

# MODERNITY, JEWISHNESS AND ADDICTION RESEARCH IN LATE 19<sup>TH</sup> AND EARLY 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY RUSSIA AND GERMANY<sup>1</sup>

In the contemporary world, drug addiction is universally recognized as a crucial problem and there is a heated debate about it everywhere, Central and Eastern Europe being no exception. It is striking, however, that little attention has been paid to the historical roots of the problem in this area. This condition appears even more surprising if we consider that interdisciplinary research on the history of drug addiction allows for the exploration of the intersection of medical theory, practical policy, social context, and cultural values. Given the special place that Jews occupy within European medical discourse,<sup>2</sup> such an investigation will also provide some insights into Jewish history—both by analyzing why so many Jews were engaged in addiction research, and by examining *how exactly* drug addiction was constructed as a social problem. While there is a growing interest in the history of medicine among Jewish Studies scholars, there has been no attempt to link the history of drug addiction with the specific status of Jews in the medical profession and in the medical discourse in Central and Eastern Europe.

In this article, I will focus specifically on the period that witnessed the construction of drug addiction as a social problem (late 19<sup>th</sup> - early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries) and compare two major countries of the region—Russia and Germany. The topic remains largely unexplored, even though several authors briefly discuss the developments that took place throughout the period.<sup>3</sup> Various medical texts related to drug addiction often serve as the major—and the most important—primary source for this matter.<sup>4</sup> However, existing works on the subject lack in-depth analysis and a critical approach towards primary sources.

1 This article is an excerpt from my M.A. thesis, "Poisons of Civilization, Remnants of Capitalism, or Jewish Disease? Drug Addiction in Russian and German Medical Texts from the 1870s to the 1930s." I am immensely grateful to Professors Michael Laurence Miller and Karl Hall for their support and appreciation of this project.

2 John M. Efron, *Medicine and the German Jews: A History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001).

3 Cf. Claudia Wiesemann, *Die heimliche Krankheit: Eine Geschichte des Suchtbegriffs* (Stuttgart: Frommann-Holzboog, 2000); Mikhail V. Shkarovskii, "Sem' imen "koshki": Rastsvet narkomanii v 1917-1920-e gody" [Seven Names of the "Cat": Heyday of Drug Addiction from 1917 to the 1920s], *Nevskii arkhiv* 3 (St. Petersburg, 1997): 467-477; Stanislav E. Panin, "Potreblenie narkotikov v Sovetskoi Rossii (1917-1920-e gody)" [Drug Addiction in Soviet Russia (from 1917 to the 1920s)] *Voprosy istorii* 8(2003): 129-134.

4 For examples of works that have frequent and rather uncritical borrowings from medical texts consider Shkarovskii; Panin and Nataliia B. Lebina, *Povsednevnaia zhizn' sovetskogo goroda: Normy i anomalii: 1920-1930 gody* [Everyday Life of a Soviet City: Norms and Anomalies: 1920s - 1930s] (St. Petersburg: Neva: Letnii Sad, 1999). Shkarovskii, 476 is especially

## PERSONALITIES OF AUTHORS

More importantly, there is another crucial aspect of medical texts that is often neglected – the fact that they have authors. Scholars of the social history of drug addiction in Russia often cite Dr. Sholomovich or Dr. Golant, but the reader never finds out any details about their personal lives or professional careers other than that they were “famous physicians.”<sup>5</sup> In the German context, on the other hand, there has been some research on the biographies of addiction researchers.<sup>6</sup> Yet, even in these cases there is little interest in their writings on drugs. I am, however, interested in the authors’ identities. In this section I will try to locate the specific professionals with their own agendas behind the seemingly impersonal narrative of pharmacological characteristics, statistics, and medical histories. In doing so, I contribute to a perspective that was designated by other scholars of addiction research, such as, David F. Musto, Caroline J. Acker, and Nancy D. Campbell.<sup>7</sup>

The issue of authors’ personalities is of special importance for Jewish history, since the overwhelming majority of addiction researchers in both Russia and Germany were Jewish. To a certain degree, this was a reflection of a more general over-representation of Jews in medicine in both countries. In *fin-de-siècle* Germany, Jews, who represented only one percent of the population, amounted to about sixteen percent of all medical doctors.<sup>8</sup> In fact, “so fundamental had medicine become to the social structure and thus self-perception of German Jewry that nearly one half of all Jews attending universities in 1900 were there to study medicine.”<sup>9</sup> There was also a strong link between Jews and medicine in the context of late Imperial Russia,<sup>10</sup> even though the influx of Jews into medical *science* proper did not really happen

remarkable in this respect, since the author actually misspells the name of the early Soviet physician (should be Tutolmin, not Tusholmin), but uses the authority of his citation to make the point about “strengthening of cocaine addiction – as well as other addictions – among both children and adults” in the 1920s.

5 Cf. Panin, 131.

6 Klaus Täubert, “Unbekannt verzogen...”: *Der Lebensweg des Suchtmediziners, Psychologen und KPD-Gründungsmitgliedes Fritz Fränkel* (Berlin: Trafo, 2005); Margarete Exler, *Von der Jugendbewegung zu ärztlicher Drogenhilfe: Das Leben Ernst Joëls (1893-1929) im Umkreis von Benjamin, Landauer und Buber* (Berlin: Trafo, 2005). These prominent scientists also happened to be devoted politicians and active welfare practitioners, and these aspects of their lives are often of more importance to their biographers. As a result, information about their research on addiction is for the most part confined to one chapter or a subsection of the biography.

7 David F. Musto, *The American Disease: Origins of Narcotic Control* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999); Caroline J. Acker, *Creating the American Junkie: Addiction Research in the Classic Era of Narcotic Control* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006); Nancy D. Campbell, *Discovering Addiction: The Science and Politics of Substance Abuse Research* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2007).

8 Efron, *Medicine and the German Jews*, 234.

9 Ibid.

10 Benjamin Nathans, *Beyond the Pale: The Jewish Encounter with Late Imperial Russia* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 103; Yuri Slezkine, *The Jewish Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), 105, 125.

until the Jews were fully emancipated in 1917. It was only in early Soviet Russia that Jews were provided with an opportunity to grow along previously inaccessible or problematic professional tracks, including academia and research.<sup>11</sup> However, even before the revolution, a large pool of Eastern European Jews studied medicine and engaged in scientific research at the universities of the German Empire.<sup>12</sup>

Perhaps even more importantly, many Jews concentrated specifically on the study of mental health. This interesting fact can be explained if we consider psychiatry as a relatively new and promising medical field that was rather open to newcomers. Also, as Harriett P. Freidenreich put it, psychiatry gave the Jews a possibility "to understand and cope better with their own personal problems" in an antisemitic world.<sup>13</sup> There are also other reasons why the specific field of addiction research was especially attractive to Jews. As one of the most modern groups in *fin-de-siècle* Europe, they were certainly fascinated by the fashionable disease that was so explicitly linked to civilization and progress. Moreover, Jews were among the first to question modernity and drug addiction fitted very well into this critical picture of decadence and degeneration.

I will take a brief look at the biographies of the most important Russian and German addiction researchers of the period under discussion and consider their personal, educational, and professional background. In the Russian context, psychiatrist Raisa Iakovlevna Golant (1885-1953) wrote one of the most coherent and systematic works on drug addiction.<sup>14</sup> I will devote

11 Zvi Gitelman, *A Century of Ambivalence: The Jews of Russia and the Soviet Union, 1881 to the Present* (New York: Schocken Books, 1988), 109, 163-164, 166.

12 Efron, *Medicine and the German Jews*, 234-235; Harriet P. Freidenreich, *Female, Jewish, and Educated: The Lives of Central European University Women* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002), 7. On the influence that this encounter exercised on both the students and the host communities, consider Jack L. Wertheimer, "The 'Ausländerfrage' at Institutions of Higher Learning: A Controversy Over Russian Jewish Students in Imperial Germany," *Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* 27(1982): 187-215; and Idem, "Between Tsar and Kaiser - The Radicalisation of Russian Jewish Students in Germany," *Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* 28(1983): 329-349.

13 Freidenreich, *Female, Jewish, and Educated*, 68, 84, 85-86 (citation is from page 86). Freidenreich is especially concerned with Jewish women, and she argues that they were even more likely than Jewish men to choose mental health professions as their specialty (Freidenreich, 84, 85, 213) - an observation not without interest to us, since one of the most important early Soviet writers on addiction, Raisa Golant, was a woman. It is interesting to compare this perspective with that of Nancy D. Campbell, who in another context notes the "appalling lack of women ... who study addiction" and discusses "possible influence of gender bias" (Campbell, 239).

14 Raisa Ia. Golant, "Problemy morfinizma: (Klinicheskie i dispansernye nabliudeniia, eksperimental'nye issledovaniia)," [Problems of Morphine Addiction: (Clinical and Specialized Observations, Experimental Investigations)] in *Trudy gosudarstvennogo instituta meditsinskikh znaniĭ (GIMZ)* [Proceedings of the State Institute of Medical Knowledge (GIMZ)], ed. N. K. Rozenberg, issue V (Leningrad: GIMZ, 1929), 17-32. For details, see my analysis of the text: Pavel A. Vasilyev, "'Problemy morfinizma' R. Ia. Golant i sovetskaia meditsinskaia mysl' 1920-kh gg.," ["Problems of Morphine Addiction" by R. Ia. Golant and Soviet Medical Thought of the 1920s], *Izmeniaiuschaiasia Rossiia v kontekste globalizatsii: Materialy studenchesko-aspirantskogo kongressa 19-23 marta 2007 g., S. - Peterburg* [Changing Russia in the Context of Globalization: Materials of Student and Graduate Student Congress, 19-23 March 2007, St. Petersburg.] (St. Petersburg, 2007): 140-143.

special attention to her biography—partially because it has been better researched,<sup>15</sup> but also because Golant's life story allows us to bring additional elements (such as gender) into the picture. Born in a lower-class family in Brest-Litovsk in the Pale of Settlement (now Brest, Belarus) on July 17, 1885, she was subject to double oppression as a woman and as a Jew in the Empire at the turn-of-the-century.<sup>16</sup> After graduating from *gymnasium* in 1902, Golant went to Western Europe to pursue university studies in Brussels, Berlin, and Freiburg.<sup>17</sup> She studied natural sciences and medicine until 1908 and then decided to specialize in neurology and psychiatry.<sup>18</sup> In 1909 Golant returned to Russia, where "job opportunities for Jewish women ... were fairly limited."<sup>19</sup> She went on to work as a physician in the Epidemiological Institute in St. Petersburg (in a field that did not quite correspond to her research interests), but she was lucky enough to establish a connection with the prominent Russian psychiatrist, Vladimir M. Bekhterev, who helped her get a job in the Imperial Military Medical Academy, where she received an M.D. degree in 1913.<sup>20</sup>

As World War I and the turbulent events of 1917 provided new occupational opportunities for Russian Jews and women,<sup>21</sup> Golant was finally able to start her teaching career at Bekhterev's Department of Reflexology, at the newly-founded State Institute of Medical Knowledge (*GIMZ*). In September 1926, she was appointed the head of the first neuro-psychiatric dispensary in Leningrad—a well-funded and innovative medical institution.<sup>22</sup> From that period on Raisa Golant embarked on a highly successful professional career in

15 Cf. my conference presentations: "Building a Jigsaw Puzzle: Problems of Development of 'New Biographical History' (The Case of R. Ia. Golant)," Conference of Students and Graduate Students of the Schools of History and Philosophy "IV November Readings," St. Petersburg State University, Russia, November 17, 2007; and "New Biographical History: Problems of Development (The Case of R. Ia. Golant)," Student and Graduate Student Scholar Conference "Russia in XX-XXI centuries," St. Petersburg State University, School of History, April 19, 2008.

16 Or triple, if we also consider class dimension.

17 *Tsentral'nyi gosudarstvennyi arkhiv nauchno-tekhnicheskoi dokumentatsii Sankt-Peterburga* (from herein referred to as TSGANTDSPb) [Central State Archive of Scientific and Technical Documentation of St. Petersburg], fond 313, opis' 1-2, delo 1, ll. 9-12 rev.; Marina A. Akimenko and Avgust M. Shereshevskii, *Istoriia instituta im. V. M. Bekhtereva na dokumental'nykh materialakh* [Documented History of V. M. Bekhterev Institute], vol. 2 (St. Petersburg: SPbNIPNI, 2000): 93. On "emancipation through higher education," see Freidenreich, *Female, Jewish, and Educated*, 1, 7.

18 On the choice of career, see Freidenreich, *Female, Jewish, and Educated*, 52.

19 Ibid, 68.

20 *Tsentral'nyi gosudarstvennyi arkhiv Sankt-Peterburga* (hereinafter referred to as TSGASpb) [Central State Archive of St. Petersburg], fond 4301, opis' 4, delo 809, ll. 1, 3; V. A. Tochilov and others, "Kafedra psikiatrii i narkologii," [Department of Psychiatry and Narcology] in *Sankt-Peterburgskoi gosudarstvennoi meditsinskoi akademii im. I. I. Mechnikova 90 let* [90th Anniversary of I. I. Mechnikov St. Petersburg State Medical Academy] (St. Petersburg: SPbGMA, 1997), 101; Akimenko and Shereshevskii, vol. 2: 93. Cf. also Freidenreich, *Female, Jewish, and Educated*, 65.

21 Freidenreich, *Female, Jewish, and Educated*, 68; Gitelman, *A Century of Ambivalence*, 109.

22 TSGANTDSPb, fond 313, opis' 1-1, delo 32, l. 12.

medical science, education, and medical administration,<sup>23</sup> that lasted until the "Pavlovian session" of the Academy of Sciences, which led to her discharge from the Psycho-Neurological Institute in 1951.<sup>24</sup>

Golant was lucky that she was able to be active and successful in public work. "With great energy and tirelessness,"<sup>25</sup> she wrote extensively on the social problems of psychiatry,<sup>26</sup> narcology, and drug addiction.<sup>27</sup> In the 1940s she started writing anti-Fascist texts and successfully integrated her civic position as a Jew, a woman, and a doctor, with a scientific analysis of medical developments made during the Second World War.<sup>28</sup>

Another Russian addiction researcher whose works are of great use to historians of drug addiction is the Moscow-based physician, Aleksandr Sergeevich Sholomovich. Apart from his scientific writings on drugs, he published several popular pamphlets on the practical organization of the struggle against alcoholism.<sup>29</sup> He was also a physician who was ready to transgress his professional boundaries and engage in a discussion on degeneration, in a broader sense.<sup>30</sup> In another context, he was passionate about serving the community and doing some volunteer work. He established the Jewish Relief Committee for the Victims of the War and donating money to the refugees from the Pale of Settlement, who had flooded into Samara in 1915.<sup>31</sup> Similarly, another major Soviet narcologist, Aleksandr Matveevich Rapoport (1894-1966), did not confine himself to the narrow scientific domain of theoretical addiction research. Rather, he was also actively occupied with practical aspects of prompt diagnostics and control.<sup>32</sup> He even eventually

23 V. A. Tochilov and others, 101-102; Aleksandr V. Shabrov and Valerii P. Romaniuk, *Sankt-Peterburgskaia gosudarstvennaia meditsinskaia akademiia imeni I. I. Mechnikova* [I. I. Mechnikov St. Petersburg State Medical Academy], vol. 1 (St. Petersburg: SpbGMA, 2006), 239, 241, 388.

24 TSGANTDSPb, fond 313, opis' 1-2, delo 1, ll. 9-12 rev.; Akimenko and Shereshevskii, vol. 2: 93.

25 *Sbornik psikhiatricheskikh rabot, posviashchennyi iubileiu R. IA. Golant* [Collection of Psychiatric Works Dedicated to R. IA. Golant's Anniversary] (Leningrad: 2-i LMI, 1940): 14.

26 TSGASPB, fond 4301, opis' 1, delo 2482, l. 343.

27 Ibid., delo 3414, l. 6; Golant.

28 TSGANTDSPb, fond 313, opis' 2-3, dela 9, 11.

29 Sholomovich, *40°. Sorok gradusov i rabochie* [40°. Forty Degrees and the Workers] (Moscow: Moszdravotdel, 1925); and Idem, *Kak my boremsia s alkogolizmom* [How We Fight Against Alcoholism] (Moscow: Moszdravotdel, 1926).

30 Sholomovich, *Nasledstvennost' i fizicheskie priznaki vyrozhdeniia u dushevnobol'nykh i zdorovykh* [Heredity and Physical Signs of Degeneration by Mental Patients and Healthy] (Kazan': Imperatorskii Kazanskii Universitet, 1913); and Idem, *Nasledstvennost' i fizicheskoe vyrozhdenie* [Heredity and Physical Degeneration] (Kazan: Imperatorskii Kazanskii Universitet, 1915). See also Daniel Beer, *Renovating Russia: The Human Sciences and the Fate of Liberal Modernity, 1880-1930* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008), 76-78. On the degeneration debate, and its relevance for the history of Russian science, see Beer, 27-41 and *passim*.

31 Anna Spon, "Istoriia evreiskoi blagotvoritel'nosti v Samare" [History of Jewish Charity in Samara], accessed October 2, 2010, <http://www.ijc.ru/istoki37.html>.

32 Rapoport, *Diagnostika alkogol'nogo op'ianeniia* [Diagnostics of Alcohol Intoxication] (Moscow: Narkomzdrav RSFSR, 1928).



invented a method to detect alcohol vapors in exhaled air, which still causes troubles for Russian drivers today (the so-called *proba Rapoport*).

In Germany, the life stories of addiction researchers are no less fascinating. Two major German writers on drugs, whose works were widely cited in the period under discussion, were Fritz Fränkel (1892-1944) and Ernst Joël (1893-1929). Both were born into middle-class Jewish families in Wilhelmine Germany, but felt equally indifferent about their Judaism and Jewishness.<sup>33</sup> With the start of the First World War, they were both captivated by the student movement and increasingly radical political ideologies (Fränkel eventually delivered a speech at the founding congress of the German Communist Party).<sup>34</sup> In the 1920s, both physicians were very active in social welfare and communal medicine in Berlin and also participated in Walter Benjamin's hashish and mescaline experiments.<sup>35</sup> However, whereas Joël fell victim to premature death in 1929, Fränkel experienced the arrival of National Socialism in the 1930s. He found refuge in France, enlisted in the International Brigades in the Spanish Civil War and then escaped to Mexico, where he even re-discovered his Jewish identity as Europe immersed itself into the abyss of genocide.<sup>36</sup> His fate is thus similar to that of Walter Benjamin's relatively unknown sister, Dr. Dora Benjamin (1901-1946). Benjamin was another addiction researcher who was also very active in the Berlin social welfare in the 1920s and early 1930s and had to emigrate after the Nazis seized power in Germany. She died in exile in Switzerland.<sup>37</sup>

As our analysis has shown, Russian and German addiction researchers were very likely to go beyond their narrow professional boundaries to engage in social and communal work. They also had left leaning, if not directly socialist or communist, views. Finally, all six physicians that I have mentioned above were Jewish and, as we have seen, this is hardly surprising. In the next section I want to focus specifically on what it meant to be a Jewish medical scientist in late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century in Russia and Germany.

33 Exler, 98-100.

34 Ibid, 60-97; Lothar Büttner and Bernhard Meyer, *Gesundheitspolitik der Arbeiterbewegung: Vom Bund der Kommunisten bis zum Thälmannischen Zentralkomitee der KPD* (Berlin: VEG Verlag Volk und Gesundheit, 1984), 133.

35 Ibid, 204-205, 210, 215, 223; Walter Benjamin, *On Hashish*, trans. Howard Eiland (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press, 2006), vii, 9-10.

36 Täubert.

37 Eva Schöck-Quinteros, "Dora Benjamin: "... denn ich hoffe nach dem Krieg in Amerika arbeiten zu können." Stationen einer vertriebenen Wissenschaftlerin (1901-1946)," in *Barrieren und Karrieren: Die Anfänge des Frauenstudiums in Deutschland*, ed. Elisabeth Dickmann and Eva Schöck-Quinteros (Berlin: Trafo, 2000), 71-102.

## DILEMMAS OF JEWISH DOCTORS

There is strong evidence that European medical discourse from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century can be labeled anti-Semitic.<sup>38</sup> Yet here we must face an important challenge: there is a seeming contradiction between flourishing anti-Jewish sentiments among doctors during this period and the statistically proven strong presence of the Jews in the medical profession in the region.<sup>39</sup> In fact, it seems that Jewish doctors must have found it very difficult to retain their loyalty to Science, when mainstream racial science was producing anti-Semitic ideas about the Jewish body and mind as essentially degenerate, weak, and effeminate. There were many Jewish physicians who refused to accept these accusations,<sup>40</sup> yet most doctors were still reluctant to challenge the dominant discourse that presented the Jewish people as pathological and “fundamentally diseased.”<sup>41</sup> Therefore, we should discuss the nature, content, and the lines of reasoning of *fin-de-siècle* medical antisemitism, in order to better understand and explain this seeming contradiction.

As Klaus Hödl has demonstrated, late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century medical theory was “highly influenced by extant, racially determined conceptions,” “amenable to biased views of ethnic groups,” and “its findings reflected...widely shared prejudices.”<sup>42</sup> However, the language of medicine at the time was becoming increasingly scientific and sophisticated. Hödl argues that late 19<sup>th</sup> century medical antisemitism was in fact occupied mostly with “scientification” of the already existing stereotypes, not with the creation of new ones.<sup>43</sup> Indeed, John Efron has demonstrated how modern science of “psychiatry provided [the antisemites with] a new language and set of ideas,”<sup>44</sup> which was largely based on the biological concept of heredity and believed in the Jewish practice of consanguineous marriage. This new language of science might seem modern, but antisemitic physicians were generally repeating accusations against the Jews that had existed since the Middle Ages – just in a more fashionable way.

Indeed, Jews were associated with many negative features, ranging from the unpleasant form of the nose, to having undecipherable speech, and susceptibility to neuroses.<sup>45</sup> Other critics would note such alleged qualities as

38 Klaus Hödl, “Medizinischer Antisemitismus oder Antisemitismus in der Medizin? Historische Wurzeln und Charakterisierungsversuche eines Phänomens,” in *Antisemitismusforschung in den Wissenschaften*, ed. Werner-Bergmann and Mona Körte (Berlin: Metropol, 2004), 161-185.

39 Efron, *Medicine and the German Jews*, 10.

40 Idem, *Defenders of The Race: Jewish Doctors and Race Science in Fin-de-Siècle Europe* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994).

41 Idem, *Medicine*, 4.

42 Hödl, “The Black Body and the Jewish Body: A Comparison of Medical Images,” *Patterns of Prejudice* 36 (2002): 34.

43 Idem, *Medizinischer Antisemitismus*, 175.

44 Efron, *Medicine and the German Jews*, 159.

45 Hödl, “Der ‘jüdische Körper’ in seiner Differenz. Textuelle und performative Konstruktionen,” in *Marginalisierte Körper. Beiträge zur Soziologie und Geschichte des anderen Körpers*, ed. Torsten Junge and Imke Schmincke, (Münster: Unrast, 2007), 69-70.

the stunted growth of the Jews, or their lack of muscular power.<sup>46</sup> Many of these accusations culminated in the proclamations that male Jews were essentially effeminate and unsuitable for military service.<sup>47</sup> It may seem to be in line with the modern narratives of such different persons as Adolf Jellinek or Otto Weininger, but in fact the association of male Jews with women had existed since the Middle Ages. For example, since medieval times Jewish males were thought to menstruate.<sup>48</sup>

However, it would be inaccurate to say that Jews were only thought of negatively. *Fin-de-siècle* medicine ascribed many seemingly positive and useful characteristics to Jews, such as inborn intelligence<sup>49</sup> and immunity to tuberculosis, which was related to the perceived Jewish ability to adapt to any circumstances.<sup>50</sup> But even those positive qualities were often seen in a perverted way. For example, the above-mentioned features could be associated with physical weakness or cosmopolitanism (lack of proper national feeling). Yet, although good intelligence and adaptability may seem like important traits to the modern reader, for the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century public the feeling of patriotism, based on blood and physical strength, was a much more desirable character trait.

The underlying explanation for the various alleged pathologies of Jewish health can probably be summarized in one word—modernity. *Fin-de-siècle* Europe started to doubt the value of progress and decided that modernity mostly brings disease and degeneration. The Jews were often perceived as an over-educated, urban middle-class group at the forefront of change and modernity. I will show that many accusations ascribing physical degeneration, moral degeneration, and effeminacy, to Jews were in fact attacks against capitalism and modernity (the latter two were often seen as Jewish enterprises).

There were, of course, explanations of pathological Jewish health that were rooted in tradition, rather than modernity. Many antisemitic (as well as some Jewish) physicians saw such elements of Judaism as relative endogamy, ritual prohibitions, and kosher food laws, as the reason behind the abnormal nature of Jewish health.<sup>51</sup> However, here we must recall how the peculiar double character of the Jew was invoked in anti-Semitic thought, seeing Jews as simultaneously modern and backward.<sup>52</sup>

46 Efron, *Medicine and the German Jews*, 142.

47 Hödl, *Der "jüdischer Körper" in seiner Differenz*, 69-70. See also Efron, *Medicine and the German Jews*, 142-150.

48 Hödl, "Der jüdische Körper als Stigma," *Österreichische Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaften* 2 (1997): 212-213; and Idem, *Der "jüdischer Körper" in seiner Differenz*, 69.

49 Sander L. Gilman, *The Jew's Body* (New York: Routledge, 1991), 128-149.

50 Hödl, *The Black Body*, 22-24.

51 Efron, *Medicine and the German Jews*, 130, 155.

52 Paul F. Lerner, "Circulation and Representation: Jews, Department Stores and Cosmopolitan Consumption in Germany, ca. 1880s-1930s," *European Review of History* 17:3 (2010) 395-413; Derek J. Penslar, *Shylock's Children: Economics and Jewish Identity in Modern Europe* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 5, 11-49.



As we have already mentioned, around the turn of the century the benefits of modernity were challenged. But for 19<sup>th</sup> century Europeans, modernity was not just an abstract concept—it had many concrete manifestations in the contemporary world. One of these facets was definitely capitalism, and the association of the Jews with capitalism had a very long tradition. In fact, the very word *Jude* in the 19<sup>th</sup> century German language was synonymous with huckster (another word for capitalist, with very pejorative connotations). Many influential thinkers from Karl Marx to Werner Sombart excessively criticized Jewish involvement in modern capitalism and even presented capitalism on the whole as a Jewish enterprise. This thesis has been most recently revisited by Jerry Z. Muller.<sup>53</sup> In a medical context, the pathologies attributed to Jewish health could have easily been explained as the result of excessive Jewish involvement in the capitalist economy.

Another relevant issue is cosmopolitanism. Jews were the only nation scattered across all the continents, but with no independent state of their own. Therefore, they were obvious deviants in the age of nation-states. Cosmopolitanism, however, was not only a political issue. It was also closely related to transnational patterns that were inherent in modern capitalism and all the matters that we have already discussed above. In relation to medical antisemitism, cosmopolitanism comes up in relation to the debate about the Jews' extraordinary ability for acclimatization,<sup>54</sup> which I have already mentioned.

Finally, there was yet another facet of modernity that allegedly negatively influenced Jewish health—urbanization. The Jews were indeed an urban group *par excellence*, and they tried to use all the opportunities provided by cities as soon as they were permitted to do so. But when *fin-de-siècle* culture brought renewed interest in the traditional and natural, it is not surprising that the alleged Jewish predisposition for neuroses was explained as the logical result of their choice to live in the modern city, with all its stress and uncertainty.<sup>55</sup> In other contexts, the alleged shortness of Jews was linked to specific residential and occupational features, such as urbanization and the predominance of indoor jobs.<sup>56</sup>

Summarizing the debate about the origins of the 'problem' we can note that Jews' bodies were often seen as extraordinary and pathological precisely because their bearers were so modern. The term *modern* is to be understood in a broader sense, as a shortcut for many diverse and often unrelated manifestations of modernity, including but not limited to cosmopolitanism, liberalism, capitalism, urbanization, and education.

Of course, there were major differences in the position of Jews in Central and Eastern Europe. In the Russian Empire the Jews occupied a space quite

53 Jerry Z. Muller, *Capitalism and the Jews* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010).

54 Hödl, *The Black Body*, 22-24; Idem, *Medizinischer Antisemitismus*, 172-173.

55 Efron, *Medicine and the German Jews*, 153.

56 Hödl, *The Black Body*, 30.

different from that in German cultural and medical discourse. Technological and cultural backwardness, the legacy of the Pale of Settlement—as well as the absence of emancipation until 1917—led to the fact that Russian Jews were by no means viewed as the central Other. Therefore, some of the conclusions made above will only apply to the German-speaking parts of Central Europe. However, as Yuri Slezkine shows, in the context of late Imperial Russia the Jews by and large were also perceived as cosmopolitan, educated, urbanized, and associated with modernity and capitalism.<sup>57</sup>

However, even when the accusations stated by medical antisemites were taken for granted, the problem remained unsolved. In other words, how could the Jewish medical scientist acknowledge and deal with the alleged pathologies of Jewish health? Of course, medicine (especially in the German context) was influenced by the modernization and subsequent assimilation and abandonment of a specific Jewish identity. Yet, the race-based character of antisemitic discourse made it almost impossible for Jewish physicians to ignore it. As John Efron demonstrated, there were a great variety of Jewish medical attitudes towards the central question: what is the cause of alleged Jewish degeneration? Some felt degeneration was a result of the observance of obsolete rituals, and others felt the cause was modernization and abandonment of ancient values.<sup>58</sup> Then the question arose: what could dramatically improve the pathological nature of Jewish health?

In my opinion, looking at addiction research in light of these dilemmas can be an interesting and fruitful enterprise. In fact, if drug addiction was perceived as the most modern disease, then it would be automatically associated with Jews. In such circumstances, addiction research by Jewish doctors can be seen as a defensive act with the purpose of clearing Jews from this accusation. It is also possible to see it as a blueprint for change that would acknowledge the Jewish pathologies, but propose solutions for their eradication (as part of the struggle for the general improvement of Jewish health). Accordingly, there might be much more that is 'Jewish' about the texts and theories that sought for the causes of drug addictions, and possible solutions to the problem. And for some of those non-Jewish authors, who also engaged in the addiction debate, these studies could be seen as the search for yet more scientific evidence of Jewish deficiency.

As can be seen from the analysis of medical texts, the connection between Jews and drug addiction was often made explicitly.<sup>59</sup> The Jews were widely

<sup>57</sup> Slezkine, *The Jewish Century*, 105-110.

<sup>58</sup> Efron, *Medicine and the German Jews*, 186-264.

<sup>59</sup> Rafael Becker, "Ein Beitrag zur Frage der Verbreitung des Geisteskrankheiten bei den Juden in Polen," *OSE-Rundschau* 5(1930): 1-4; Idem, "Die Geisteskrankungen bei den Juden in Polen," *Allgemeine Zeitschrift für Psychiatrie und psychisch-gerichtliche Medizin* 96(1932): 47-66; Fränkel and Dora Benjamin, "Die Bedeutung der Rauschgifte für die Juden und die Bekämpfung der Suchten durch die Fürsorge," *Jüdische Wohlfahrtspflege und Sozialpolitik* 3(1932): 21-24.

presented as drug addicts *par excellence*, and the connection between them and drug addiction was made explicitly. For example, two articles by the Jewish psychiatrist Rafael Becker provide evidence for the fact that Jews were much more likely than Gentiles to prefer drugs to alcohol.<sup>60</sup> In another context, Fritz Fränkel and Dora Benjamin presented a whole range of the stereotypes of Jewish drug addicts (from the corrupted bourgeois, to the hysterical *femme fatale*, to the homosexual psychopathic artist) and supplemented them with statistics that showed only three or four Jews among the 1500 registered alcoholics in the Berlin District. Yet in the same district 30% of morphine addicts were Jews.<sup>61</sup> To explain this fact, physicians invoked other stereotypes about the Jews, such as their concentration in medical sciences, trade, and liberal professions, as well as their alleged practice of consanguineous marriage and racial predisposition towards mental diseases.<sup>62</sup> More specifically, among perceived qualities that made Jews so prone to morphine were susceptibility to depression (which the doctors tried to demonstrate on the basis of statistical data on suicides) and "dislike of violence and aversion from brutality that keep [the Jews] away from alcohol."<sup>63</sup>

In both Russia and Germany many Jews worked as pharmacists,<sup>64</sup> and as such they were also invoked in medical and administrative texts as drug dealers (often people imagined the pharmaceutical industry – especially private pharmacies – were headed by profit-driven Jewish capitalists, who do not care about the health of the people).<sup>65</sup> On the other hand, Jews were also well represented among public health officials and pharmacy inspectors<sup>66</sup> – and obviously, as we have demonstrated earlier, Jewish medical scientists also constituted a major part of drug researchers.

In fact, drug addiction in early Soviet Russia and Weimar Germany was to a certain degree an internal Jewish problem—and this fact substantiates our hypothesis about Jewish research on drug addiction as a defensive act, or blueprint for change. Thus, drug addiction research appears to be one of the attractive fields for Jewish scientists, who used this opportunity to contemplate, negotiate and re-define the new Jewish identity in a rapidly changing modern world. Confronted with the association between drug addiction and Jewishness, they struggled to offer possible solutions to this specific problem and concurrently constructed larger projects for the improvement of Jewish health and social change.

60 Becker, *Ein Beitrag zur Frage*, 3; Idem, *Die Geisteskrankungen*, 49.

61 Fränkel and Benjamin, 21-23.

62 Ibid, 22-23.

63 Ibid.

64 Mary Schaeffer Conroy, *In Health and in Sickness: Pharmacy, Pharmacists and the Pharmaceutical Industry in Late Imperial, Early Soviet Russia* (Boulder: Columbia University Press, 1994), 105.

65 TSGASPB, fond 4301, opis' 1, delo 2538, ll. 254-255.

66 Ibid, dela 729, 731, 733, 734, 737, 743, 745, 747, 748; delo 2538, ll. 1-2 etc.

Drug addiction in Russian and German medical texts from the 1870s to the 1930s was constructed as a social problem related to modernity, capitalism, and Jewishness. Through this association the Jews (especially in the German context) were made 'responsible' for drug addiction (among other 'vices' of civilization). Accordingly, the solution for the social problem also had to be aimed at Jews in a certain way (mostly through the critique of capitalism and Jewish involvement in it). Moreover, medical science in both Russia and Germany (though with substantial variations, due to political, cultural, and scientific differences—and also the place of the Jews) played a major role in marginalizing and repressing drug addicts through its influence on practical narcotic policy. Thus, Jewish addiction researchers' medical programs were initially formulated with humanistic aims of transforming and re-generating pathological Jewish bodies and minds.<sup>67</sup> Yet, they were used in perverse ways, much like Max Nordau's terms, such as "degenerative art," were later employed by the Nazis for their specific aims. Of course, drug addiction research was only one of the fields where the battle against modernity was fought, but it is striking that the final results of this battle still tends to greatly influence our contemporary lives.

<sup>67</sup> Compare Fritz Fränkel and Ernst Joël's statements like "Addiction is a disease, not a crime" (Ernst Joël and Fritz Fränkel, *Der Cocainismus: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte und Psychopathologie der Rauschgifte* (Berlin: Julius Springer, 1924), 24) or "The addict is not a delinquent, but a patient" (Joël and Fränkel, "Zur Verhütung und Behandlung der Giftsuchten," *Klinische Wochenschrift* 4(1925): 1718).