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THE REACTION OF OCCUPIED EUROPE  
TO THE STIGMATIZATION OF THE JEWS  
WITH THE STAR OF DAVID

I would like to dedicate my article to the memory of two persons — Leon Poliakov (1910–1997), the author of the still valuable book *L'Étoile Jaune*<sup>1</sup>, published 55 years ago, and Franciszek Ryszka (1924–1998), the author of *Państwo stanu wyjątkowego. Rzecz o systemie państwa i prawa Trzeciej Rzeszy* (*A State in a State of Emergency. On the State and Law Systems in the Third Reich*), which 40 years ago, when it was published, had no equal in the writings of the world<sup>2</sup>.

The literature on the stigmatization of the Jews, one of the elements of the Holocaust perpetrated during the Second World War, is not very abundant<sup>3</sup>. A special shortcoming is the lack of comparative treatments that would take into account both the racist legislature and the reaction it produced among the population in particular countries. I will not deal here with the history of the introduction of racial segregation in Europe under the Nazi occupation<sup>4</sup>. I will only recall that the first town where Jews were stigmatized was Włocławek (Leslau), which lay in the Polish

<sup>1</sup> L. Poliakov, *L'Étoile Jaune*, Paris 1949, 92 pp. Poliakov's biography in *Who's who in France 1996–1997*, does not mention this item.

<sup>2</sup> The book was published by Ossolineum, its third edition was issued in 1985.

<sup>3</sup> The most important item in this context is Ph. Friedman's article *The Jewish Badge and Yellow Star in the Nazi Era*, published in "Historia Judaica" 17, April 1955, 1, pp. 41–70, reprinted in: idem, *Roads to Extinction: Essays on the Holocaust*, ed. A. J. Friedman, New York 1980, pp. 13–33; cf. also: *The Yellow Badge. A Shibboleth in Nazi Europe*, "The Wiener Library Bulletin" 8, September–December 1954, 5–6, pp. 40, 42; cf. entry *Kennzeichnung als Juden*, in: *Enzyklopädie des Holocaust*, vol. 2, Berlin 1993, pp. 749–754.

<sup>4</sup> Given all the enormous literature on the persecution of the Jews, ending with the Holocaust, no analysis has so far been made of all the discriminatory regulations issued first in the Third Reich and later in occupied Europe and the countries allied to the Third Reich.

territory annexed by the Reich. On 24 October 1939 the order of the SA-Oberführer Hans Cramer imposed on all the Jews, regardless of sex or age, an obligation to wear a yellow triangle (with each side of 15 cm. on their backs)<sup>5</sup>.

The sign that distinguished the Jews, being often the implementation of the idea or initiative of the invader's local authorities, had various forms. It might be the said triangle, it might be, as in Vilna, a circle, however, most frequently this was a six-pointed star, called the Star of David, or the Star of Zion<sup>6</sup>. In some territories the Jews were told to wear this star on an armband, elsewhere it had to be sewn on their clothes on the left or right side of the chest, sometimes also (or only) on their backs. The Star as a rule was supposed to be yellow, although in the Generalgouvernement (German-occupied Poland), placed on a white armband, it was blue, that is the colour it now has on the flag of Israel. It had various sizes — according to the order of Hans Frank, it was to be 10 cm. wide, other orders spoke of "the breadth of a hand". The age of children who were freed of wearing the Star was not everywhere the same — in the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia (just as in the Reich itself) this was up to the age of six; the same regulation was issued in Holland, France and Belgium, but in the Generalgouvernement it was the age of up to ten, while in Lwów — even fourteen. In some countries there was an order to place an inscription in the middle of the Star, as if explaining its meaning. Thus the Czech Jews had the word *Jude*, Dutch — *Jood*, and French — *Juif*, written in the middle of the Star.

I think that the aims of such stigmatization of the Jews can be formulated as follows:

1. To make a Jew somebody distinguishable at first sight, which would facilitate and accelerate the actions of discriminatory and repressive character.

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<sup>5</sup> Its photograph has been included in G. Schoenberner's book *Der gelbe Stern. Die Judenverfolgung in Europa 1933-1945*, 4th ed., München 1985, p. 54; E. J. Epstein and Ph. Rosen in *Dictionary of the Holocaust. Biography, Geography and Terminology* (Westport-London 1997, p. 346) say that in May 1937 the Jews in German concentration camps were ordered to wear a yellow triangle. It may be added that there is a signature of the same Hans Cramer under the regulation of 10 July 1941 about the introduction of the stigmatization of Jews in Kaunas.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. entry *Davidstern*, in: A. Rabbow, *Lexikon politischer Symbole*, München 1970, pp. 58-60.

2. To separate the Jews from the rest of society, to isolate them from other citizens, to give them the status of outlaws, to eliminate them from the national collectivity.

3. To humiliate the Jews, to force them to wear this "mark of shame" that would expose them to gibes, attacks and persecution.

4. To affect the non-Jewish population with propaganda, to augment their sense of estrangement from the Jews, followed by the instigation of hatred and encouragement of unpunished actions such as pogroms.

5. To deprive the Jews of human traits, to reduce them to the category of branded cattle, without individual traits, driven from place to place and led to slaughter.

The latter aspect has not been duly noticed so far. I emphasize it, since as a researcher of national stereotypes, I have dealt, among other things, with the animalization of the picture of an enemy applied by caricaturists<sup>7</sup>. The representation of a Jew, and sometimes a Pole as well, as a repulsive, filthy insect, was meant, on the one hand, to prevent pity or empathy, on the other to gain approval for any actions that would eliminate these "germ carriers". In my opinion the stigmatization of the Jews reflected a striving for their dehumanization, it was to arouse among the rest of society an indifference to their fate and consent to their disappearance.

In the analysis of the aims which this stigmatization was to serve we should certainly take into account the time and place at which the respective regulations were issued. Of great significance was not only the character of the invaders' policy in a given territory<sup>8</sup>, but also the successive changes in the conceptions of "the ultimate solution of the Jewish question"<sup>9</sup> taking place

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<sup>7</sup> Cf. T. Szarota, *Polak w karykaturze niemieckiej (1914–1944). Przyczynek do badań stereotypów narodowych (The Pole in German Caricature, 1914–1944. A Contribution to the Study of National Stereotypes)*, in: idem, *Niemcy i Polacy. Wzajemne postrzeganie i stereotypy (Germans and Poles. Mutual Perception and Stereotypes)*, Warszawa 1996, pp. 101–137.

<sup>8</sup> In Denmark, which was to be the so-called "Model Protectorate", the stigmatization of Jews was not introduced at all and it was an absolute exception among the occupied countries. A legend was long alive that the Germans gave it up since King Christian X was said to announce that he would put the Star on himself, cf. L. Yahlil, *The Rescue of Danish Jewry. Test of a Democracy*, Philadelphia 1969, p. 61 ff.

<sup>9</sup> The moment and reasons for making the definitive decision on *Endlösung* that would also embrace Western Europe has recently emerged again as the subject

during the war. Frequently, though not always, the stigmatization of the Jews was a preliminary step that preceded their concentration in a closed district — the ghetto<sup>10</sup>. In the Reich itself, the introduction of the Star of David on the basis of the police regulation of 1 September 1941, can be interpreted as a signal pointing to the approach of the decision of the Holocaust<sup>11</sup>. The stigmatization of the Dutch, Belgian and French Jews in the spring of 1942 was in practice tantamount to pronouncing the sentence of death on them.

I want to present the basic subject of my deliberations — the reactions of occupied Europe to the stigmatization of the Jewish population — as if in the form of a triptych, showing first the attitudes and behaviour of the Jews themselves, then of the anti-Semites, collaborators and the street mob, and finally those who condemned this barbarity, sympathised with the persecuted and showed solidarity with them.

### ***The Reactions of the Stigmatized Jews***

In Ludwik Landau's *Kronika lat wojny i okupacji* (*The Chronicle of the Years of War and German Occupation*), under the date of 29 November 1939 there is a record relating to Łódź: "Since the time of the introduction of armbands the Jews have been subject to so many attacks and beating that, especially men, have been trying to go out as little as possible. The only comfort is the fact that the Polish Christian population generally shows sympathy, or at least there are no signs of anti-Semitism"<sup>12</sup>.

After the Star of David was introduced in the Generalgouvernement, the same chronicler recorded: "In our conditions of

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of scholarly analysis. A young German historian, Christian Gerlach, put forward a controversial thesis that Hitler decided to take up this action only in December 1941, after the United States joined the war. Cf. the essays in his book *Krieg, Ernährung, Völkermord, Forschungen zur deutschen Vernichtungspolitik im Zweiten Weltkrieg*, Hamburg 1998.

<sup>10</sup> In occupied Western Europe only in Amsterdam preparations for creating a ghetto were very advanced, but even there this project was given up at the very last moment.

<sup>11</sup> The Swiss historian Phillippe Burrin says that the decision about the *Endlösung* was made in the second half of September 1941 and in its wake there were seven attacks on synagogues organized by the SD of Paris in this town on the night of 2/3 October 1941, cf. *Hitler et les Juifs. Genèse d'un génocide*, Paris 1989.

<sup>12</sup> L. Landau, *Kronika lat wojny i okupacji* (*The Chronicle of the Years of War and Occupation*), ed. Z. Landau and J. Tomaszewski, vol. 1, Warszawa 1962, p. 104.

mixed population this regulation is especially painful, all the more because the precedents in Łódź show that a person wearing an armband in the street can simply suffer a beating"<sup>13</sup>. We find more information about it in the note of 8 December 1939: "The armbands designed for the Jews are already generally in use — although some people who are actually subject to this regulation try, driven by various considerations, not to wear these signs. — Those who wear them sometimes meet with mistreatment, either on the part of the Germans — there were cases where people wearing armbands were thrown out of trams, to say nothing of the constant 'catching of slaves for forced labour' — or on the part of the population — such as attacks by hooligans, etc.; most people, however, remain indifferent, and as some say, sometimes much friendliness is being shown"<sup>14</sup>. The fear of going out is also testified by the record of 10 January 1940 in Mary Berg's diary: "The Nazi-controlled Polish press has published unofficial reports that a ghetto is being planned for the Warsaw Jews. This report has aroused great bitterness among all our people, who have already been ordered to wear white arm bands with the Star of David on them. For the time being those, whose Semitic appearance is not striking are not wearing these arm bands; but in general all the Jews avoid showing themselves in the streets"<sup>15</sup>. Janina Bauman, who wrote her memoirs years later, said the same thing: "We tried not to go out unless it was necessary"<sup>16</sup>.

I have not found in the sources any relation about the reaction of Warsaw Jews to the Star of David that would speak of wearing it with pride or in an ostentatious way. This was, however, the case in occupied Paris, at least on the first days after the introduction of the VIII<sup>ème</sup> ordonnance of 29 May 1942. We learn from German documents that on Sunday, June 7, 1942, the Jews planned organizing a manifestation in the Champs-Élysées and a march of whole families, with babies in prams, along les Grands Boulevards, from La Place de la République to the Opera. It was even recommended that the war veterans place their military distinctions next to the Star. Other reports show that

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<sup>13</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 109.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 121–122.

<sup>15</sup> M. Berg, *Warsaw Ghetto. A Diary by Mary Berg*, ed. by S. L. Schneiderman, New York 1945, p. 25.

<sup>16</sup> J. Bauman, *Winter in the Morning. A Young Girl's Life in the Warsaw Ghetto and Beyond 1939–1945*, London 1986, p. 30.

such a manifestation took place, indeed, and the Jews declared that they wore the badge with pride since it was proof of German repressions<sup>17</sup>. The Germans were indignant. *Les cafés et restaurants*, we read in the Propaganda–Staffel report of June 10, *présentent le spectacle insupportable de Juifs insolents et provocants attablés à proximité d'officiers et de soldats allemands. Les Juifs déclarent qu'ils portent avec fierté l'étoile juive qui est le signe de l'oppression nationale–socialiste. — Il faut, le plus rapidement possible, interdire aux Juifs l'entrée des grandes artères, des cafés, restaurants, théâtres et, surtout, la fréquentation des bains public*<sup>18</sup>.

Certainly, much more often than a sense of pride, the stigmatized Jews felt embarrassment and shame. The young Parisian Daniel Darès recorded in his note–book: *On m'a donné mon étoile. À l'école, quand je suis entré, j'avais honte. Des élèves me regardaient curieusement et ils s'éloignaient en tournant la tête*<sup>19</sup>. In Vilna the fourteen–year–old Icchak Rudaszevski jotted down in his diary on 8 July 1941: “I was ashamed to show up with this in the street, not because people would know that I was Jewish, but because I was ashamed of what they [the Germans] were doing to us. I was ashamed of our helplessness. Now I no longer bother about this badge. — Let those be ashamed who have made us wear it”<sup>20</sup>. Here is how the thoughts and sensations of a nine–year–old girl were reconstructed years later by Annette Muller, living in Paris: *j'ai eu conscience de ce qu'être juif comportait de sale, de dégradant, de honteux. Cette honte, je la ressentais dans la rue, quand les gens détournaient leur regard devant l'étoile qui nous marquait d'une tache ignoble et puante. Étoile jaune humiliante. C'était donc ça, être juif? Et moi je l'étais et j'en avais honte. J'aurais tant voulu être comme les autres, les gens bien, propres et corrects!*<sup>21</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Cf. A. Kaspi, *Les Juifs pendant l'Occupation*, Paris 1991, p. 111; the Propaganda–Staffel of Paris in a letter of 5 June 1942 to the commander of Sipo and SD in Paris, Helmut Knochen, proposed that on the day of the introduction of the Star the Jews be forbidden an entry to the Champs–Elysées, the Grands Boulevards and rue de Rivoli; photocopy in L. Poliakov's book, *op. cit.*, p. 68.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. L. Poliakov, *op. cit.*, p. 47. A month later, on 8 July 1942 the SS and Police commander Karl Oberg issued the last, ninth regulation concerning the Jews; it enumerated 17 public places where Jews were from then onwards forbidden to appear, the list included even telephone boxes.

<sup>19</sup> Cit. from: A. Rayski, *Le choix des Juifs sous Vichy. Entre soumission et résistance*, Paris 1992, pp. 88–89.

<sup>20</sup> *Fragment dziennika z getta wileńskiego (A Fragment of a Diary from the Vilna Ghetto)*, “Lithuania” 1991, N° 2/3, p. 36.

It is difficult to say how many Jews dared to walk the streets without the Star of David. Jacques Biéliny was surprised when some worker leaned over him in the Paris underground and told him: *Pourquoi vous portez ça? À votre place j'aurais refusé!*<sup>22</sup> A refusal to wear the armband was everywhere punished, there was fear of being denounced. The Parisians who risked going out without it, when they came back home and passed the concierge, attached it with a pin again. In the flats of Warsaw Jews small notices were placed: "The Badge!", "Remember the Badge!", "Have you already put on the Badge?", "Before leaving the building, put on the Badge!"<sup>23</sup>

### **Anti-Semites, Collaborators, Street Mob**

It would certainly be unjust to say that all the pre-war anti-Semites accepted the stigmatization of the Jews with applause, or demanded such an action from the Nazi authorities. Emanuel Ringelblum recorded in his diary on 12 December 1939: "It is characteristic what attitude some leaders of the National Democrats have taken towards the Jews. There are more and more expressions of sympathy because of the introduction of the patch"<sup>24</sup>. Alas, other voices were also heard. In an article under an amazing title *Gubernia Generalna — Paradisus Judaeorum (The Generalgouvernement — Paradisus Judaeorum)*, published on 16 June 1940 in "Walka", the underground organ of the National Party, we read: "The Jews are clearly overprivileged by the German anti-Semitic racists. The armband with the Star of David has become a badge that protects them from being caught and forced to slave labour. The Jews are not kidnapped from the streets, or transported to the Reich. — — The Jewish Ghetto has no reason to complain about the occupation"<sup>25</sup>.

<sup>21</sup> A. Muller, *La petite fille du Vel' d'Hiv*, Paris 1991, pp. 77-78.

<sup>22</sup> J. Biéliny, *Journal 1940-1942. Un journaliste juif à Paris sous l'Occupation*, ed. R. Poznanski, Paris 1992, p. 231 (record from 7 July 1942).

<sup>23</sup> Ph. Friedman, *Roads to Extinction*, p. 18 (cf. note 3).

<sup>24</sup> E. Ringelblum, *Kronika getta warszawskiego wrzesień 1939 - styczeń 1943 (The Chronicle of the Warsaw Ghetto September 1939 - January 1943)*, ed. A. Eisenbach, Warszawa 1983, p. 43.

<sup>25</sup> Under the date 6 June 1940 in Stanisław Srokowski's diary there is a record: "Some Poles put on Jewish armbands — — so as not to be caught for forced labour in Germany", The Archives of the Polish Academy of Sciences (PAN), call number III-22, fol. 84.

I have already mentioned the “attacks by hooligans” on the Jews in Warsaw, recorded by Ludwik Landau. Mary Berg writes that the Jews in Warsaw avoided showing themselves in the streets “because of frequent attacks by Polish hooligans who beat and rob every Jewish passer-by. Some Poles not blessed with Nordic features have also been molested by these hoodlums”<sup>26</sup>. In E. Ringelblum’s diary under the date 30 January 1940 we find the following record: “In the Saxon Garden a band of Polish hooligans aged fourteen–fifteen spotted me with an armband. I had to run for my very life. — — Somebody organizes these anti-Semitic attacks. — — One of the Germans had led the band who beat-up people right and left”<sup>27</sup>. The author of another diary, Chaim Aron Kaplan, under the date 1 February 1940, placed a very apt comment on the incidents under discussion: “No nation lacks hooligan elements, and the conquerors have paved the way for them. They have hinted that the Jews are expendable: that the government will not adhere to the letter of the law when the victims are Jews. And a hint is enough for hooligans. In the past few days there has been no end to attacks upon Jews in public places in broad daylight. The conquerors’ eyes look on, but they are struck with blindness”<sup>28</sup>. These excesses took place before the eyes of many passers-by. There were many casualties, but nobody to turn to for help.

Similar excesses also took place in other countries under German occupation. They generally preceded the introduction of the “mark of shame”, and the German authorities were nearly always instrumental in them, although they tried to give the impression that in each case these were spontaneous, “self-cleansing” actions of the local population<sup>29</sup>.

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<sup>26</sup> M. Berg, *Le ghetto de Varsovie*, ed. S. L. Shneiderman, Paris 1947, p. 28 (this fragment of her record of 10 Jan. 1940 was removed from the Polish edition, probably because of the interference of censorship: M. Berg, *Dziennik z getta warszawskiego*, translated by Maria Salapska, Warszawa 1983, p. 28.). Cf. note 15.

<sup>27</sup> E. Ringelblum, *op. cit.*, p. 85.

<sup>28</sup> Ch. A. Kaplan, *Scroll of Agony. The Warsaw Diary of Chahim A. Kaplan*, translated and edited by A. I. Katsch, New York–Toronto 1965, p. 114.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. T. Szarota, *U progu zagłady. Zajścia antyżydowskie i pogromy w okupowanej Europie (Warszawa, Paryż, Amsterdam, Antwerpia, Kowno) (On the Threshold of the Holocaust. Anti-Jewish Incidents and Pogroms in Occupied Europe: Warsaw, Paris, Amsterdam, Antwerp, Kaunas)*, Warszawa 2000.



The opinions of French anti-Semites and collaborators on the question of the stigmatization of the Jews were divided. On 15 May 1941 the ultra-reactionaries from the journal "Au Pilon" put the introduction of an armband in the first place in their list of demands<sup>30</sup>. Xavier Vallat, the head of the Commissariat général aux questions juives, opposed this policy and consequently lost his post to the fanatic Darquier de Pellepoix<sup>31</sup>. Those who supported such a solution, did not hide their joy, when the respective regulation was issued. Guy Crouzet of "Les Nouveaux Temps" on 16 June 1942 wrote about "une date historique". Lucien Rebattet, the author of *Les Décombres*, the best-seller of the time of German occupation, wrote in the weekly "Je suis partout" on 6 June 1942: *Je disais l'hiver dernier dans ce journal ma joie d'avoir vu en Allemagne les premiers Juifs marqués de leur sceau jaune. Ce sera une joie beaucoup plus vive encore de voir cette étoile dans nos rues parisiennes ou il n'y a pas trois ans cette race exécration nous piétinait. Nous avons pourtant un regret qui est vif: c'est que l'étoile jaune ne soit pas imposée par une loi française*<sup>32</sup>.

And here is a fragment of a short note entitled *Impudence juive* that appeared in the Paris paper "Le Matin" on 2 July 1942: *Les Juifs portent l'étoile jaune, et encore pas tous, car nombreux sont ceux qui à leurs risques et périls, se sont soustraits à cette obligation. Quant à ceux qui s'y soumettent, ils sont loin de le faire avec l'humilité qu'on devait attendre d'eux. Ils y mettent, au contraire, dans bien des cas, une sorte d'ostentation et de provocation insolente. Regardez le spectacle des grands boulevards ou des Champs-Élysées le samedi après-midi — jour du sabbat — ou le dimanche: c'est pas bandes entières que les porteurs d'étoile se promènent, envahissent les cinémas, s'installent en parlant très fort ou en ricanant aux terrasses de café. — — Le Parti Populaire*

<sup>30</sup> At the same time it was postulated to designate a district where Jews could move freely. It was proposed to create the ghetto in Paris in *le quartier du Temple*.

<sup>31</sup> On 17 February 1942 in a talk with the chief of the Gestapo Jewish Department in Paris, Theodor Dannecker, Xavier Vallat told him *Je suis un antisémite bien plus ancien que vous! J'aurai pu être votre père!*, cf. L. Poliakov, *op. cit.*, p. 29.

<sup>32</sup> Cit. from: Archives de la Préfecture de Police in Paris, *Rapports de quinzaine des Renseignements Généraux, Situation de Paris du 15 juin 1942*; cf. R. Poznanski, *Les juifs en France pendant la Seconde Guerre mondiale*, Paris 1997, p. 300. The letter addressed on 15 December 1941 by Gen. Otto von Stülpnagel to Fernand de Brinon shows that the German authorities expected that the Vichy government would submit a draft of a legal act that would introduce the stigmatization of the Jews; R. Bourderon, I. Avakoumovitch, *Détruire le PCF. Archives de l'État français et de l'occupant hitlérien 1940-1944*, Paris 1988, p. 90.

*Français vient de demander qu'un terme soit mis à cet abus et que pour rappeler les Juifs au sentiment de la décence, on leur interdise, tout simplement, l'accès de certains endroits publics. Ne serait-ce pas juste?*<sup>33</sup>

It should be added that the introduction of the Star of David in Paris created an occasion for active anti-Jewish declarations and moves. On Sunday, June 7, 1942, the members of the collaborationist "Rassemblement national populaire" went about town demanding that the personnel of restaurants do not wait on Jews, and when they spot them in a street terrace, make them come inside<sup>34</sup>.

### ***Those who condemned, sympathized and showed solidarity***

Philip Friedman writes, citing some Jewish underground paper, that when in November 1939 the Germans ordered the Jews of Łódź to wear armbands with the Star of David, rumour spread that a group of Polish socialists decided also to put them on in order to demonstrate their solidarity with the victims of persecution. We do not know, however, whether this actually happened. After the introduction of armbands in the General-gouvernement Polish Christians happened to put them on, but only very few and in exceptional situations, that is e.g. when they wanted to escape arrest on the street<sup>35</sup>. The fact that examples of sympathy shown to the Jews were few may be explained by Polish anti-Semitism, however, in my opinion, a factor of decisive importance was the character of the Nazi rule by terror in occupied Poland.

The above-quoted Friedman cites the statement by a member of the Czechoslovak National Council, Hubert Ripka, addressed by him to the Jews in the territory of the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia on 18 September 1941: "Jews of Czechoslovakia, we think of you with profound sympathy in these days. (...) Today they [the Germans] wish to designate you publicly by a mark of shame. But the yellow Star of David is a mark of honor which all

<sup>33</sup> The postulate of Jacques Doriot's party was put into practice by the order of K. Oberg of 8 July 1942 (cf. note 18).

<sup>34</sup> R. Poznanski, *op. cit.*, p. 298.

<sup>35</sup> This happened in the spring and summer of 1940, that is before the ghetto was created, and allegedly in January 1943, during the massive hunts in the streets.

decent people will respect. (...) Jewish friends, do not hide your Jewish identity, be proud of it"<sup>36</sup>. Unfortunately, it has not been established how the Czech Jews reacted to the introduction of the Star of David in the Protectorate, or what was the reaction of the Czechs.

In the occupied countries of Western Europe people thought they would be able to openly and ostentatiously express their disapproval of the racist segregation, and show their friendliness and sympathy towards the Jews. A letter of a Gestapo functionary in the Hague, addressed to his Paris colleague, chief of the Jewish Department, Theodor Dannecker, in reply to the latter's question about the reaction of the Dutchmen to the stigmatization of the Jews, bears the date 8 June 1942. It turned out that religious people accepted the regulation about the Star of David with strong indignation, treating it also as a violation of Holland's sovereignty and an insult to the whole Dutch nation. On the first days many Dutchmen demonstratively walked the streets with this sign on. On public vehicles special kindness was shown to the Jews, and seats were given up to them<sup>37</sup>. The persons who wore the Star as a sign of protest and solidarity were immediately arrested and imprisoned for 6 weeks<sup>38</sup>. We learn from a police report that on the night of 2/3 May 1942 in Amsterdam a leaflet was distributed calling on everybody to put the Star on; this appeal was only partly a success, since in the first week only 20 persons were punished with a fine for wearing the Star "illegally". The police managed to capture some painter who made 60 stars himself and then sold them<sup>39</sup>. On the eve of the introduction of this regulation, that is on 1 May 1942, one of the Dutch conspiratorial papers was said to print 300,000 Stars of David with the inscription: "Jews and non-Jews are the same beings"<sup>40</sup>.

The German military commander in Belgium, Alexander von Falkenhäusen, wrote in his report of 16 March 1942: *Von der Einführung des Judensterns wurde dagegen Abstand genommen, da anzunehmen ist, dass hierdurch zugunsten der Juden eine*

<sup>36</sup> Ph. Friedman, as in note 23, p. 27.

<sup>37</sup> This letter is cited by L. Poliakov, *op. cit.*, pp. 69-71.

<sup>38</sup> Ph. Friedman, *op. cit.*, p. 26.

<sup>39</sup> Nederlands Instituut voor Oorlogsdocumentatie, *Reports of Sipo and SD*, folder 52a, report without number (probably N° 92) and without a date (probably 5 May 1942).

<sup>40</sup> *Enzyklopädie des Holocaust*, *op. cit.*, p. 753.

*Mitleidsbewegung entsteht, der die bisher uninteressierte Bevölkerung fernstand*<sup>41</sup>. His fear was quite justified. The President of the Municipal Council of Brussels said in his letter addressed to the German authorities on 5 June 1942: *dass man ausserstande sei, sich an Handlungen zu beteiligen, die in solchem Masse gegen die Menschenwürde verstieessen*<sup>42</sup>. Let us take the chronicle *La Belgique sous les nazis* by Paul Delandsheere and Alphons Ooms. Under the date 10 July 1942 we read: *Hommes, femmes et enfants juifs doivent la [the Star of David — T. S.] porter ostensiblement sur le coté gauche de la poitrine. Cela les fait reconnaître de loin. On en voit, dans les rues, un assez grand nombre, plus qu'on ne le supposait. On entend au passage leurs divers langages. Il y a des Allemands, des Polonais, des Tchèques, des Français, preuve que notre sol fut toujours hospitalier à l'infortune persécutée. L'autorité occupante a cru les marquer ainsi d'un flétrissant stigmat. Mais nul d'entre eux ne songe à le dissimuler. Ils se sont vite rendu compte que cette révélation obligatoire et publique de leur identité raciale ne leur attire, de la part de la population, ni hostilité, ni mépris. Au contraire, il est visible qu'elle compatit à leur sort, plus pénible encore que le sien. On en a quotidiennement la preuve. "C'est vrai, me dit une dame juive, nous sommes mieux vus qu'avant; et je remarque une réaction à laquelle je ne m'attendais pas: des gens voyant mon étoile me cèdent leur place en tram!"*

*Dans une école libre du haut de la ville, un instituteur dit à ses élèves: "Vous savez qu'il y a deux Juifs parmi vos petits compagnons; à partir de demain, ils devront porter l'étoile de David. Ne les plaisantez pas à ce sujet; soyez plutôt bons pour eux"*<sup>43</sup>. *Plusieurs allèrent au delà de cette recommandation et, le lendemain, épinglèrent en classe, par solidarité, une étoile jaune sur leurs vêtements... Ainsi réagit le sentiment public*<sup>44</sup>.

Jewish children, almost everywhere, were most afraid of being rejected by their colleagues. Janina Bauman writes that on the first day she appeared with the Star of David at school, the

<sup>41</sup> Institut für Zeitgeschichte in Munich, microfilm MA 677/4, fol. 546.

<sup>42</sup> L. Yahil, *Die Shoah. Überlebenskampf und Vernichtung der europäischen Juden*, München 1998, p. 474.

<sup>43</sup> In Paris some agent informed the police that in one of the schools the teachers ordered the pupils to come to school on 8 June 1942 with a badge of any kind they chose, L. Poliakov, *op. cit.*, p. 85.

<sup>44</sup> Vol. 2, Bruxelles, [without the date of publication], pp. 282–283.

“Aryan” schoolgirls advised her to take it off. “The following morning”, she remembered, “two of my new friends were waiting for me at the gate. I slipped off my band again and we went to school together. And so it was ever after: two girls with me in the morning, six or more in the afternoon. I had a warm, reassuring feeling of being among friends”<sup>45</sup>.

Today the behaviour of Parisians is the one we certainly know most about<sup>46</sup>. Rumours about the stigmatization of the Jews had circulated in this town as early as the autumn of 1940<sup>47</sup>. Several months before it became a fact, some woman *se fabriquait un brassard jaune afin de pouvoir s'en parer dans le cas ou les Allemands tenteraient d'obliger les israélites à en porter*<sup>48</sup>. On the day the regulation about the Star was issued, 29 May 1942, in the underground journal “Libération” there appeared an article *L'Odieux antisémitisme*, where we read: *Nous n'admettrons jamais que, sur notre sol, les citoyens ni les hôtes soient inquiétés par cause de religion*<sup>49</sup>. The following week in several districts of Paris leaflets were stuck on the walls: *Français, pour l'honneur de la France, exigez la suppression immédiate de l'étoile jaune imposée aux Juifs, Pour embeter Hitler, solidarisons-nous avec les Juifs, Comme les Belges l'ont fait, mettons l'insigne jaune. A bas l'antisémitisme*<sup>50</sup>.

<sup>45</sup> J. Bauman, *op. cit.*, p. 32.

<sup>46</sup> Cf. R. Poznanski, *Porter l'étoile jaune à Paris*, “Revue historique” 292, 1995, 1, pp. 53–71.

<sup>47</sup> This was connected with the registration of the Jews and the order to mark all Jewish shops and enterprises. The Germans did not decide to do it then, therefore it became impossible to embrace the Jews with the same restrictions as the Negroes, barring them from using the *métro*.

<sup>48</sup> This information is given by Madeleine Gex Le Verrier, the author of memoirs *Une française dans la Tourmente*, Paris 1945, p. 62, written at the beginning of 1942 in London, after she left Paris.

<sup>49</sup> N° 78; in June 1942 in the Communist underground journal “J'accuse” an appeal appeared: *Français, saluez les porteurs de l'insigne jaune!* In the text we read: *Français, démontrez aux Juifs, vos frères, votre solidarité, votre respect à ces victimes de la barbarie nazie. — C'est à vous, Français, qu'ils appartiennent de prouver que la fraternité humaine n'est pas un vain mot. Vous trouverez cent moyens de témoigner votre sympathie aux Juifs brimés et persécutés, vous imposerez silence aux provocateurs s'ils s'en trouvent, cit. from A. Rayski, *Face à l'extermination et au secret*, in: S. Courtois, A. Rayski, *Qui savait quoi? L'extermination des Juifs, 1941–1945*, Paris 1987, pp. 140–141.*

<sup>50</sup> R. Poznanski, *Les Juifs*, p. 296; on 16 June 1942 the writer Jean Guéhennno wrote down in his diary an observation concerning the behaviour of Parisians towards the Jews: *Jamais les gens n'ont été si aimables, Journal des années noires 1940–1944*, Paris 1947, p. 209.

Sunday, June 7, 1942, was to turn in Paris into a massive manifestation of solidarity with the persecuted Jews. Appeals to this effect were made by various underground organizations, above all the Communists and Gaullists<sup>51</sup>. The Frenchmen were called upon either to pin a yellow star made of material or paper onto their clothes, or to wear some yellow mark, e.g. a yellow handkerchief or a yellow flower in their buttonholes<sup>52</sup>. Quite a number of Parisians complied with the appeal. That day the police in Paris arrested 17 Jews for not wearing the Star, two Jews for wearing it next to a military distinction, seven "Aryan" Frenchmen for wearing the Star illegally, and 13 for wearing some "fanciful badges"<sup>53</sup>. Serge Klarsfeld published recently a list of ten women interned in the Tourelles camp on 20 June 1942 for demonstrating their sympathy with the Jews. They wore the Stars of David with the inscription *Amie des Juifs*<sup>54</sup>. Several persons from this group, together with others who were held responsible for the same "offence", landed up later in the camp at Drancy, where they were detained till 1 September 1942. Among them were the architect Henri Muratet, who wore the Star with the inscription *Auvergnat*, the student Michel Reyssat (a *zazou* of Paris), who placed the inscription "Swing" next to the Star, the official Michel Ravet, who wore this sign with the inscription *Goi*, and the news-vendor Marie Lang, who attached the Star of David to the neck of her little dog<sup>55</sup>.

Jacques Biélinky in his diary placed the text of the announcement of the Nazi authorities issued on 26 June 1942 that threatened to send to a concentration camp the non-Jews who, by wearing the Star *avaient ainsi manifesté leur sympathie pour le judaïsme* as well as those Jews who did not wear the Star<sup>56</sup>.

<sup>51</sup> The above-cited letter of the Propaganda-Staffel to H. Knochen of 5 June 1942, L. Poliakov, *op. cit.*, p. 67 (photocopy), and pp. 78-79 (translation into French).

<sup>52</sup> The letter of the Propaganda-Staffel of 6 June 1942, L. Poliakov, *op. cit.*, p. 79.

<sup>53</sup> Archives Nationales, Paris, file AJ 40/877, dossier 2, police report of 9 June 1942.

<sup>54</sup> S. Klarsfeld, *Le Calendrier de la persécution des Juifs en France 1940-1944*, Paris 1993, p. 241 (photocopy of the document under which the author of the book placed a subtitle: *Celles qui ont sauvé l'honneur*); one of those brave girls published her memoirs: Alice Courouble, *Amie des Juifs*, Paris 1946.

<sup>55</sup> L. Poliakov, *op. cit.*, pp. 87-89; cf. also G. Wellers, *L'étoile jaune à l'heure de Vichy de Drancy à Auschwitz*, Paris 1973, p. 262.

<sup>56</sup> J. Biélinky, *op. cit.*, p. 228.

A physician staying in Kaunas, Elena Kutorgienė-Buiydaite, recorded on 30 July 1941 in her diary: *Vse i yedut yevrei s zhalkimi pozhitkami. — — Idut po mostovoy gus'kom, z zhelytymi zvezdami. Chto-to dikoye. Stydno!*<sup>57</sup> And here are the reflections by a Pole — Andrzej Bobkowski — who lived in occupied Paris. On 1 June 1942 the following record appeared in his diary: "In a situation where they need the French and want to make them co-operate, it's absolutely loony to issue such a regulation in this country and to show off in this way in front of the nation, which, say what you will, produced the *Déclaration des droits de l'homme* and is still completely pervaded by its ideas. Tragic, loathsome, hopeless". Some days later, on 9 June 1942 our countryman added: "I am trying not to notice them [the Jews — T. S.], for I am ashamed. But it is strange how few people realize what savagery we, the white people, have reached. I am ashamed of all this magnificent race which has built the modern world, created the whole of its technology, harnessed nature, overcome so many diseases — what for? So as to force its brothers, perhaps its most valuable element, its yeast, to wear these humiliating badges, as if they were medieval lepers. If I were a coloured man I would lose all my respect for the whites. Maybe one day we will have to pay the highest price for these madmen's games. The price of our existence. Our technology and our savagery will be used for our destruction"<sup>58</sup>.

(Translated by Agnieszka Kreczmar)

<sup>57</sup> *Chernaya kniga o zlodetskoy povsemestnoy ubiystve Yevreyev nemetsko-fashtskimi zakhvatchikami*, ed. W. Grossman, I. Erenburg, Vilnius 1993, p. 309.

<sup>58</sup> A. Bobkowski, *Szkice piórktem (Francja 1940–1944)* (*Pen Sketches, France 1940–1944*), part 2, Londyn 1985, pp. 100–101; there is a French translation of this book published in Switzerland: *En guerre et en paix. Journal 1940–1944*, trans. L. Dyèvre, Montricher 1991 — this is doubtless one of the most interesting personal diaries, written in occupied Paris. Its German edition was displayed at the Book Fair in Frankfurt-am-Main in 2000.