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**The Compromise of Return: Viennese Jews after the Holocaust,
by Elizabeth Anthony.**

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The Compromise of Return: Viennese Jews after the Holocaust, Elizabeth Anthony (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2021), xiv + 271 pp., paperback \$34.99, electronic version available.

Few Jewish survivors of Nazi terror returned to Germany or Austria after 1945. Several factors weighed against return, including the absence of loved ones and memories of the indifferent, opportunistic, or brutal behavior of neighbors, acquaintances, and coworkers. Elizabeth Anthony's examination of Viennese Jews who did re-emigrate considers the range of motivations that led them to come back. Her book, particularly commendable for its sensitivity to survivors' voices, takes into account pre-Anschluss Jewish life in Vienna, hardships under the Nazis, emigration, deportation, and returnees' experiences after the war.

Anthony's presentation unfolds via four main chapters linked by the notion of return and the draw of *Heimat* (homeland). These central components are bookended by an introductory section establishing historical context from approximately 1848 to 1945, and a final chapter examining the impact of postwar political developments on everyday Viennese Jewish life and Jewish organizations, as well as the influence of the occupation forces from 1945 into 1955. Each of the topical chapters address what Anthony refers to as four "waves of return," not necessarily sequential or mutually exclusive: Jews in hiding or mixed marriages; returnees from concentration camps; those who had fled as political opponents of the Nazis; and those who had fled for safety and sought to reestablish professional lives or build new careers elsewhere.

Despite differences in experience and motivation, Anthony identifies certain commonalities. Uncertainty regarding what might follow return was ubiquitous; people hoped for safety, housing, employment, reunion with family and friends. Some still planned future emigration. Lack of meaningful sympathy for their plight—manifested in antisemitic attitudes and the sheer absence of structural or legal support—exacerbated matters.

The book features several important elements for which the author deserves praise, including the treatment of Gentiles' attitudes towards Jews, and Gentiles' self-understanding. Pervasive—but not uniform—attitudes towards Jewish returnees ranged from privileging one's own suffering to outright antipathy. Here Anthony integrates returnees' testimonies with Günter Bischof's and Heidemarie Uhl's treatment of the *Opfermythos* ("victim myth"). Specifically, Anthony draws a link between Viennese Jews' recollections of lived experience to the Allies' 1943 Moscow Declaration proclaiming the Austrian state the first victim of Nazi aggression (though also proclaiming Austrians' share in responsibility for Nazism). This sort of blanket psychic amnesty affirmed Austrians in their understanding of themselves as victims of war and occupation—and helped them avoid seeing themselves as either active perpetrators or beneficiaries of Jewish suffering (pp. 152, 204–207, 240–42).

Building on the work of Robert Knight, Anthony notes that prominent Social Democratic Party (SPÖ) figures such as Interior Minister Oskar Helmer and, to an extent, Vice-Chancellor Adolf Schärf and President Karl Renner, were reluctant to extend aid or support restitution. Antipathy towards Jews was certainly evident on Helmer's side. Nor was he alone: a number of leaders of the SPÖ's coalition partner, the Catholic-conservative People's Party, shared that sentiment. In any case, Anthony reminds us, with everything in short supply most Austrian politicians were reluctant to identify special categories of the needy: better to preserve the myth of Austrians-as-victims writ large. There would have been more to lose than to gain at the ballot box by championing Jewish returnees (pp. 197–99).

Anthony's contribution is particularly evident in her work with Jewish Community of Vienna (IKG) archival sources and documentation from the Schutzverband der Rückstellungsbetroffenen (Protective Association of Parties Affected by Restitution). Her sixth chapter in particular draws on these sources to demonstrate how these organizations addressed inadequacies in housing, employment, health care, restitution, and other forms of assistance that the authorities either could not deliver effectively—or would not provide specifically for Jewish returnees.

Other aspects of Anthony's work are less fully developed. A reliance on a limited secondary literature, narrow use of published primary sources, and only halting consultation of archival material from

the Viennese Municipal/Provincial Archive or the Archive of the Republic result in occasional over-generalizations. While consulting primary source material in greater depth might have resulted in a different sort of study than the author intended, it would have insured her against overlooking nuances and outright misstatements.

One example is Anthony's treatment of the July 7, 1945 *Opferfürsorgegesetz* ("Victims' Welfare Act). She states, "Austrian law delineated victim groups in a way that comprised most all citizens *except* Jews, but included returning Wehrmacht soldiers, *minderbelastete* ("lesser implicated") Nazis, and bystanders" (p. 64). This is inaccurate. Veterans were not included unless they could prove their *bona fides* as anti-Nazi resisters; bystanders were not a category under the law; and lesser-implicated Nazis were excluded under both the initial and subsequent versions of the law. Moreover, Jews *were* included, albeit in a separate, lower-priority category. They did not receive priority because the law favored those who played an active role in resistance (first priority), or even a passive role (second). These designations certainly reflected the *Opfermythos*, but it would be incorrect to assert that Jews were ignored outright. Anthony appears not to have consulted the various iterations of the law between 1945 and 1949, or to have examined parliamentary debates or contemporary discussions of the law in party-specific periodicals. Moreover, with respect to reverence for military service, she suggests that support for war memorials and veterans' groups was widespread and enthusiastic by the 1950s (p. 216). Regrettably, she overlooks the suspicion towards both veterans associations and war memorials, especially in the SPÖ.

Further, while amnesties in 1947 reintegrated former Nazis implicated in less serious crimes, and a decade later those implicated in more grievous crimes, Anthony's treatment of denazification overlooks key details. Even as antisemitism and indifference persisted, the SPÖ-dominated Viennese municipal government did not turn a blind eye to former Nazis. These were compelled to engage in labor service (clearing rubble, shoveling snow, other public service projects); the Viennese SPÖ organization also supported denunciations (if corroborated) of those who had evaded denazification. Information that made its way to the municipal civil service or police led to instances of both dismissals and arrests. Federal law permitted requisition of apartments and rehousing based on need, and a point system that disadvantaged former Nazis facilitated both their eviction and others' housing (albeit with exceptions). Regrettably, Anthony does not cite recent scholarship that address these themes and her bibliography leaves out Dieter Stiefel's classic work on denazification.

Still, from start to finish readers will be moved by the experiences Anthony recounts, and the criticisms above do not diminish the value of her work. But in fact, a more nuanced treatment would have allowed her to avoid overstatements and other errors without sacrificing the ethical force, and ultimately the sustainability, of her argument. Hers is a book to be valued for its contributions, but not to be considered definitive. Future work demands a similarly deep inquiry into Viennese and other Austrian archival sources.

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Odyssey of a Child Survivor: From Latvia through the Camps to the United States, George David Schwab, introduction by Wendy Lower ([n.p.]: George David Schwab, 2021), 308 pp., hardcover \$27.99.

The amazing journey of George David Schwab (b. 1931) from "rich kid" in Riga to Holocaust survivor to professor of political science at CCNY and co-founder (with the late Hans J. Morgenthau) of the National Committee on American Foreign Policy is well worth the read. It may be supplemented by a careful reading of his lengthy interview at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum on March 18, 2005 (98 pp; RG-50.030*0493), and of Gwendolyn Chabrier's *Behind the Barbed Wire* (2011). What sets Schwab's story apart from other personal accounts was his privileged economic status prior to World War II. Many, if not most, of the latter were penned by "ordinary Jews," including *pintele yidn* (devout Jews who tried to sustain religious observance under dire circumstances)—often with the help