain total power. Europe should not be American or British, but certainly not Russian!"<sup>99</sup> In a peaceful postwar Europe, he wanted, after a rapid period of normalization, an independent Germany as part of a Europe united in cooperation. Europe would then require American diplomatic and material support against Soviet attempts to gain hegemony.

In January 1947, he took part in formulating the manifesto of the German Social Democrats still in America. They demanded that an all party German delegation take part in a peace conference as well as the freeing all prisoners of war. They called for the Allies to remove all occupying forces, to annul all territorial changes and deportations. The manifest required that the victors cease slandering the German people and that the Allies should begin a new diplomacy of conciliation and understanding.<sup>100</sup> The manifest managed to ignore the horrors done by the Nazis, including the Holocaust.

This last point is particularly interesting; although Stampfer was a great German patriot and an outstanding patriot of the German social democracy, his consistency in deliberately overlooking the issue of the Holocaust is none the less remarkable. However, in doing so, he was not exceptional among his friends of the German exile in the West. Even after many details of the Holocaust became well known and the Allies published their joint declaration on December 17 1942 in all three Capitals, the German refugees were in no hurry to react. Stampfer's newspaper referred to the Holocaust on back pages under minor headlines. Even the appeals made to the paper by Jewish leftist organizations that had assisted the German refugees' escape from France and their absorption in the US were largely ignored.<sup>101</sup> The refugees maintained consistently that the German people were not a partner to Nazi crimes; perhaps, the Germans were victims, even more than the Jews.<sup>102</sup>

Only half a year after the Allies joint declaration, at their conference in New York, July 1943, did the German Social Democrats issue their own statement. They declared that the murder of the Jews had been one of the most terrifying chapters in human history and those responsible must be punished.<sup>103</sup> While the statement appears impressive, one cannot ignore the long silence of six months, not the silence of the German Social Democrats, and especially not that of Stampfer who had never denied his Jewish origin.

### **After the war**

Stampfer visited the British and American occupied zones of Germany during July and August 1947.<sup>104</sup> Returning to the US, he published his impression in the *New Yorker Volkszeitung*. He criticized strongly the manner in which the Allies had fought the war, particularly the massive bombardments of German cities. He censured even more strongly the position of the Allies regarding the question of collective blame, prisoners of war, and the dismemberment of Germany's territories. The fate of the social, political and economic regimes that would in the future prevail in Germany were to him even more important.<sup>105</sup> His visit as well as his published work demonstrates how strongly he remained bound to Germany and German affairs. Indeed, when about one year later, the *Akademie der Arbeit*, in Frankfurt am Main, which was still owned by the SPD, invited him to come and teach there, he immediately accepted the invitation.<sup>106</sup>

Let us refer again to the "Jewish crossroads" remarked upon at the beginning of this article and try to review its implications regarding those two years 1947-1948. The physical and military struggle to establish and maintain the state of Israel was proceeding while the political struggle took place mainly in the USA. America's Jewry, including the American Jewish labor movement, was strongly involved. Was Stampfer aware of the "Jewish option"? Did he reflect on the implications of choosing Frankfurt rather than Tel Aviv? His writings do not refer to it, and there is no way to ask him, as he is no longer alive. But his daughter, Marianne Loring, testifies that he expressed himself on the establishment of the Jewish state with the words: "a fatale mistake!"<sup>107</sup>

He continued persistently on the path he began in his youth. He did not choose the Zionist road nor did he choose to stay in the US. The possibility of staying in America as an honorable pensioner did not appeal to him, so he accepted the invitation of the *Akademie der Arbeit* and returned to Germany.<sup>108</sup>

Not at all young, at the age of 74, Stampfer chose an option that was not easy in any way one looks at it. Germany in the year 1948 was still in ruins, split east and west into Soviet and Allied zones of occupation. Hunger was widespread in many districts. Germany's political future was still far from clear. Whether we can understand his choice or not, one must admire his fidelity to his values and the courage he exhibited in his decision and the manner in which he stuck to it. It was a new beginning for him in more than one way. As well as renewing his "Stampfer Korrespondenz" column in the party's newspaper,<sup>109</sup> he stepped on to the teacher's podium at the *Akademie der Arbeit*. He was successful in his new career; the house publication of the *Akademie* published the following memoriam: "...from his place on the lecturer podium at the academy he gained an enthusiastic crowd of listeners..."

A short time before his death, he summed up his life in a short sentence which finely illustrates what was and had always been important to him: "I became a Social Democrat at the age of 18 and I am still one at the age of 83."<sup>110</sup>

Stampfer added one more sentence to his life's summation: "I went through many crises but never lost hope. I have probably made mistakes, but I always believed that I was on the right side of the great battle. I lived deeply through the suffering of my time, but I do not wish for myself a life other than the one I lived."<sup>111</sup>

Stampfer died at the age of 83 at his home in Kronberg/Taunus. He left a wife; his daughter remained after the war in the USA. His death marked the end of a stormy life and the end of a branch of the Stampfer line. Though his branch of the family is not well known in Zionist circles, he had none the less a special significance in the history of German socialism and should, as he would have wished it, be remembered as a German Social Democrat.



- 1 . Dr. Zahava Ben-Dov, collection of "Religious Zionism" 1999, p. 391.
- 2 Encyclopedia Judaika 12, p. 812.
- 3 Dr. Zahava ben Dov, collection of religious Zionism, 1999, p. 391.
- 4 Archive of the city of Brno, 3861/01
- 5 The central archive for the history of Czech Jewry in Prague, HBMa 844 Kolodneje nad Luznici, p. 8.
- 6 Ibid. HBS III/9, box No. 17.
- 7 Ibid. Ibid.
- 8 Jehoshua Stampfer's diary, the Zionist archive, Jerusalem.
- 9 Dr. Zahava Ben Dov, the "Religious Zionism" 1999, p. 392.
- 10 In the a.m. inhabitants' list of Brno, ha appears as a Dr. Jurist and his second wife, Bertha, as a jurist's wife.
- 11 Stampfer's autobiography, p. 11.
- 12 Ibid. p. 9.
- 13 Black is gunpowder, red is the blood. In gold sparks the fire.
- 14 His autobiography, p. 9
- 15 Ibid. p. 11.
- 16 Ibid. p. 9.
- 17 Friedrich Stampfer, Demokratische Wege, Deutsche Lebenslaufe Fuenf Jahrhunderter.
- 18 City of Brno's archive, 3861/01.
- 19 Ibid. Ibid.
- 20 Stampfer's autobiography, pp. 12-13.
- 21 Ibid. p. 14.
- 22 Ibid. Ibid.
- 23 Ibid., p. 15.

24 Ibid., pp. 19-21.

25 Ibid., pp. 22-23.

26 In one of her letters to the writer.

27 His autobiography, p. 38.

28 Demokratische Wege, p. 611.

29 His autobiography, p. 13.

30 Ibid., p. 25.

31 Ibid., pp. 51-52.

32 Ibid., p. 32.

33 Ibid., pp. 37-38.

34 Ibid., pp. 26-27.

35 Ibid., pp. 52-55.

36 Ibid., pp. 38-39.

37 Ibid., p. 42.

38 Ibid., pp. 46-51.

39 Ibid., pp. 43-44.

40 Ibid., Ibid.

41 Ibid., p. 45.

42 Ibid., p. 77.

43 Ibid., pp. 70-71.

44 Ibid., p. 88.

45 Ibid., p. 63.

46 Ibid., p. 86.

47 Demokratische Wege, p. 611.

48 Autobiography, p. 168.

49 Ibid., p. 224.

50 Ibid., p. 224.

51 Ibid., pp. 214-217.

52 Ibid., p. 223.

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