At around 11 a.m. on November 9, 1952, two forty-year-old performers stepped out on the stage at the Haus Vaterland on Potsdamer Platz in the heart of East Berlin, the capital of the three-year-old German Democratic Republic. One of them, Eberhard Rebling, on piano, was already a familiar name in the world of East German music. Rebling, a non-Jew, had been raised in Berlin and had trained as a pianist and musicologist before and, for a time, during the Nazi period, until he left for Holland in 1936. He returned to Berlin in February 1952 to become one of the “mighty handful,” a group of five musicologists responsible for building official East German musical culture.¹ The soul of the November performance, however, was not Rebling. He was there to accompany a Dutch Jewish singer and dancer specializing in Yiddish music named Lin Jaldati, who was making her East German debut that morning. She also happened to be Rebling’s wife.

They were performing Yiddish music on November 9, an ignominious day in German history marking the 1918 abdication of the Kaiser and the armistice that ended World War I and Kristallnacht. It is not surprising, then, that on this November date, the fourteenth anniversary of Kristallnacht, the Berlin Jewish community was hosting a special memorial event. After all, they had been doing exactly that since the end of the war. The highlight of the morning program was the singing of Jewish battle songs in Yiddish by Jaldati, someone few could have imagined ever being in this august building, which was so far from her Dutch home, both physically and psychologically.²
Jaldati’s 1952 Kristallnacht concert was the beginning of an illustrious career as a Yiddish chanteuse in East Germany. In 1959, after seven years spent building her reputation in the GDR, Jaldati went on her first European concert tour as an official representative of her adopted home. The trip was the beginning of Jaldati’s thirty-year career as the Yiddish diva of the communist world and as an East German cultural ambassador spreading antifascist music.

For Jaldati, however, that November 1952 debut performance meant much more. She had left her homeland of Holland earlier that year, and the concert was the first step in rebuilding her career as a performer and propagator of Yiddish music and eastern European Jewish culture in the self-proclaimed “democratic Germany.” One could even say that the concert and her musical career in the GDR gave her life after surviving Auschwitz and Bergen-Belsen during World War II.

Jaldati’s ability to popularize Yiddish music with the support of the highest state and SED representatives in East Germany is difficult to explain, especially in light of the almost clichéd view of East Germany as being anti-Semitic and, as such, lacking any kind of Jewish life. On the one hand, the country had few native Yiddish speakers, and in the early 1950s, a harsh anti-Semitic campaign, masquerading as anti-Zionism, forced many East German Jewish leaders to leave the country. On the other hand, her popularity with both general audiences and state functionaries confirms the powerful role music played in the forging of a new East German national identity and an antifascist ideology.

But the somber Yiddish dirges that became Jaldati’s most popular antifascist songs force us to reexamine the presumption that East German music was always meant to “express heroic pathos, revolutionary struggle, patriotism and optimism, happiness, and joy in life.” More poignantly, as this chapter reveals, her popularity challenges the presumed absence of Jewish culture and memory in East Germany and highlights how Yiddish culture in particular functioned in East Germany’s advertisement of itself as the antifascist alternative to the “fascist” West Germany. Jaldati and her popular performances of Yiddish music in the 1950s suggest that prewar eastern European Jewish culture was central to East Germany’s attempts to overcome its Nazi past.

Lin Jaldati, Leftist Politics, and Yiddish Music

Jaldati, a stage name assumed by Rebekka Brilleslijper in 1935, did not start out as a singer. Her first foray into the arts, in the early 1930s, was as a dancer working for Dutch revues and the national ballet. But in 1937, when she was living in a boarding house for up-and-coming artists in The Hague, one of the other residents, Eberhard Rebling, overheard her singing songs in a language
that sounded a bit like the German he spoke. It turned out to be Yiddish, which Jaldati had learned in both her Jewish neighborhood in Amsterdam and in leftist Zionist summer camps, as well as from her previous boyfriend, Boris Kowadlo, who had introduced her to the institutional world of eastern European Jewish immigrants in Amsterdam.\(^8\)

She had been learning Yiddish and eastern European Jewish culture from friends of Kowadlo, mostly immigrants who had established Amsterdam’s leftist Ansky club in 1920 (named for the famed Jewish cultural activist and writer Sh. Ansky, the pseudonym of Shloyme Zanvil Rappoport).\(^9\) Jaldati got her break while working in the Jewish community in April 1935, where she was performing Jewish folk dances at the Ansky club’s fiftieth anniversary celebration of Shalom Aleichem’s career in Yiddish literature.\(^10\) She danced again at an October 1936 Zionist Maccabi-Amsterdam Simchas Torah ball.\(^11\) The immigrant community encouraged the young Dutch Jewish dancer to learn to sing, helping to launch her career as an interpreter of Yiddish music. (She is pictured mid-performance in figure 8.1.) They also encouraged her to become more involved in leftist politics, which led Jaldati to join the Communistische Partij Nederland (CPN) in 1936.

In the 1930s, it was hard not to choose political sides in Europe. Nazi Germany was spreading its political tentacles throughout Europe in the second half of the decade, with its pro-Franco support in the Spanish Civil War and, later, with the conquest of Austria and Czechoslovakia. Its embassies and consulates were also radiating Nazism all over the continent.\(^12\) And the Soviet Union and Comintern supported Communist parties, and sometimes broader leftist coalitions, wherever they could. Jaldati chose a leftist, antifascist path; her early public performances of Yiddish culture took place both in Jewish communal contexts and, according to her autobiography, at rallies protesting Dutch unemployment and the Spanish Civil War.\(^13\) However, her programs of Jewish dances and songs, which she choreographed herself based on conversations with Amsterdam immigrants, were a peripheral part of her career until, in 1938, Rebling convinced Jaldati to strike out on her own and start a Yiddish variety show, which he would accompany on the piano. In the process, the couple produced shows based on new research that Rebling, who also specialized in the study of dance, conducted. He, too, grew close to the leftist Jewish immigrant community in Holland, and in 1939, he and Jaldati had trees planted in their honor in the Zionist settlement in Palestine, as a symbol of their politics and, for Rebling, an expression of solidarity with the Jewish community.\(^14\)

The couple’s shows from 1938 combined their passions: her Jewish songs and dances, and his piano and classical music. Like good cabaret, their performances, called *Joodsche Kunstavond* (An Evening of Jewish Art), were carefully choreographed and involved dance and movement as much as singing. However, unlike
most of the other cabaret that was the rage in 1930s Europe, their shows did not overtly satirize contemporary politics. There was little mention of Hitler or fascism; instead the performances were heavily didactic, teaching Dutch audiences, both Jewish and not, about eastern European Jewish culture.

In the 1920s and 1930s, in cities like Berlin, New York, Tel Aviv, and Warsaw, Yiddish theater and cabaret were generally performed for Yiddish-speaking audiences, and there was little cultural or emotional distance between the performer and the audience. At their performances, in contrast, Jaldati and Rebling built a relationship with their Dutch audiences pedagogically by teaching them about Yiddish culture. They were operating in a post-vernacular Yiddish universe, in which the use of the language was primarily performative and didactic, rather than a vernacular means of communicating and building community with the audience. Still, though their shows lacked an overt political message, in 1938...
and 1939 the very act of performing Yiddish music in Holland was a political statement about one’s stance toward international fascism.

The German invasion of Holland on May 10, 1940, however, put an end to their Yiddish cabaret and to Jaldati’s public performances. As a German citizen, Rebling was able to continue his career and public life; he taught piano and published music reviews in the Dutch press until early 1942, when he received a draft notice ordering him to serve in the Wehrmacht. Since he was partnered to a Jewish woman, the idea of fighting for the Reich, which had declared their relationship illegal in its 1935 Nuremberg Laws, was too much for him. He therefore dodged the draft and went underground. Jaldati, for her part, earned a living by teaching privately. When she and the whole Brilleslijper family received deportation orders in 1942, they ignored them and went into hiding with the Dutch Communist underground.

In the underground, Jaldati and Rebling continued performing and gave illegal house concerts under the auspices of De Vrije Kunstenaar (The Free Artist), the illegal Dutch artists’ union, until July 1944, when their safe house, located about thirty miles from Amsterdam, was betrayed and nearly everyone living there, arrested. During the police transport from the safe house to Amsterdam, Rebling escaped out the back of a police wagon. In Amsterdam, Jaldati was interrogated as a political subversive for several days and then sent to Westerbork, a Dutch transit camp in northeast Holland, near the German border. On September 3, Jaldati and her family were on the last train out of Westerbork to Auschwitz, the same train that was carrying the family of Anne Frank. Losing everyone in her family but her sister Janny, Jaldati survived Auschwitz, a death march to Bergen-Belsen, and then a bout with typhus before the British liberated Bergen-Belsen on April 15, 1945. She and Janny helped to nurse the dying Anne and Margot Frank until they succumbed to typhus shortly before the liberation. Then the two broken Holocaust survivors made their way back to a decimated Holland, liberated only on May 5 and still reeling from the Germans’ 1944‒45 occupation policies, which led to the mass starvation known as the Hunger Winter. In late May, Jaldati reunited with Rebling.

Right after: Jews, Communists, and the Making of War
Memory through Music

Postwar Europe looked nothing like the Europe of 1939. Jaldati returned home to a destroyed Jewish community, a traumatized Dutch society, and more personally, to the realization that, of her family, only she, her sister, her husband, and her young daughter Kathinka had survived the war. In addition to rebuilding her own life, and dealing with relief agencies and insurance companies, Jaldati,
like a small number of survivors, began to search the ruins of Jewish culture.\(^{22}\) She turned to Yiddish-speaking survivors of the war and Nazi atrocities for additional musical material. In doing so, she joined other survivors, including famous Yiddish writers like Shmerke Kaczerginski, who took up the task of picking up the pieces of a destroyed culture by becoming *zamlers*, or “collectors,” a role popularized in the prewar period by the Vilna-based YIVO, a center of scholarship on eastern European Jewry, as hundreds of Jews set off on amateur ethnographic expeditions documenting Yiddish-language culture.\(^{23}\) As we have seen in several chapters in this volume, the act of collecting and preserving Yiddish culture took on an urgency in the postwar period, as the songs, melodies, and stories of Jewish refugees, camp survivors, and others were often the only remnants of eastern European Jewish life. In the DP camps, newspapers urged readers to collect music and other material. As one newspaper admonished: “It is the obligation of every surviving Jew to immortalize the songs that were sung in his ghetto or camp. Get in touch with us!”\(^{24}\) Collectors went to DP camps in Germany and Italy, wrote down music, and then brought it to Australia, Israel, the United States, or, in Jaldati’s case, to Holland, to make sure that Yiddish music would persist, even in the absence of the Jews who produced it.

After recovering physically from her camp experience, she performed continually in postwar Holland, beginning in late 1945. But she began functioning as a collector of the cultural ruins of eastern European Jewry when she and Rebling went on their first European tour to Scandinavia.\(^{25}\) In November and December 1946, the couple performed in Copenhagen, Denmark; Malmö, Stockholm, Norrköping, Sweden; and Helsinki, Finland. Local Jewish cultural organizations, such as Copenhagen’s Jødisk Ungdomsforening (Jewish Youth Organization), Stockholm’s Jidisher Dramatischer Amatergeselshaft (Yiddish Amateur Drama Society), and Helsinki’s Judiska Saskolans Direktion (Jewish High School Board), hosted them.\(^{26}\) While in Sweden singing for survivors, Jaldati made a side trip to Falun to meet Leo Rosenblüt, a musician and survivor who presented Jaldati with a book of Yiddish songs from the concentration camps. Many of these songs made their way into her repertoire, including her signature piece “S’brent,” Mordechai Gebirtig’s slow minor-key lamentation providing the melody for its fiery lyrics of resistance.\(^{27}\) She had heard the song in Auschwitz, but only after meeting Rosenblüt did she obtain the musical score.

In April 1947, just four months after her successful Scandinavian tour, Jaldati brought her music to Germany, for the first time as a free woman. (She had sung in the barracks at Auschwitz and Bergen-Belsen, so she had technically already sung in Germany.) Going to Germany required fortitude for many reasons, including the inevitable visit with Rebling’s parents, whom she described as anti-Semitic, especially her father-in-law, who had been a proud member of the Nazi Party.\(^{28}\) She performed at Berlin’s main DP camp, Schlachtensee, in the...
American sector of Berlin, which, according to the *Berliner Zeitung*, had in March opened a theater space for Yiddish performances.\(^{29}\) The note she received from the UNRRA of Schlachtensee shortly thereafter, written in Yiddish, thanked her profusely, because “her concert had brought great joy” to the refugees.\(^{30}\) She and Rebling returned in September, so that Rebling could give talks about his musicological research in Soviet-occupied Berlin.\(^{31}\)

Their initial trip to Germany prompted further invitations to perform there, and in May 1948 they returned, just as the conflict between Berlin’s Soviet-occupation administration and the Western Allies was increasing, leading to the June 1948 Berlin Blockade. On the ground, as Berliners navigated the growing political conflict, they were attempting to rebuild their lives (and their ruined city) and to restore some semblance of normalcy, which included such mundane and joyous activities as attending concerts. Jaldati’s second Berlin performance took place on May 1, 1948—May Day—just a few weeks before David Ben Gurion announced the establishment of the State of Israel. Again, she performed at Schlachtensee, with a show unlike any she had given before.\(^{32}\) The program, which was printed in Yiddish (written in Latin characters, likely because there was no Hebrew type), included such diverse pieces as Gebirtig’s “Shoyn shtil iz in gesl” (It’s Gotten Quiet in the Alleyway) and the expressionist *danse macabre* from Sh. Ansky’s play, *Der dibek* (The Dybbuk).\(^{33}\) Just as she had done across Scandinavia, Jaldati sang as an insider, one camp survivor to another. She was responding to the call in the DP newspapers for survivors to collect music and other Yiddish cultural artifacts from DPs across Europe. A week later, she performed again—this time for the Berlin Jewish community, which hosted two concerts for Jaldati on May 10 and 11 at its building in the American sector on Joachimsthaler Straße.\(^{34}\) And, making good on her desire to perform Yiddish to wide audiences, Jaldati had her fifteen minutes of fame, literally, when she sang Yiddish songs on the East German radio station Berliner Rundfunk on September 2, 1948, from 5:45 to 6:00 p.m., sandwiched between a show called *Sie fragen—wir antworten* (You Ask, We Answer) and the local news.\(^{35}\)

Jaldati was a DP herself (and a Yiddish stage star among survivors), but she and Rebling were also Communists with their own heroic story of survival in the underground. She did not see a contradiction in these two identities. However, by 1948, Europe was becoming an ideologically divided continent, shaped by Soviet and American occupation forces. Communists had been celebrated in the immediate postwar years for their wartime resistance, but by the late 1940s, as the Cold War heated up, they were regarded suspiciously, even as a potential fifth column.\(^{36}\) For Jews, unlike in the prewar period, when Communist and Jewish identities supported one another under the rubric of antifascism, during the Cold War, the two identities became increasingly incompatible, at least at the level of institutional politics.
Although he had been a leftist and member of the underground, Rebling did not formally join the Communist Party of the Netherlands (CPN) until after the war, in either 1946 or 1947. Under a pseudonym, he wrote for and served as music editor of the CPN newspaper *De Waarheid* (The Truth), as he had done before the war, while continuing to teach and perform in the Jewish community. For Rebling, the two identities were more distinct than they were for Jaldati. On the one hand, he was a proud Party member, music editor of its newspaper, and CPN representative at international events, even leading a delegation to Moscow in 1950. On the other hand, like his wife, he was a minor celebrity in Holland’s postwar Jewish community. But the boundaries between his two identities started collapsing in on him in 1950. According to Rebling, he lost his job teaching piano in the Jewish community when its leaders discovered he was a Communist, and then in 1951, he lost his job as music editor of *De Waarheid* amid political infighting and his conflicts with the CPN leadership.

Jaldati never became as impassioned a Communist as Rebling, but in 1949 she began performing more frequently for international Communist audiences. In April she and Rebling attended the World Congress for Advocates for Peace in Paris, a Soviet-sponsored postwar international institution used in the war of rhetoric against the United States and its allies, who were accused of fomenting violence and nuclear proliferation. Rebling covered the event for *De Waarheid* and met with many German socialist remigrants, who tried to convince him to move back to Germany. Jaldati was there with a women’s organization, hoping to form relationships with the international Communist women’s community. In Paris the renowned Communist (and Jewish) writer Anna Seghers, who had moved back to Germany in 1947 after a period of exile in Mexico, suggested that Jaldati help rebuild a new Germany. As Jaldati remembers it, Seghers implored her to consider moving with her husband to the former Soviet Zone and the soon-to-be independent German Democratic Republic suggesting that Jaldati’s music would “clean out the rubble in people’s heads” after twelve years of Nazism. Instead, as a Jewish Auschwitz survivor, she would spiritually purify the contaminated souls in a Germany that had just perpetrated the greatest crime in modern history. Her music would be a form of secular expiation.

Jaldati’s big break in the Communist world was a June 11, 1949, performance in Prague with the famed singer Paul Robeson, whom she had met in Paris that April. The two were on Prague national radio in a Czech program called *Songs of Two Oppressed Peoples*. When a Czech reporter asked Jaldati why she sang Yiddish music, she did not talk about collecting the remnants of Jewish culture, as she would have done in Stockholm or Schlachtensee. The journalist reported
her and Robeson’s answer, “They were publicizing the fight [against race hatred], but not just for themselves. They fight on behalf of the rights of all of mankind using the most powerful weapon of all—love.” Until 1948, Jaldati had sung primarily for Jewish institutions, and after the war, generally to Jewish DPs. By 1949, her Communist identity had become more visible in her choice of where and how she performed Yiddish music, and more importantly, how she talked about what she was doing. At the same time, she never stopped propagating and performing Yiddish culture for its own sake, recognizing the importance of Yiddish music and Jewish culture, especially to postwar European audiences.

From Prague, Jaldati returned to Berlin. By 1949, there were no DPs to host her at Schlachtensee or at any other Berlin DP camp, because all the camps had been deactivated during the Berlin Blockade. Instead, the Berlin Jewish community received permission from the American military authorities to produce a matinee concert of Jewish music in Kreuzberg at the Palladium Theater, a popular, non-Jewish concert venue. With their new focus on the local Berlin Jewish community, Jaldati and Rebling produced the concert program in German rather than Yiddish, and offered a broader repertoire of songs in Yiddish and Hebrew and included some German classical music performed by Rebling.

Despite the increasing polarization in Holland caused by Cold War politics and Jaldati’s greater visibility as a Communist performer, she managed to be part of both the Communist and Jewish worlds in Amsterdam. On May 10, 1951, she gave a big concert on Yom Ha’atzma’ut for the Nederlands Zionistenbond (Dutch Zionist Union), and on October 17, the leftist community center Ons Huis Rozenstraat hosted the couple for an evening of Yiddish and other songs. At least for Jaldati and Rebling, there was still no contradiction in being a Zionist and embracing Jewish nationalism as well as a Communist calling for universalism and human rights. But their dual lives in Holland, especially Rebling’s, were becoming increasingly tenuous.

Many of Rebling’s colleagues had moved back to Germany to rebuild the country on socialist terms. As for Jaldati, it was less clear what she would have to look forward to if she and Rebling were to move to the GDR. On the one hand, it was a socialist country, and Jaldati mentioned the attraction of contributing to socialism in later years as motivation to move. On the other hand, it was Germany, the very country that had orchestrated the murder of her family and of the eastern European Jewish cultural community she had grown to love.

After Rebling lost his job with De Waarheid, and with her family’s resultant bleak financial situation in Holland, life in East Germany began to look promising. By fall 1951, the newly established Verband Deutscher Komponisten und Musikwissenschaftler (later called Verband der Komponisten und Musikwissenschaftler der DDR) laid the groundwork for musical culture and politics in East Germany and established its journal Musik und Gesellschaft.
association's leaders offered the editorship, a high-ranking position in the musical establishment, to Rebling. The couple decided to make the move to the GDR and formally petitioned East Germany for permission. On December 13, 1951, the SED’s Zentralkomitee approved his return to the GDR and began the process of welcoming him and his Dutch family home.50

Jaldati Brings Yiddish Culture to the German Democratic Republic

The family arrived in Berlin in February 1952, and Jaldati, with Rebling acting as her agent, began hustling to arrange concerts for herself in a leftist German musical atmosphere, where there was little place for Yiddish music. But it is hard to imagine a better agent for the Yiddish songstress than Rebling, who was so deeply enmeshed in the political power structure that he could open doors to get her engagements. One might imagine that, given their position of privilege in the German socialist musical establishment and the atmosphere of anti-Zionism at the time, they would have been forced to choose state socialist musical contexts over Jewish communal institutions. In fact, neither Jaldati nor Rebling turned away from the Jewish community, which had always hosted their concerts and, in the postwar period, their tours as well. Although they were not official members, they regularly performed for the local Berlin Jewish community and later for the broader Verband der Jüdischen Gemeinden in der DDR (Federation of Jewish Communities of the German Democratic Republic), which became a constant source of work and connection.51

In 1952 Berlin’s Jewish community numbered several thousand, making it the largest in postwar Germany. It was still an institutionally united community, one struggling to remain so in an increasingly divided city, which would be physically severed in August 1961 when the East German government built the Berlin Wall.52 The city’s Jewish community—along with the VVN and the Berlin branch of the Nationale Front des demokratischen Deutschland (National Front for a Democratic Germany)—hosted Jaldati for her 1952 debut concert commemorating Kristallnacht.53 No other single day on the memorial calendar had such symbolic and real meaning in the lives of German Jews. Given the event’s diverse co-sponsors, Kristallnacht also loomed large in East German antifascist memorial culture, which suggests that East Germany incorporated, but did not erase, memory of Jewish persecution in favor of a universal antifascism. In addition to Jaldati, it featured speakers from each sponsoring organization, including Martin Riesenburger who was considered the official rabbi of Soviet-occupied Berlin, even though he was not formally ordained.54
One year later, the community had split into the Jewish Community of West Berlin and the Jewish Community of Greater Berlin, which was how East Berliners referred to their part of the city. At the first Kristallnacht commemoration after the division, Jaldati sang again but this time, surprisingly, in the British sector. According to Neues Deutschland, the SED’s official newspaper, the West Berlin Jewish community’s morning event ended abruptly when “fascist” British police broke up a gathering of Jews who were commemorating Nazi atrocities by listening to Jaldati’s concert. East Berlin’s Kristallnacht commemoration began at 4:30 p.m. in the newly reopened main synagogue on Rykestraße, known in East Germany as the Friedenstempel (Peace Temple), further situating East German Jewry within the discourse of the antifascist peace movement. Jaldati is not listed in the program; instead the East’s commemoration included an organ concert, synagogue choir music, and traditional Jewish mourning prayers, such as El Male Rakhamim (God, full of mercy). These performances show how, on the ground, Jewish and Communist memories of Kristallnacht and the Nazi past were still deeply intertwined in 1953, at the height of the East German anti-Zionist campaign.

Jaldati recognized that the market for Yiddish music in East Germany was smaller than it had been in Holland, and that in a time of harsh East German anti-Zionism, there would be no more Israel Independence Day concerts and fewer Hanukkah shows, which had been her bread and butter before the move. Ultimately, she needed to build a singing career in a context without DP’s and with only a few Yiddish speakers. At the same time, she was performing in a political and cultural environment that demanded the resurrection of a leftist German folk musical culture. So she expanded her repertoire to include workers’ music and folk music, in German and other languages. She befriended Hanns Eisler, the Jewish socialist composer exiled from Nazi Germany and from the United States, who returned to Germany and composed the East German national anthem. Jaldati began performing his work, along with that of Louis Fünrberg, Paul Dessau, and Bertolt Brecht, three other important figures in leftist German music. Three days after her 1953 Kristallnacht concert in West Berlin, she performed for the Society for German-Soviet Friendship and sang much of her Yiddish repertoire. But she also included works by Brecht and even Leyb Kvitko, a leading light of Soviet Yiddish literature, who, nonetheless, was one of those Soviet Yiddish writers murdered on August 12, 1952, at the height of the violent 1948-53 Soviet anti-Zionist campaign, which purged Jews from the ranks of the Soviet intelligentsia.

It did not take long for Jaldati to establish herself as the Yiddish singer of East Germany and as an important performer of workers’ music and folk music. By the mid-1950s, she had recorded Yiddish music, as well as a 78 record of Dessau and Fünrberg’s music for Eterna, an East German record label. Her voice
appeared on the radio with some regularity, and she performed live throughout the country, including nearly every November, when she performed for Kristallnacht commemorations.\textsuperscript{59} Whether on stage, radio, or later television, she and the GDR media emphasized the fact that she was a Jewish camp survivor, not a Communist wartime resister. In fact, the press rarely mentioned that during the war she had been a member of the CPN underground; this is somewhat unexpected in a political atmosphere that heralded Communist concentration camp “resisters” as active heroes, but marked Jewish “survivors” as passive victims.\textsuperscript{60} Although there were many Jews among the remigrants building East German culture, including most of the “mighty handful” creating official East German music, the East German press generally referred to them as socialists, and referenced their Jewishness only in the negative, especially during the anti-Zionism campaign of 1952–53. Being connected to, but not a part of, the official East German establishment, Jaldati served the state as a visible Jew, whose very presence countered charges from the West of communist anti-Semitism.

When Yiddish Music Became a Political Weapon: Jaldati’s 1959 International Tour

The year 1959 was a time of high tension between East and West Germany.\textsuperscript{61} After inaugurating the 1955 Hallstein Doctrine, which isolated the GDR by forcing NATO countries to recognize either the FRG or the GDR, West Germany banned the Communist Party in 1956. In response, as part of its anti–West German campaign, the GDR’s official film company, DEFA, produced several documentary films, many of which were shown in Western countries, such as England and France, with the express aim of exposing the leaders of the West German government as unrepentant Nazis. One particularly harsh DEFA film, \textit{Unternehmen Teutonenschwert} (Operation Teutonic Sword), produced in 1958, led to a libel lawsuit in England, which halted the film’s showings. The film accused Hans Speidel, who had recently been named commander-in-chief of NATO ground forces, of being one of the Nazi masterminds behind two political assassinations in the mid-1930s.\textsuperscript{62} This East German propaganda campaign reached its climax with the 1963 trial-in-absentia of Hans Globke, one of the formulators of the Nuremberg Laws, who was then director of the Federal Chancellery in Konrad Adenauer’s West German government. Jaldati testified at Globke’s trial, the only woman to do so figure 8.2.\textsuperscript{63} One of DEFA’s documentaries was Joachim Hellwig’s \textit{Ein Tagebuch für Anne Frank} (A Diary for Anne Frank), a supposed remake of Frank’s story, which ten years after the war had taken the world by storm following a 1955 Broadway
play based on her diary. The play opened in East Germany in late 1956. In December 1958, DEFA premiered its film, which bore little resemblance to the original diary or the play. Not long after, in February 1959, at a major public launch of the film in Berlin, Jaldati performed on stage with Arnold Zweig, the famous German Jewish socialist writer; Kati Szekely, who played Anne Frank in the East German stage version; and the Michailow-Quartett, which performed chamber music by Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy. Jaldati, of course, had a particular interest in Anne Frank’s story. She and her sister were the ones who told Otto Frank of the fate of his daughters in summer 1945, and Jaldati and Frank maintained a written correspondence even after she moved to East Germany, including writing letters to help DEFA obtain Frank’s permission to make its Anne Frank film.

It was not history that motivated DEFA to produce the film, but instead a desire to present its own interpretation of Nazism and to accuse several members of the current West German government of being unreconstructed Nazis. The film connects the history of wartime Nazi atrocities (including the use of Jewish slave labor during the war) with West German industry of the 1950s, specifically large companies, such as Krupp, Siemens, and the notorious IG Farben. Although the film never whitewashes the fact that Jews were the primary
victims of Nazi atrocities, it also does not mention Hitler, racial ideology, or anti-Semitism. Like other DEFA documentaries, the film reminds the viewer that fascism did not die with World War II, and it names several former Nazis who at the time were high-ranking officials in the West German government. The film’s editors included clandestine footage taken by West German cameramen of former leaders in the Nazi government who were working under West German chancellor Konrad Adenauer and living freely and in comfort.67

The distribution of Ein Tagebuch für Anne Frank inaugurated a new strategy—the use of Jewish culture for diplomatic and political purposes. To maximize the effect of film screenings abroad, the GDR, as an act of Besuchsdiplomatie (diplomacy by means of a visiting delegation at a time when there are no diplomatic relations), agreed to send Jaldati on tour with the film, to be the public face of a country struggling to gain diplomatic recognition from Western European nations in a sharply divided Cold War Europe.68 In so doing, the film, Jaldati’s personal story of survival with Anne Frank, and her Yiddish music would help mitigate accusations of communist anti-Semitism given the very real purges in the GDR earlier in the decade.69

The film tour was Jaldati’s first as Besuchsdiplomat bringing cultural diplomacy to places with politically active, Yiddish-speaking, often leftist Jewish communities. Unlike her 1946 tour to Scandinavia, she did not give Yiddish concerts to soothe the souls of psychically wounded survivors, although that may have been how audience members responded to her performances. She performed first in Warsaw in April 1959, under the auspices of the GDR, to give a concert “to commemorate the victims of fascism,” or so the Bulgarian Jewish newspaper Evreiski vesti reported. (The fact that a Bulgarian Jewish newspaper covered her Warsaw concert at all reflects how she had become the Yiddish voice not just of the GDR, but of Communist Eastern Europe.)70 Although the article did not explicitly mention the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, the timing of her visit in April suggests that she took part in those commemorations, one of the most important dates on the Jewish and Polish war memorial calendars, especially in Warsaw.71

On April 19 she appeared in Paris at the Palais de la Mutualité, in the heart of the Latin Quarter, as part of the French Jewish Community’s formal Warsaw Ghetto Uprising commemoration. The evening opened with a “religious ceremony,” presumably a memorial service, followed by a showing of the Anne Frank film, a performance of the Paris Jewish folk choir, and concluded with Jaldati reading excerpts from Frank’s diary and performing Yiddish songs.72 Given her personal valorization of multilingualism and didacticism as well as its value within antifascism, she likely chose to read in French to connect with the audience. The concert poster, in French and Yiddish, emphasized the evening’s commemoration of loss and celebration of heroism.73 In addition to highlighting the performance of a Yiddish-singing Auschwitz survivor from East Germany
Eberhard Rebling, Lin Jaldati, and Yiddish Music

(always important to the GDR Ministry of Foreign Affairs!), the poster also listed Shoshanna Avivit, a famous Hebrew-language actress and co-founder of the original Habimah theater, who recited excerpts from works by the Yiddish writer Sholem Asch, who had recently died. In 1959 the Jewish community of Paris, at least the Yiddish-speaking Ashkenazi one, still comfortably rested at the crossroads of leftist politics and global Jewish culture.

Following her successes in Warsaw and Paris, in September 1959 the GDR sent Jaldati on a second, more challenging tour to England, a visit organized by Stanley Forman at Plato Films. Plato, which had distributed several DEFA films including Unternehm Teutonenschwert, hosted Jaldati and Rebling and generated publicity for the concerts and film showings. In light of the ongoing libel suit and the hostility in England to all German-language films, DEFA’s Anne Frank film in Britain would be controversial, and sure enough, British censors tried to ban it. To counteract the censorship campaign, Plato organized a press conference and private screening at the National Film Theatre, which pitched the singer as the “famous folk singer, Dutch-born Lin Jaldati.” No mention was made of the fact that she had been a Communist since 1936.

Using the Anne Frank story as the hook, Forman landed Jaldati a coveted spot on the BBC and secured central venues for her three-city tour, which he billed as an event commemorating the twentieth anniversary of the outbreak of World War II and honoring the memory of Anne Frank. The advertisement for the tour in the Jewish Chronicle, Britain’s august Jewish newspaper, did not mention the controversial film screening, and instead focused on Jaldati’s Yiddish songs; indeed Yiddish Folk Songs was the title of the event appearing on concert posters.

Jaldati’s London performance was no small affair. Photographs of her concert show a packed 1400-seat Princes Theater in the heart of London’s West End. Rebling was on stage accompanying her on piano and supporting her as she gave her own survival testimony in front of a potentially hostile British audience. But they were not alone on the stage. Next to Jaldati, perched on an easel, was the ghostly presence of Anne Frank in the form of an enlarged photograph (see figure 8.3). Three days later, Jaldati appeared at Manchester’s Houldsworth Hall; Jubilee Hall in Leeds hosted her final show on September 24 before her return to London. The Jewish Chronicle’s review of the London evening lamented that Jaldati’s voice was not as good as some Yiddish singers in Britain, but insisted that “she made up for it in dramatic gesture and delivery. With excellent enunciation to support her characterizations, she turned each song into a musical monologue.”

On September 23, still in the north of England, Jaldati appeared on the BBC television show Wednesday Magazine, a program targeted at and produced by women. Given 1950s attitudes about women, it was slotted to air in the
afternoon, when “lighter fare” was broadcast. \(^\text{82}\) (Apparently, a woman telling her Auschwitz survival story was considered “light fare.”) Her four-minute spot opened with songs from her Yiddish repertoire, and then her interviewer, David Jacobs, joined her on stage for a chat about the Holocaust. The focus was on how her story intersected with Anne Frank’s. But then, as Jaldati recalled a few years later, Jacobs, a relatively new television broadcaster, suddenly asked her, the survivor: “How can a Dutch Jewish survivor of Nazi concentration camps possibly live in Germany?” The question was a perfect set up for her: “The people in my country, the GDR, suffered the same things that I suffered, or they had emigrated or were in concentration camps.” \(^\text{83}\)

Whether she made this latter point out of personal belief in the ideological power of East German antifascism or as a strategy calculated to impress the GDR state functionaries, a professional diplomat could not have said it better. So in the end, although the initials “GDR” did not appear on the Manchester concert poster, with her two television spots, public defense of her adopted home, and extensive press coverage, the East German state got what it wanted out of Jaldati, so much so that *Neues Deutschland* covered her England visit extensively. \(^\text{84}\) From England, she and Rebling traveled to Belgium for a series of concerts, including shows in Brussels advertised as evenings of “Jewish solidarity.” \(^\text{85}\) Then, after almost two months abroad, the couple returned home to Berlin.

Not long after, they received a letter from Albert Norden, a Jewish Communist and the Politburo member in charge of agitation and foreign
information. Because the tour had been the couple’s first foray as cultural emissaries, he wanted to give them some feedback. Norden lauded their artistic success, but was nonetheless concerned that in Belgium, the couple had not properly emphasized that they were artistic representatives of the GDR: “On both the concert program and the posters, which are in French and Yiddish, one finds it challenging to find where [emphasis in original] Lin Jaldati and Eberhard Rebling come from,” Norden admonished them. He did not stop there: “After all, you are not rootless cosmopolitans, but are instead well known and esteemed artists of the German Democratic Republic. That fact must always be mentioned when you travel abroad, like you did, as far as I know, in England.”

Norden’s charged language of “rootless cosmopolitans” could not have been lost on Jaldati and Rebling, who understood very well that Norden was referring to Stalin’s late 1940s charge that Jews were “rootless cosmopolitans,” and therefore not to be trusted as good Soviet citizens. By 1959, Stalin was dead and the current Soviet premier Nikita Khrushchev’s 1956 so-called secret speech, which laid the blame for Communism’s past violence on Stalin’s cult of personality, was no longer secret. Nonetheless, at the height of the Cold War, there was a lingering suspicion that state socialism in Eastern Europe was anti-Semitic. Norden was telling the couple that the GDR had to remind the people of the world, especially in those places where it was seeking diplomatic recognition, that East Germany was a happy home for Jews. Rebling wrote back, saying that while Norden was correct about the Belgian posters and programs, he was mistaken that audiences did not know that they were from East Germany. He was adamant that he and his wife repeated that fact again and again in front of their audiences and to their Belgian hosts, never mind Jaldati’s stunning performance on the BBC, which Rebling did not mention.

Perhaps Norden’s reprimand stung, especially Rebling, who prided himself on not making political mistakes. (On occasion, as editor of the music union’s journal, he accused others of making those mistakes.) Norden’s critique of their diplomatic skills was in the branding of the event, not in the fact that Jaldati and Rebling were celebrated in Jewish contexts. Even if it might seem parochial through the eyes of universalist antifascism, Norden, as a proxy for the East German state, had no problem with an evening of Jewish solidarity. He just wanted to be sure everyone knew that East Germany promoted it.

Jaldati and Yiddish Song in East German Antifascism

Jaldati described the day the family decided to move to East Germany as one of the hardest of her postwar life. Understatement hardly expresses what it must
have meant to leave her home, surviving sister, and native language for her husband’s country, a place that had perpetrated the murder of her family. But she moved. She tied her fate to state-sponsored socialism at a time when anti-Semitic purges defined Communist parties throughout Eastern Europe, including the GDR.

Even in this environment, she pursued her interest and passion for Yiddish music and eastern European Jewish culture. Her early concerts in the GDR, including the first one in November 1952, were done in the service of Jewish culture and Jewish memory, even if they were also embedded in an official antifascist framework. The people in her audiences did not necessarily understand her music in the same way that state officials did. As historian Anna Shternshis has shown, the producers and consumers of state-sponsored Communist Jewish culture interacted with that culture in ways the state cultural authorities had not anticipated.

East Germany sent Jaldati on tour as a cultural diplomat to prove that the GDR supported Jewish culture and countered fascism. At the same time, her primarily Jewish audiences in cities like London, Paris, and Warsaw celebrated Jaldati as a Holocaust survivor and important interpreter of Yiddish music whose somber lamentations and fiery marches conjured up memories of Nazi atrocities and lost loved ones. When she sang at home, East German critics, writing in the East German press, celebrated her Jewish partisan music for inspiring a fighting antifascist spirit; her somber ghetto songs, for fostering the memory of fascist atrocities; and her folk music, for transmitting the centuries-long history of Jewish suffering and perseverance. But beyond the newspaper critics, who knows how any individual in an East German audience made up primarily of non-Jews responded to Jaldati’s music or to her as a person, with the Auschwitz numbers occasionally visible on her arm. Did these audiences feel compassion for her suffering? Did they identify her as a fellow “victim of fascism,” or, more likely, feel discomfort at the tattoo’s silent accusation? She usually wore long sleeves, sparing the audience these questions. But occasionally, her sleeves were just above the elbow, short enough to expose evidence that she had survived Auschwitz.

When she performed Yiddish music in East Germany, she did more explaining about a song’s historical context, the history of anti-Semitism, and the meaning of eastern European Jewish folk culture than she did in Schlachtensee or Stockholm. Her East German Yiddish concerts were generally billed as “Jewish partisan music” or “Jewish music of resistance” to embed Yiddish culture and war memory in an antifascist framework. On her first tour abroad as a cultural diplomat, she demonstrated her ability to publicly frame war memory through a socialist lens. At the same time, she never stopped propagating Yiddish culture for its own sake. Although the framing of her concerts changed,
her Yiddish repertoire did not.\textsuperscript{90} To highlight her importance to the country, in 1962, ten years after her arrival in the GDR, DEFA produced \textit{Lin Jaldati singt}, a bizarre short documentary celebrating Jaldati as a survivor of Auschwitz, resistance fighter, and leader in the fight against antifascism.\textsuperscript{91} That same year, none other than Hanns Eisler nominated Jaldati for the GDR’s Nationalpreis, citing as reason her performances of “the songs of the suffering-and-fighting Jewish people.”\textsuperscript{92}

Her confidence in promoting both Communist and Jewish culture, allowed Jaldati to serve as a bridge between both memories of the war through her music. She did this most explicitly with her performances at Warsaw Ghetto commemorations, which had been the domain of Jewish communities globally since 1944, and of the State of Israel since 1953. When she arrived in the GDR in 1952, the country did not officially commemorate the April date.\textsuperscript{93} The state had made the second Sunday of September into the Gedenktag für die Opfer des Faschismus (Memorial Day for Victims of Fascism), its key temporal marker commemorating fascist atrocities, and Jaldati occasionally performed at those events.\textsuperscript{94} When Jaldati performed at Warsaw Ghetto commemorations, as she did during her 1959 concert tour, she did so outside East Germany, in places with Yiddish-speaking communities.

On April 22, 1963, on the twentieth anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, something unexpected happened at the Babylon Theater on Rosa Luxemburg Platz in East Berlin. Several East German organizations came together to commemorate the event by hosting a concert for Jaldati.\textsuperscript{95} The concert of \textit{Jiddische Lieder und Gedichte} (Yiddish Songs and Poetry) was co-sponsored by the Committee for Antifascist Resistance Fighters in the GDR, the Jewish Community of Greater Berlin, and the House of Polish Culture in Berlin, a new institution on Friedrichstrasse established to build cultural relations between Poland and the GDR.\textsuperscript{96} Jaldati’s Yiddish concert at the first major East German Warsaw Ghetto commemoration was presented simultaneously through socialist, Jewish, and Polish memories of Nazi atrocities.

That same year, on November 11, the Federation of Jewish Communities for the GDR held a major event to commemorate the twenty-fifth anniversary of Kristallnacht. As had happened many times in the past, Jaldati, Rebling, and their Yiddish music featured prominently in the program. After the opening greetings from the federation’s head, Helmut Aris, and speeches from other East German dignitaries connected with the Jewish community—Hans Seigewasser, the state secretary for church affairs, and Rabbi Riesenburger—Jaldati and Rebling took the stage and performed what had become their signature repertoire. The couple was followed by the famous Staatskapelle Dresden and the Lewandowski Choir of Budapest, from where much Jewish culture was imported to East Germany.\textsuperscript{97} The 1963 East German Warsaw Ghetto and Kristallnacht events embedded
Jaldati’s Yiddish music in a multilayered antifascist memorial culture across national borders.

As for Jaldati, herself the quintessential embodiment of East German antifascist memorial culture in all its complexity, in addition to helping define Jewish commemorative practices as an East German antifascist idiom, she continued to find new Yiddish music. Beginning in 1962, shortly after the Berlin Wall went up, she began corresponding in a mixture of German and Yiddish with Yakov Sheinin, a Soviet folklorist and musicologist based in Moscow. They exchanged music, congratulated each other on their accomplishments in Jewish music. At one point, Sheinin practically begged Jaldati to come to Moscow to perform eastern European Jewish music and dance. The relationship was built on their mutual passion for being zamlers, a role that continued to live behind the Iron Curtain into the 1960s. This activity should not surprise us, given the complex way Yiddish music operated in East Germany’s memorial culture of antifascism. Collecting early twentieth century Yiddish labor songs, which is what Sheinin and Jaldati were doing, was part of the future-looking East German imperative to create a new socialist culture based on a past history of the working classes. This vision dovetailed perfectly with the preservationist imperative passed on to Jaldati to save the remnants of a destroyed Jewish world.

Notes

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The Lin Jaldati and Eberhard Rebling Papers, both now housed at the Akademie der Künste (henceforth AdK), Berlin, were consulted both before their donation and processing at the AdK and afterward. This distinction is noted with the phrase “old number system” if the reference was found before the archives were processed by the AdK in 2013.


3. Aaron Eckstaedt, “Klaus mit der Fiedel, Heike mit dem Bass”…: Jiddische Musik in Deutschland (Berlin: Philo, 2003). Klezmer musician and musicologist Aaron Eckstaedt is one of the few scholars who has recognized Jaldati as the earliest Yiddish singer in postwar East Germany; but he, too, has argued that “Jewish life did not really exist at all. Most Jews were Communists and not members of the community,” assuming that Jewish life can be equated with membership in the Jewish community (p. 35).

4. See among others, Michael Berg and Nina Noeske, eds., Zwischen Macht und Freiheit: Neue Musik in der DDR (Cologne: Böhlau, 2004); Matthias Tischer, Musik in der DDR: Beiträge


8. Boris Kowadlo, Togbukh, file D13622, Joods Historisch Museum Archives, Amsterdam. In the 1930s, the relationship between Yiddish-speaking immigrant communities and native-born Jewish communities in places like Paris and Amsterdam was often tense, especially regarding the question of fascism, refugees, and a Jewish response. See David Weinberg, A Community on Trial: The Jews of Paris in the 1930s (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977).


13. The Netherlands was no different from other European nations that remained on the sidelines during the conflict. Norman Padelford, “The International Non-Intervention Agreement and the Spanish Civil War,” American Journal of International Law (1937): 578–604. Although Jaldati says in her autobiography that she performed at rallies to encourage Dutch involvement on the side of the Republic during the Spanish Civil War, I have found no coverage of concerts connected to the Spanish Civil War at which Jaldati’s name was mentioned.


18. Jaldati placed an advertisement for dance lessons in the Amsterdam Jewish Council’s newspaper, Het Joodsche Weekblad, on September 5, 1941. On October 26, all other Jewish
newspapers were closed down. *Het Joodsche Weekblad* was closed in September 1943, since its readers had been deported or forced into hiding. On Dutch Jewish newspapers during the war, see Roni Hershkovitz, “The Persecution of the Jews, as Reflected in Dutch Underground Newspapers,” in *Dutch Jews as Perceived by Themselves and by Others*, ed. Chaya Brasz and Yosef Kaplan (Leiden: Brill, 2001): 307–23.


22. On how Jaldati and Brandes-Brilleslijper dealt with practical issues like property reclamation, see box 1, files 3 and 5, Janny Brandes-Brilleslijper Papers, Anne Frank Archives, Amsterdam.


25. The most extensive collection of her postwar concert programs can be found in box 1, file 1, the Eberhard Rebling Papers, Theater Instituut Nederland, Amsterdam. For her postwar work in Holland, see for example “Concert Program in Den Haag, December 6, 1945,” box 1, file 1, Eberhard Rebling Papers, Theater Instituut Nederland, Amsterdam.


27. Jaldati and other postwar Jewish performers often learned Gebirtig’s 1938 song “S’brent” in ghettos and camps, when it started being promoted as a ghetto song written in Krakow in 1942, before the ghetto’s liquidation and Gebirtig’s murder that same year. This dating framed the song as a heroic ghetto resistance song. Thanks to David Ross for assistance with interpreting the music of “S’brent.”

28. Jaldati and Rebling had been to Germany in 1947, and they both wrote about their first meeting with Rebling’s family as one colored with anti-Semitism. Jaldati described a festive lunch that Rebling’s mother had prepared for the family: “My sister-in-law said, ‘No, I won’t sit at a table with Jews,’ and she disappeared.” Jaldati and Rebling, *Sag nie*, 412–16. When she later retold the experience of meeting Rebling’s family, Jaldati reminded her East German audience that she had to find a way to overcome her visceral reaction to Germans, given her commitment to internationalism. See Screenplay for *Lin Jaldati singt*, box 9, film materials (old numbering system), Lin Jaldati Papers, AdK, Berlin.


33. Program, Gastspiel fun Joldate Lin un A. Frejling, May 1, 1948, box 1, file 1, Eberhard Rebling Papers, Theater Instituut Nederland, Amsterdam.


36. On the Communist Party of the Netherlands, see Ger Verrips, Dwars, duivels en dromend: De geschiedenis van de CPN 1938–1991 (Amsterdam: Balans, 1995). In 1947–48 the Dutch Communist Party’s membership peaked at 53,000, and then declined precipitously. By 1953, there were only 17,000 members. See Verrips, Dwars, Duivels en dromend, 551.

37. In the 1960s Jaldati-Rebling autobiography, Sag nie, published in East Germany, he suggests that he had been a Communist since his days in Germany in the 1930s. His official curricula vitae produced for the SED suggest otherwise. One undated CV says that he joined in 1946 (Eberhard Rebling, “Biographie,” DY 30/5482, pp. 194–96, SAPMO-BArch, Berlin); another CV from August 1963 gives the year as 1947 (Eberhard Rebling, Biographie, DY 37/10523, SAPMO-BArch, Berlin).

38. Eberhard Rebling newspaper clippings, box 2, Eberhard Rebling Papers, Theater Instituut Nederlands, Amsterdam.

39. Rebling and Jaldati, Sag nie, 428–42.


43. A photo of Jaldati and Robeson appeared in Nash Rozhlas (Our Radio), June 12, 1949, the day after the concert, box 2, Lin Jaldati Papers (old numbering system), AdK, Berlin. Robeson was on his own Communist tour of Europe, moving between Paris, Prague, and Moscow in 1949, including his famous June 13, 1949 Moscow concert, at which he sang “Zog nisht keynmol” (Never Say), also known as the “Partisan Song,” perhaps the most famous ghetto song. On Robeson, see Martin Duberman, Paul Robeson (New York: New Press, 1995).

44. Jaldati and Rebling, Sag nie, 432.


47. Gerhard Cohen to Bezirksamt Kreuzberg, Amt für Kunst, June 12, 1949, SA1/185, pp. 20–26, CJA, Berlin.


49. Silverberg, “‘Monopol der Diskussion?’” 193–211.


51. The archives of the Verband der jüdischer Gemeinde der DDR housed at the Centrum Judaicum Archive in Berlin show how the couple was regularly invited and performed for the community’s official celebrations. See for example, the correspondence between Helmut Aris, president of the federation, and Jaldati and Rebling in preparing for the Jewish community’s official commemoration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of Kristallnacht in 1963, 5B1/217, pp. 89–93, CJA, Berlin.

53. On the VVN and its relationship to Kristallnacht commemorations, see DY55/V278/2/139, SAPMO-BArch, Berlin. As the tenth anniversary commemoration, the 1948 commemoration was larger than usual. See pp. 11–12 of the file.


56. “Jüdische Bürger erzwangen in Westberlin eine Gedenkfeier für die Opfer der Kristallnacht,” *Neues Deutschland*, November 11, 1953.


59. The AdK archives hold a 1955 Eterna shellac record of Jaldati’s most-often performed songs, “S’brent” (incorrectly dated as 1942), and “Zog nisht keynmol,” also known in German as the “Partisanenlied” by Hirsh Glik (1942). The record appeared as part of the Eterna music series of peace songs from different nations. ALA5159.30, AdK, Berlin. Jaldati and Rebling also produced a record of German antifascist music by Dessau and Fürnberg. Kristallnacht commemorations were often mentioned in the general East German press, and occasionally appeared on the front page. See for example “Kundgebung anlässlich des 18 Jahrestages der Kristallnacht am Sonntag, dem 11 November, 10 Uhr, im Friedrich-Palast,” *Neue Zeit*, November 9, 1956. There were further announcements on November 8 and 10, all on page 1.


61. See chapter 3 of Harrison’s *Driving the Soviets up the Wall*.

62. *Unternehmen Teutonenschwert*, directed by Andrew and Annelie Thorndike (DEFA,1958). The film garnered two harsh reviews in the West German press accusing it of falsifying documents to prove its accusations against Speidel. See “Ohne Teutonen,” *Der Spiegel*, April 15, 1959, http://www.spiegel.de/spiegel/print/d-42625070.html (accessed July 29, 2013); and “DEFA fälschte Dokumenten, Gutachten zu ‘Unternehmen Teutonenschwert’ — Film in England verboten,” *Die Zeit*, February 13, 1959, http://www.zeit.de/1959/07/defa-faelschte-dokumente (accessed July 29, 2013). During the lawsuit, the filmmaker’s defense team, organized by its British distributor Stanley Forman, was unable to produce the original documents, leading to a settlement not to show the film. For its part, the East German government assumed that the lawsuit had been orchestrated, not personally by Speidel, but by the highest offices in the West German government. See “Aktenvermerk über eine Besprechung mit dem Gen. Forman von Plato Film London,” February 21, 1959, A123057, pp. 1-4, Ministerium für Auswärtige Angelegenheiten, BArch, Berlin. Forman died in March 2013, and nearly all of his obituaries in the British press mention the story of the libel suit.

63. The Deutsches Rundfunkarchiv has video clips of the East German television program *Aktuelle Kamera*, which covered the Globke trial and included clips of trial testimony, including Jaldati’s. See *Aktuelle Kamera’s Im Blickpunkt*, July 18, 1963, no. 081550, Nachrichtenbestand, Deutscher Fernsehfunk (DDR-F), DRA, Potsdam-Babelsberg.

64. There is a vast literature on the story of Anne Frank’s diary. See, for example, Francine Prose, *Anne Frank: The Book, the Life, the Afterlife* (New York: Harper, 2009); and Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett and Jeffrey Shandler, eds., *Anne Frank Unbound: Media, Imagination, Memory* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2012). On Anne Frank in East Germany, see Sylke Kirschnick, *Anne Frank und die DDR: Politische Deutungen und persönliche Lesarten des berühmten Tagebuchs* (Berlin: Ch. Links Verlag, 2009). On the stage adaptations of the mid-1950s, see ibid., 35–58.

66. The Anne Frank Archives in Amsterdam hold letters between Otto Frank and Jaldati, in which he expresses his gratitude to her and Janny for telling him of the fate of his daughters in summer 1945. The two continued corresponding throughout the late 1940s, and he gave Jaldati a free copy of the original Het Achterhuis, Anne Frank’s original Dutch-language diary, published in a small print run in 1947. Later, filmmakers used Janny Brandes-Brilleslijper as a talking head discussing the last days of Anne Frank’s life. On Otto Frank and Lin Jaldati’s correspondence, see MM745C-300021-25, Anne Frank Archives, Amsterdam. On Janny Brandes-Brilleslijper as a last witness to Anne Frank’s life, see Willy Linder, Last Seven Months of Anne Frank (New York: Young Picador, 2000). Linder originally produced a documentary by the same title, Laatste zeven maanden van Anne Frank (dir. Willy Linder, 1988), in which Brandes-Brilleslijper’s testimony plays a large role.

67. Ein Tagebuch für Anne Frank, directed by Günther Deicke (Berlin: DEFA, 1958). The DEFA Film Library at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, also has a copy of the film’s screenplay. Thanks to Hiltrud Schulz for having produced a screenplay based on the actual film and for her research support. Thank you to Ralf Schenk, film historian and head of the DEFA-Stiftung in Germany, for information about the clandestine film footage.


69. See chapter 3 of Harrison, Driving the Soviets.


71. The ghetto uprising had been commemorated in Warsaw since immediately after the war, most famously with the 1948 unveiling of Nathan Rapoport’s Warsaw Ghetto Uprising monument. See James Young, Textures of Memory (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1993). See also Michael Steinlauf, Bondage to the Dead: Poland and the Memory of the Holocaust (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1996).


73. Ibid.


76. The East German Society for Cultural Connections with Foreign Countries worried about England’s antipathy to German film in general, let alone those from East Germany. Distributing and showing of DEFA-produced films was a central strategy in GDR propaganda in the countries from whom the GDR was trying to win formal diplomatic recognition at the height of the Cold War. See B3322, pp. 38–39, Ministerium für Auswärtige Angelegenheiten, Berlin.

77. Letter from Stanley Forman to the Television Booking Department, BBC, October 2, 1959, BBC Archives, Reading, England.

78. The film was banned in Manchester, according to the Manchester Evening Chronicle. In addition, an August 26, 1959 press release circulated by Plato Films mentioned the ban. “Press Release,” August 26, 1959, box 3 (old numbering system), Lin Jaldati Papers, AdK, Berlin. For more on the larger context of GDR-British relations, see Berger and LaPorte, Friendly Enemies.

79. The press release can be found in both the BBC Archives and the Lin Jaldati Papers at the AdK, Berlin.


82. “Contract between Stanley Forman and BBC Wednesday Magazine for Jaldati interview,” September 1959,” BBC Archives, Reading. On the Wednesday Magazine, see Mary Irwin,

83. Script for “Wednesday Magazine,” September 23, 1959, BBC Archives, Reading. Unfortunately, the script does not contain a transcript of the actual conversation. It only shows that she was on air singing in Yiddish and then being interviewed. On her recollection about the interview, see “Screenplay for Lin Jaldati singt,” box 9 (old numbering system), p. 75, Lin Jaldati Papers, AdK, Berlin.

84. Articles appeared four times in September relating to her visit to England.


88. Rebling, too, recognized how hard the decision was on her, see Sag nie, 442–43.

89. See Anna Shternshis, Soviet and Kosher: Jewish Popular Culture in Stalin’s Soviet Union (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006).

90. Although a few of the more Jewish nationalistic songs, such as “Am yisrael chai,” dropped out, she kept one or two Hebrew songs in her antifascist repertoire, such as “Ali be’er.”

91. Lin Jaldati singt, directed by Gerhard Jensch (1962; Berlin, DEFA). Film viewed at the DEFA Film Library, University of Massachusetts, Amherst.

92. Eisler’s full quote reads: “Ihre ausgezeichneten Darbietungen von Liedern des leidenden und kämpfenden jüdischen Volkes sind ein wichtiger Beitrag für das kulturelle Bemühen unserer Republik,” file 6516, p. 1, Hanns Eisler Papers, AdK, Berlin. This and other related files show only that the higher commissions were deliberating; it seems that Jaldati did not win the Nationalpreis.


96. Invitation to “Jiddische Lieder und Gedichte” (an evening of Yiddish songs and poetry commemorating the twentieth anniversary of the Ghetto Uprising in Warsaw), April 22, 1963, box 1 (old numbering system), Lin Jaldati Papers, AdK, Berlin. The Polish Cultural House still exists, with a slightly different name, at the same address. Although East German radio hosted Jaldati for a show commemorating the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising in 1962, the 1963 program was the first live performance. “Zirkusträume und klingende Ostereier,” Neue Zeit, April 26, 1962.


98. Correspondence between Lin Jaldati and Yakov Sheinin, box 16 (old numbering system), Lin Jaldati Papers, AdK, Berlin.