

RUSSIAN WOMEN ÉMIGRÉES IN PSYCHOLOGY: Informal Jewish Networks

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This paper uses archival sources and autobiographies to give a fuller account of the lives of three Russian women psychologists, each of whom voluntarily emigrated several years before the Third Reich. As such, their stories contribute to gender history, emigration history, and ethnic history. The characteristics of second-generation women in psychology seem to apply to this sample; they accepted applied or secondary positions in psychology or allied fields and came late to tenure-track positions. Some first-generation characteristics fit them also: choosing career over marriage, accepting the “family claim,” and living “fractured lives.” Émigrée history reveals that these women found careers in the United States that could not have happened in the smaller, more restricted higher education networks of Europe. Female friendships and family ties to the Old World sustained them. All struggled with professional networking and had varying success, depending heavily upon the patronage of sympathetic male psychologists. Ethnic history shows that none identified strongly with Judaism, yet all benefited from Jewish mentors and networks of patronage. Evidence of gendered or racial discrimination in hiring practices is sparse, though it surely existed.

Keywords: second generation women, Jewish networks, emigration, Gestalt psychology

Sociohistorical Background of Russian Émigrée Women

The social historical context of Russian women as émigrées sets the stage for three gendered ethnic stories in the United States. For Russian intelligentsia and especially Jews in the *fin de siècle* period through the First World War, it was not uncommon to send children to study in Europe (Nadell, 2003; Pickus, 1999). In 1867, Switzerland began to open its universities to women. German universities began to accept women in 1901 and Prussia did so in 1908. By World War I, 60% to 80% of the 5,000 Eastern European women studying in Switzerland were Jewish (Neumann, 1987). It is remarkable that so many women, and so many Jews, were able to enter higher education in Europe before 1933 (Freidenreich, 2002, p. 8). The boundaries of imperial Russia and the Habsburg Empire gave way to the boundaries of Soviet Union after the Russian Revolution in the early 1920s, and they changed again in 1945. My terms *Russian* and *East European* signal this fluidity.

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Why this preponderance of Jews leaving Eastern Europe for an education in Western Europe and the United States? Pogroms drove two and a half million East European Jews out, following the assassination of Czar Alexander II in 1881. In 1880, the United States had 280,000 Jews and by 1917 it had 3,389,000, increasing their percentage of the New York population from 3% to 30% by 1920 (Klingenstein, 1991). Jews were “highly urbanized” and many children of the middle class had the means to attend universities, initially in Europe and later in the United States (Orleck, 1999). Because these facts are well documented, I simply mention them as background. In a lovely book co-edited by German historians of psychology Sibylle Volkmann-Raue and Helmut Lück (2002), fully 13 of 18 significant women psychologists turn out to be Jewish. Charlotte Haver (2002) highlighted the role of education in Jewish middle-class homes in the 19th century: “most of the woman psychologists here stemmed from the Habsburg Empire, that is, Russia, where Jewish traditions in even assimilated families were still very strong” (pp. 322–323).

Three Women Psychologists From Russia

In the 1920s, several years after the Russian revolution, three women left their homelands, either with their families or without them: Maria Rickers–Ovsiankina (b. 1898), Tamara Dembo (b. 1902), and Eugenia Hanfmann (b. 1905). Completing their doctorates (*Promotion*) in Berlin and Jena, they made connections with mentors in the late 1920s who supported and recommended them to colleagues in the United States (Haver, 2002). Their mentors belonged to a school loosely known as Gestalt psychology, in which psychologists were involved in a cultural challenge to 19th-century psychologies derived philosophically from British associationism and German Herbartian elementism. A critique of this reductionist approach issued from the influential works of Hermann Lotze and his protégée, Carl Stumpf—the predecessor of Wolfgang Köhler at Berlin.

The Gestalt view that we perceive wholes instead of parts, and relations instead of points, gave rise to variety of novel investigative practices in other areas of psychology. Berlin provided a center, though its proponents taught in Giessen, Frankfurt, Jena, and elsewhere before crossing the ocean to the United States. Kurt Danziger (1990) commented on the cosmopolitan character of this group (pp. 173–175). Kurt Lewin set forth their general methods and goals in an essay in 1927, proposing that instead of taking the average subject based on the statistical frequency of some measure, we design an experiment in which the experimenter attempts to produce a concrete phenomenon under artificial experimental conditions. This approach quickly gained currency in the United States, and the women introduced here formed the vanguard of students of Lewin and the Berlin group. These women realized that the prospects of finding academic work in German-speaking Europe were limited for women. They emigrated voluntarily in 1930 and 1931, arriving in Worcester and Northampton, Massachusetts, where they worked in hospitals until they could perfect their English, get further contacts, and publish.

Thus, I raise questions about voluntary émigrée scientists who came just a few years prior to the forced émigrés who fled the Third Reich. Would émigrés have benefited from the emphasis on applied work in the United States, in contrast to

the more philosophical context of psychology in Germany? Were there more positions in universities here? Was U.S. psychology mainly science based, or were opportunities opening up for clinical and applied work in the 1930s and 1940s? Did it matter that the academic psychology community in the United States increasingly required that research be presented in ways that were socially relevant and quantitative (Ash, 1996a, pp. 117–119; Ash & Solner, 1996, p. 4)?

Our small sample of Russian and East European women comes from a search of existing women's autobiographies in psychology (O'Connell & Russo, 1983; Stevens & Gardner, 1982). I found other East Europeans such as personality psychologist Else Frenkel-Brunswik (b. 1908 in Lemberg, Habsburg Empire, now Poland; O'Connell & Russo, 1990; Sicherman & Green, 1980; Smith, 1980; Volkmann-Raue & Lück, 2002), educational psychologist Hilda Taba (b. 1902, Estonia; Sicherman & Green, 1980) and in a later generation, Ina Uzgiris (b. 1937, Kaunas, Lithuania). I also found David Krech, formerly Isadore Krechevsky and Urie Bronfenbrenner, who were sons of Russia immigrants.

However the three women studied here have in common that they became friends and shared some of the same sponsors and patrons. They all had deep exposure to the Berlin Gestalt psychologists including Kurt Lewin. Lewin's work included prominently the "psycho-sociological problems" of minority groups (Heinze, 2004, pp. 160–162). The group tensions of minorities became a focus of his work in the United States. Andrew Heinze's *Jews and the American Soul* (2004) characterized Lewin as "a Prussian Jew and Zionist." Lewin was tempted by an offer to emigrate to Palestine just before his premature death in 1947. Perhaps this affinity with Judaism and his own émigré experience underlie his support for these Russian women.

All three belonged to the second generation in psychology, defined as taking doctorates between "the two waves of feminism"—the right to vote in 1920 and the women's liberation movement in the 1960s and 1970s (Johnston & Johnson, 2008; Scarborough, 1992). They form a cohort that went on to careers in applied and academic fields of psychology, not without employment difficulties during the Depression years and after. Unfortunately, the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research was unable to locate any information on them. Fortunately, I was able to interview Marianne Simmel who knew them at the Worcester State Hospital in the 1940s (Simmel, 2009). In Shakow's circle, they were called "the wild Russians." Simmel was closest to Dembo and Hanfmann. She knew only that Rickers was from Vladivostock, because "I had no contact [with her] over the years." Similarly, Alice Shakow Piller could not identify Rickers as Jewish or not; as she was a child at the time and Maria was the age of her parents (Alice Shakow Piller, personal communications, August 20, 2008, September 16, 2009). However she recalled them fondly.

To date, women psychologists enumerated in the second generation include five from the University of Vienna, and five others that come from a variety of German institutions (Johnston & Johnson, 2008). One whom Johnston and Johnson (2008) mentioned is Evgenia Hanfmann from Jena (and Berlin), while two whom they evidently missed are Maria Rickers–Ovsiankina and Tamara Dembo (also from Berlin). These constitute my sample of three. Uniting these three women psychologists, then, is an important new method of doing psychology that they learned primarily at the University of Berlin in Germany. In addition to their

scientific methods, I propose to explore how their gender, ethnicity, and cultural heritage may have helped or hurt them in their double migration to Germany and then to the United States.

Eleven of 16 Lewin students were women, and “many of them were Jewish” (Sprung, 1992; Sprung, Sprung, & Woodward, 1995). Nine of these are listed with background information: Gita Birenbaum from Lithuania, Tamara Dembo from Baku, Sara Forer from Jerusalem (Palestine), Margarete Jucknat from Germany, Anitra Karsten from Turku, Finland, Käte Lissner from Berlin, Vera Mahler from Hamburg, Sarah Sliosberg from Grodno, Poland, Bluma Zeigarnik from Puenai, Lithuania. Could it be that this group complements the men described in *Refugee Scholars in America* (Coser, 1984), and before that in *The Intellectual Migration* (Fleming & Bailyn, 1966)? If so, an important lacuna exists in the intellectual history of women in social science. I chose to pursue only those who came to the United States. Because Hanfmann and Dembo self-identified as Jewish (Hanfmann, Dembo), and all three (including Rickers–Ovsiankina) had Jewish patrons or coworkers in the United States, I want to examine aspects of patronage within ethnic and mixed ethnic communities, as well as gendered features of their successful but arduous careers as professional women and émigrés.

Maria Rickers-Ovsiankina: David Shakow and Donald Adams as Lifetime Patrons

The first to arrive as an émigrée psychologist came originally from Tschita, Russia, in Eastern Siberia, where she was born on May 16, 1898. Her mother was German, her father Russian. She explained her unusual name as follows: “With regard to your inquiry about my name, I may state that I am not married, but that my full name is Maria A. Rickers–Ovsiankina, the latter being my Russian name which I frequently omit for simplicity” (Rickers–Ovsiankina, 1935). She had three sisters and a brother, and the family moved to Vladivostock, where her father later owned coal mines that heated the city. After the Russian Revolution, she abandoned plans to study in St. Petersburg and moved with a sister and a brother to Berlin (Farina, 1996). By 1924 she began to study with Kurt Lewin in Berlin.

Why, then, did she attend the University of Giessen, overlapping with Koffka there, taking her doctorate there in 1928 (Cattell, 1978; Farina, 1996; Handler, 1995)? Was it because the University of Berlin was closed to “Jews from the East” (Simmel, 1986)? In any case, her dissertation on “interrupted actions” showed the person-in-the-environment character of Lewin’s laboratory (Ovsiankina, 1928). During, 1928 to 1931, she worked as “teaching assistant at the University of Berlin, prison psychologist, vocational guidance assessor, and researcher in a school for the retarded” (Handler, 1995, p. 172). Her publications were few (Hanfmann, Rickers–Ovsiankina, & Goldstein, 1944; Rickers–Ovsiankina, 1960, 1977a, 1977b). She never married, and I have found no indication of her feelings on the matter.

A young American postgraduate student in Germany, Donald Mackinnon, befriended Maria Rickers–Ovsiankina (1898–1993), in 1930. He wrote an enthusiastic letter to David Shakow at Worcester State Hospital, in support of a young PhD:

Here in Berlin I am getting all sorts of psychology from Lewin, Köhler, Spranger, Walther Jaensch, and the psychoanalysts. I have come particularly to work with Lewin He is tremendously alive . . . I don't know what your situation is at present, but thinking that you might be looking for a good assistant I that I'd let you know that Ovsiankina is, so to speak, on the market for a job and hoping for something in America. Ovsiankina, in case you didn't know, is Fraulein Dr . . . as she made her doctorate under Lewin. You must know her "Die Wiederaufnahme unterbrochener Handlung[en]" [The resumption of interrupted tasks] (Rickers-Ovsiankina, 1928). She is a Russian, an anticommunist who got out of her hometown, Vladivostok, just in time. She is at present an assistant to Lewin but such a position here doesn't bring much money and so she is looking for something else She probably knows Lewin's system, methods and techniques as well as anyone. . . . She has also done a little straight mental testing . . . Certainly one would look far and wide in America to find one with as good training and capacities as Ovsiankina. (Mackinnon, 1930, paragraph 4).

Shakow replied that he could only offer \$850 for a "research associate" position at Worcester State Hospital, provided she find a sponsor. She got her maternal uncle, F. W. Rickers of Brooklyn, New York to post a bond (Rickers-Ovsiankina, 1931). Shakow was particularly keen on her psychometric skills, including the Rorschach and other tests, for example, he wrote that

I am also interested in knowing whether you have done any work with the B & A and similar tests. A statement of some of the things which you have done will help me greatly in organizing a program for the coming year. If you have any reprints of your work which you can spare, I should appreciate receiving copies. (Shakow, 1931, paragraph 2).

Notice that it was professional skills that apparently guided Shakow's interest in Rickers. Once she arrived, however, she became close to his family; Shakow's daughter remembers her fondly (Alice Shakow Piller, personal communications, August 20, 2008, September 16, 2009).

Here we have an American Jewish family adopting a young Russian émigrée who may or may not have been Jewish. Marianne Simmel confirmed that Shakow was "very helpful" to numerous refugees who came to work at Worcester Psychiatric Institute (Simmel, personal communication, September 17, 2009). Shakow recruited over a hundred interns during his directorship of the Worcester State Hospital, 1927–1946 (Cautin, 2008, p. 224; Cautin, 2006), and he viewed it as "a little graduate school" (Shakow, 1977). Indeed, it became a precursor of the scientist-practitioner model. Coming from cosmopolitan lower Manhattan, Shakow reached out to immigrants, having grown up among them in the lower East Side (Alice Shakow Piller, personal communication, September 16, 2009).

Another close friendship came about with Donald Adams and his wife (see Figure 1) at Duke University. Rickers-Ovsiankina borrowed some Lewin films to show the staff of the Worcester Hospital and the Psychology Department at Brown University after Adams obtained approval from Professor William McDougall. Her close relationship was signaled in Adams' remark, "Mrs. Adams sends warmest greetings in which I heartily join" (Adams, 1932b). She wrote him in German, so apparently he had spent time in Germany or even had German parents. The films had German titles: *The Child and Environmental Forces*,



Figure 1. Young **Maria Rickers–Ovsiankina** in a swimsuit. Donald Adams Papers. Courtesy of the Archives of the History of American Psychology.

Satiation, Hanna sits down on a Stone, Demand Characteristics (Adams, 1932a). Adams wrote on June 9 to thank her for her “editorial work on the films,” adding,

Since you are the only one in America to whom we can turn for such work on these films, I had hoped that we might be able to get a permanent position for you in this Department . . . I hope that you will not hesitate to call on me for recommendation to any position where these abilities could be put to their fullest use. (Adams, 1932c, paragraph 1)

She was persistent, writing again 8 months later:

I have to tell you my bad news. The appropriation of the research organization where I am employed, has been cut terribly. As consequence I lost my position. This is especially hard for me since I have to support my family in Siberia and China. I am trying of course to locate something else. But it is so difficult for me, since I do not know many people in this country and am also not familiar with the ways how one handles such a matter best in the States . . . Maybe you will happen to hear of an opening. My best greetings to you and your family. (Rickers–Ovsiankina, 1933, paragraph 2)

In this case, the Rickers–Ovsiankina’s informal network included a Quaker and a Jewish psychologist. If ethnicity was a mixed blessing in Berlin, it seemed not to matter in the United States. Clearly, however, cultural inexperience weighed on her. How to network, as a foreigner and a woman, became a huge obstacle. In addition, she experienced the “family claim,” that is, the obligation to care for family. This feature marked the lives of several first generation women psychologists in the United States. Finally, she got a late start in beginning to study psychology at age 26. Thus her life was “fractured” early on by the upset of the Russian Revolution and double emigration to Germany and the United States, though she received a good break in her opportunities to study with Kurt Koffka, Kurt Lewin, and David Shakow, as well as fruitful contacts with Don Mackinnon and Don Adams, by the time she was 32. She also showed an ability to get along with their wives.

From 1933 to 1935, Rickers–Ovsiankina received a grant-in-aid from the Social Science Research Council while expanding her clinical skills at Worcester. She was finally hired in 1935 at age 37 at a small women’s institution south of Boston, Wheaton College. Shakow wrote perhaps a dozen letters to colleagues recommending her. In her interview she mentioned that “The schizophrenics at Worcester are the most delightful people” and some were her “close friends” (Leslie Phillips, personal communication, September 9, 1994, as cited in Handler, 1995, p. 173). Perhaps this reflects her outsider feelings. One colleague reported that she “was keenly sensitive to her previous immigrant status, especially during the Second World War and the subsequent McCarthy era. Both the German and Russian portions of her heritage were political liabilities in this era” (Handler, 1995, p. 174). The Wheaton College President wrote to the U.S. Secretary of State, George C. Marshall: “I do not believe that she is or has been associated with any communist or fascist organizations. I believe her to be a law-abiding and thoroughly responsible American citizen. I have no hesitation in certifying as to her good character of devotion to the government of the United States” (Handler, 1995, p. 174).

Thus she managed by hard work to enter academia around the edges and to hang on. She found summer teaching at Mt Holyoke, MIT, University of Oregon, and Pennsylvania State University during 1943 to 1946. She became research associate at MIT and Harvard in Social Relations during 1947–1948. At Wheaton she rose to full professor, leaving only after 14 years in 1949, at age 51. To earn extra money to send home to Russia, she taught Rorschach testing at Northeastern University and Harvard in the summer and part time.

She had yearned to work with graduate students and she prevailed on Shakow and friends such as Don Adams to recommend her for a position. She was bold in her networking, in a time long before affirmative action and recruiting guidelines, when recruiting was intensely personal among men and women psychologists. She was finally hired to a position that involved building a clinical program at the University of Connecticut in 1949. Sam Witryol helped her develop this program, and he reported that she was a popular teacher. She brought Vygotsky and other European authors to the curriculum. “She often teased the faculty by saying that she was the only clinical psychologist with a Ph.D. in experimental psychology” (Handler, 1995, p. 175).

She stayed 16 years at the University of Connecticut, from 1949 to 1965, culminating in the publication of her edited volume, *Rorschach Psychology* (Rickers–Ovsiankina, 1960, 1977a, 1977b). It set Rorschach testing in European intellectual contexts: Jungian psychology, transactional analysis, phenomenology, and Gestalt. Unfortunately, I have not been able to discover correspondence from this period; what we have comes from the Shakow collection. We do know that she consulted for the Department of Veterans Affairs in 1950 to 1965 (Cattell, 1978).

In 1962, at age 64, Rickers–Ovsiankina turned again to Shakow when looking for a “climatically syntonetic environment . . . orienting myself toward clinical research” (Rickers–Ovsiankina, 1962, paragraph 1). She found Nevitt Sanford’s “outfit in Stanford” and noted that “it would involve working with David Hamburger” whom she thought Shakow knew (Rickers–Ovsiankina, 1962, paragraph 1). Her next letter mentioned why she wanted to move to California: “I am still desirous to move to a dryer [sic] climate (right now my arthritis is terrible),” but because nothing came through, she applied for a Fulbright Fellowship to Italy (Florence) or Greece (Rickers–Ovsiankina, 1963).

By May, 1964 she had developed a 23-page proposal for a “Women’s Auxiliary Corps in Mental Health.” On May 20, 1966, Shakow received a letter requesting a recommendation for her to teach a course “A Seminar for Women: Toward Understanding Human Beings” at the University of California Berkeley Extension Center in San Francisco. By Christmas she had joined the Women’s Faculty Club at the University of California Berkeley and had arranged for the Berkeley Center for Community Psychiatry to “serve as academic host.” She cited a USPHS “Project for the Training of Mature Women as Mental Health Rehabilitation Workers,” led by Ida F. Davidoff and Agnes C. Lauga. She described her project as requiring two part-time staff and a director (herself), less formal than academic instruction but “more systematic and goal-oriented than the type of instruction offered to adult education groups or to hospital volunteers.” Evidently, the application succeeded, because she directed this project from 1967 to 1975. She taught paraprofessional mental health workers at the Center for Training, Community Psychiatry and Mental Health Administration (Cattell, 1978).

Was this a case of women shunted to applied positions, or did it reflect her genuine professional interests? Bear in mind that she trained in Lewinian field methods, and that her first study in the Worcester Hospital gave schizophrenics toys to play with, from which she concluded that the time spent playing with the toys was a predictor of time of discharge (Handler, 1995). She spent her career in clinical work in academic settings. Her necrologist wrote,

Marika went to Berkeley, California, following her retirement and continued a very active and energetic life. She taught extension courses for the University of California at Berkeley, often attended colloquia there, and was also a participant in hikes. Members of the university community, though they interacted with Marika only toward the end of her life, describe her as vigorous, energetic, and articulate. (Farina, 1996)

To answer my own émigré questions, Marika did benefit from the emphasis on applied work in the United States, as well as from the abundance of departments of psychology who hired scholars to do clinical work. She found tenure—

track positions in a small women's college and a state university, with additional part-time and summer teaching positions. Soft money also came her way after retirement. She rode the wave of clinical psychology, editing a classic in the field and holding two tenure-track positions. Her research became socially relevant, if not quantitative (cf. Ash, 1996a; Ash & Solner, 1996).

Tamara Dembo's Patrons: Kurt Lewin, Lawrence K. Frank, Mary Henle, and Heinz Werner

Tamara Dembo (1902–1993) was born on May 28, 1902 in Baku in Transcaucasia. She came from a Russian–Jewish family: Her father Wulf Dembo was a Jewish merchant, while his wife Sophie Woltschkina was Russian. Due to a heart condition, she was not permitted to attend school (de Rivera, 1995; Van der Veer, 2000; Wertsch, 1993). Unlike Rickers–Ovsiankina and Hanfmann below, and in spite of Simmel's (1986) observation that German universities were blocking “Jews from the East,” she was able to acquire a degree in Berlin (Lück, 2002). However like the other two, she spent substantial time elsewhere at the recommendation of her Berlin mentors.

Dembo studied with Kurt Lewin, Max Dessoir, Carl Stumpf, Max Wertheimer, and Wolfgang Köhler in Berlin. Clearly she received a cosmopolitan education in the Weimar Period: Lewin, Dessoir, and Wertheimer were Jewish, Stumpf was Catholic, and Köhler came from the Lutheran region of Braunlage/Harz (Danziger, 1990, pp. 173–175; Jaeger, 1992, p. 282). In addition, she spent an interlude studying animal psychology with Buytendijk in Groningen (Van der Veer, 2000). Buytendijk corresponded with Koffka, Köhler, Lewin, and Kurt Goldstein. Dembo worked on two observational studies with Buytendijk; both of them were critical of stimulus-response psychologies and offered various forms of “animal-in-asituation” designs. She published one on rats in an open field box, 2 × 2 m, under Buytendijk's name as was common then (Buytendijk, 1931; Dembo, 1931b). The other was an unfinished manuscript on birds. She began, and remained, an experimental psychologist of behavior in free situations, from animals to humans. She and her mentors offered an alternative to behaviorist psychologies.

As detailed in a section on Koffka below, Kurt Koffka and Molly Harrower sponsored Dembo in North America. Dembo, joined by Hanfmann, worked as assistants in a local hospital in Northampton for 2 years, while sitting in on Kurt Koffka's seminars on the development of the child at Smith College. She became Lewin's assistant at Cornell in 1934–1936. In 1935 Lawrence K. Frank, as director of the Laura Spellman Rockefeller fund, made it possible for Lewin to come to a position at Cornell and Iowa (Ash, 1992a). Thus Dembo, as Lewin's research director, clearly benefited from this connection. Lois Barclay Murphy wrote that “[Frank] was one of the most seminal figures in the social sciences . . . He would pull people off their islands of separate scientific disciplines and get them onto a new island where they could communicate with each other” (Heims, 1991, p. 64). I find it interesting that Lewin wrote to Frank in 1934 that he would prefer a man for his second assistant position at Cornell (Ash, 1992b, p. 199, citing letter from Lewin).

Was she blessed or oppressed by her multiple but nontenure track positions? She became a like a daughter to Lewin and his wife Gertrude; again, her Jewish background may have conferred a tacit privilege—given the inclusive and supportive attitude of Lewin toward hardworking women including many of Jewish origin. However she maintained a close friendship with others, including Fritz Heider and Sybilla Escalona (Escalona, 1961). As Susan Klingenstein (1991) wrote of English departments hiring Jews from 1900 to 1940, “the process of admission was not a simple unilateral act of consent, a throwing open of hitherto closed doors by the guardians of Anglo–Saxon culture; rather, it was a complex, bilateral process, a give-and-take between two cultures” (p. xi).

Dembo seems to have had more patience with Lewin’s personal style than Barker did (Dembo, 1931a). For example, Roger Barker led the project on frustration and regression in children with Dembo and Lewin (Barker, Dembo, & Lewin, 1941, 1943). He remarked of his time with Lewin that

I can remember being so tired I ached. He would go on and on. If I hadn’t had a wife to go home to, he would have really broken me down. He never had any idea of when to stop. He would start, as I recall, at 2:00 in the afternoon and we would go into his office. The idea would be to plan this research. Tamara Dembo would be there. And Herbert Wright some of the time. Lewin would sit there in his office, discussing this research and he would make notes. Then he would say, “Well, I’d better dictate this.” He’d look at his notes (no one else could read them) and he would dictate while some of us would take it down. After about two hours, I would be bleary-eyed. But he apparently was just warmed up. I can remember us going until 6:00 or 6:30 and I would just hope someone would phone in and break it up.” (Barker, n.d.)

By 1943, however, the funding declined, Stoddard moved on, and Dembo had to seek employment. She accepted an offer as assistant professor at Mt. Holyoke in 1943 and as acting associate professor at Stanford in 1945. In 1948 she became associate professor at the New School of Social Research, where she was recruited by Mary Henle but then left due to strained circumstances after 2 years. In 1950 she joined Hanfmann at Harvard interviewing Russian émigrés, with U.S. Public Health Special research funding (Dembo, 1974).

Dembo did write one report for the Commission on Community Interrelations of the American Jewish Congress in January 1951. Called “The Problem of Jewish Identification” and submitted to Isador Chein, it offers a concise formulation of “identification with the total group of Jews or Jewish subgroups and further identification with the total group of Americans or subgroups of Americans.” She diagramed this in terms of socioemotional relationships, and whether they satisfy the needs and wishes of the dominant group or the dominated one. Identification is “the willing taking over of wishes and needs of another person or group.” She saw Jews as a total group:

the identification of a Jew with the Jewish group means that he be guided by the wishes and needs of this group. From orthodox to atheist, from Zionist to anti-Zionists, from those who are learned in Jewish matters to those who know practically nothing about the history and values held by the Jews—all are Jews. They belong to different subgroups. [They all] consider themselves Jews and tell

their children that they are Jewish. In doing this they satisfy *two needs of the total group: the need of existence and need of continuation*. (Dembo, 1951, p. 2)

Dembo went on to acknowledge that “there exists [sic] American subgroups” too, where “the identification only with the total group would mean considering oneself an American and conveying this knowledge or feeling to one’s children.” Among Jewish Americans “there can exist strong identification with both groups and at the same time “anti-Semitism” against some members of the Jewish group, and/or seclusion from non-Jewish Americans and nonacceptance of them as close friends.” She concluded that dual identification as American and Jew could be fostered by Jewish organizations, to the benefit of non-Jewish and Jewish Americans (Dembo, 1951). I daresay she lived her life by this credo. Certainly she had celebrated Christmases with her friends Anitra Karsten from Finland, “Marika” Rickers–Ovsiankina, and Eugenia Hanfmann (Karsten, 1951). Recall that Lewin was a secular Jew who seriously considered emigrating to Israel and wrote a half dozen articles on Jewish issues of minority groups, danger, education of the Jewish child, self-hate, and psychological problems of Jewish education (Lück, 1992, p. 187).

In 1952, when her contract with Harvard had run out, Dembo let it be known that she would accept a position either at Kansas or in the Northeastern United States. Her old friend Fritz Heider (1952) wrote back, speaking on behalf of his wife Grace and their colleagues Bea and Herbert Wright:

We know how difficult your future time perspective is, and we would like to do all we can to clarify it. It would help us to know more exactly the kind of position you feel you could accept. We have mentioned you recently in connection with several openings, but have always been unsure if you would accept them if they developed. There are, for example, a temporary and a permanent position at Oregon. [Their topology colleague Roger Leeper was at Oregon.] However the letter to us says “. . . since our department is not large, we could not make good use of any psychologist with highly specialized or narrow interests. The teaching which each of us has to do has to extend over a broader range of areas than would be the case in a larger department . . .” One job would call for teaching social psychology and supervising the teaching of the elementary laboratory course by seven or eight assistants. Would you exclude this sort of thing as a possibility?

Her friend Heider could not afford the topology meeting after Christmas, however:

I hope that the Topological Meeting goes well . . . We will probably be here this summer for Karl is starting college in the fall and everything gets more expensive. (Heider, 1952)

Heider added that her chances would be improved if she published her independent work on rehabilitation psychology.

To be quite realistic I would say that much more important than your relations with Kansas as far as getting a job goes, is the fact that you have not yet published the main report from your research project with the handicapped. I am sure that there are very valuable results which more people should know about . . . After all, Tamara, I thought that you are an independent woman. You should be able to tell

Kansas to go to hell if they don't want you. You really have enough resources and enough stamina to stand on your own feet. I remember when you started out on these projects and everyone told you that you should not give up the security of a teaching job you said to us that you didn't care—that you could always get a job as an attendant in a hospital. Goodness knows I certainly don't want to see you give up psychology but I think that the time has come when you should consider things that are not the ideal job (Heider, 1952).

Surely Heider was underestimating the difficulty of finding a job as a woman in the academic market place. However his remarks also suggested that she may have cared less about a tenure track job than about research and work in an émigré community, for example, with Lewin in Iowa or Heider in Kansas, or with her friends Hanfmann and Rickers–Ovsiankina back east.

In 1952, she received help in her job search from the Heiders, the Barkers, the Wrights and Al Baldwin at Kansas. She also received letters from Leon Festinger at the University of Minnesota, Maurice Greenhill at the School of Medicine, and Jacob Finesinger at Department of Psychiatry, University of Maryland. These physicians had been recommended by Nancy Bayley and Else Frenkel–Brunswik at Berkeley. Dembo turned down an offer from Thomas Rennie at the Payne Whitney Clinic. She finally accepted an offer at Clark University (Letters to Dembo from May through December 1952, Clark University Archives, Box C Dembo 2–1–2, Series 2: Correspondence). Her new department chair was Heinz Werner, another emigrant Jew from Europe (Witkin, 1965).

A pioneer American Jewish psychologist, Thelma Alper, had taught at Clark from 1948 to 1952 and then left for a better offer from Edna Heidbreder at Wellesley College (Alper, 1983; Rossiter, 1995). In 1953 Dembo followed her as associate professor at Clark, in an otherwise all male department including the Jewish psychologist, Seymour Wapner, who collaborated with Werner on his Vygotskyan developmental theory (Alper, 1952; Dembo, 1952). She did not become full professor until 1961, age 59 (see Figure 2).

In 1952 Dembo proposed a values experiment for Alper to perform with her classes: “What are your seven wishes for the whole life of your child?” What are



Figure 2. A department photograph shows **Tamara Dembo**, **Seymour Wapner**, **John Bell**, two unidentified men, and **Heinz Werner** in the 1950s. Courtesy of Clark University Archives.

your seven wishes for yourself?" Write (a) age, (b) religious upbringing, (c) consider self religious? (d) social economic position of your parents, and (e) class at school? This could be seen as a continuation of her interest in identification of minority groups with their own group and with the total group. For herself, her close friends included psychologists from Berlin, Sara Sliosberg in Israel (Sliosberg, 1964), and Sibylle Korch Escalona in New York City. She had a more formal relationship with Margarete Jucknat in Berlin (Jucknat, 1969, 1970).

Dembo landed on her feet in academia, so to speak, after giving the best years of her life to directing Lewin's laboratory until his death in 1947. Her dissertation on frustration and anger in a field situation led slowly to an interest in rehabilitation psychology. She gained a reputation in "adjustment to visible injuries" (Dembo, Diller, Gordon, Leviton, & Sherr, 1973; Dembo, Ladieu, & Wright, 1951; Dembo, Leviton, & Wright, 1956; Dembo & Tane-Baskin, 1955; Ladieu, Hanfmann, & Dembo, 1947). Her work fit in with the organismic approach of the Leipzig Gestalt School, which Werner represented. It also reflected his commitment to both experimental developmental and clinical psychology (Franklin, 1990). She was slow to publish, but her publications became classics.

Eugenia Hanfmann's Patrons: Wilhelm Peters, David Shakow, and Abraham Maslow

Eugenia Hanfmann came from Russian intelligentsia, including an aunt who was a physician and a mother who was a part-time teacher "not happy to stay at home" (Hanfmann, 1983, p. 148). Her mother's best friend was a physician. She trained in Jena, but she became Dembo's roommate and workmate in Northampton and Worcester from 1930 to 1934 or so. She wrote of her childhood: "we moved from place to place . . . I searched for safety, shelter, and food After the end of the Civil War, we left Russia for Lithuania, my father's country of birth" (Hanfmann, 1983, p. 141). As a student at Jena, she earned her doctorate by 1927. "The professor of psychology [Wilhelm Peters]—an Austrian Jew and a socialist—welcomed foreigners in his labs and seminars, as most of his colleagues did not . . . but within the Psychological Institute, I found companionship, intellectual stimulation, and warmth" (Hanfmann, 1983, pp. 141–142). She subsequently took a clerical job in Riga, whereupon "Peters recommended me as research associate to Koffka." In 1931–1932 she became an orderly, or assistant, in a hospital ward in Northampton, while in 1933–1935 she worked in Koffka's laboratory at Smith College.

By 1933, she wrote acknowledging the group support she received in finding her first professional position in the United States, a modest one for a 28-year-old with a PhD, but solid enough for Depression times.

I had two stimulating productive years in Koffka's small research setting, a bit of an ivory tower Having gotten no replies to my hundreds of applications to colleges, I was facing a choice between taking any job I could find and accepting help offered by friends. At this point, through the mediation of Maria Rickers-Ovsiankina, along with Dembo, I was rescued by David Shakow, then head of psychology at Worcester State Hospital. By hiring me to do a psychologist's work for an attendant's remuneration, he gave me a chance to acquire first-hand knowledge of the clinical field. (Hanfmann, 1983, p. 142–143)

The job title was actually research associate. For the next 19 years held a succession of positions: research in Chicago, teaching in 1939 [“The years at Mt. Holyoke were relatively barren” (Hanfmann, 1983, p. 144)], the assessment program at the Office of Strategic Services directed by Harry Murray in 1941, and the Department of Social Relations, Harvard University in 1946 [“my interests and activities were clearly shifting from academic to clinical work” (Inkeles, 1950; Hanfmann, 1983, p. 145)] where she worked with Alex Inkeles on a study of Soviet social system at the Russian Research Center (Hanfmann, 1983). When asked about sex discrimination, she wrote,

I realized that some men’s high valuation of my contribution may have been due to their low expectation of women. I recall only one concrete instance that suggested to me this dynamic. A rather arrogant colleague, impressed by one of my articles, told me that he knew I wrote good case histories, but had not expected me to be so good at theory. Some similar conception of a woman’s place in research may have been at work when an extremely ambitious colleague of mine forgot—to his advantage—a verbal agreement we had made about our respective publication rights. (Hanfmann, 1983, p. 147)

Her chairman at Harvard recommended a three-year position after she had served a one-year lectureship, but the dean disapproved it because it would allow the privilege of attending faculty meetings; under pressure of a prestigious donation of \$250,000 to hire a distinguished woman scholar at Radcliffe, the dean reversed himself (Rossiter, 1995, p. 39; Hanfmann, 1983; Simmel, 1986). Her minority status as Jew does not seem to have bothered her, in contrast to her Jena student days, of which she wrote: “Outside [the Psychological Institute] I often felt a stranger, a person without country and without rights” (Hanfmann, 1983, p. 141).

She stayed on at Harvard until Abe Maslow brought her to newly founded Brandeis in 1952. Her report to the president on the first year contains prescient suggestions for reform: change the name from Psychological Clinic to Psychological Counseling Center to give it less stigma for students, guarantee confidentiality even from parents, and “it should not be made accountable to any University office charged with administrative or disciplinary functions” (Hanfmann, 1953). She belonged to the Psychology Department, where she rapidly gained the respect of colleagues. Abe wrote in a memo: “I would recommend in the following order: “Eugenia Hanfmann, Ricardo Morant, and Walter Toman,” and she assumed temporary chairpersonship in 1958–1959 (Maslow, 1957). She remarked later that

Like many professional women, I was often a minority member in my jobs, sometimes a minority of one. I wanted to have some female companionship at work and did everything I could to obtain it. I was very happy to find Thelma Alper at Harvard, but I was aware that the minority position had its advantage. Being one of a kind, one stands out from the group, one commands attention; at Times I received more recognition than was due me for my work. This insight did not prevent me from enjoying the bonus. (Dembo, 1950; Inkeles, 1950; Hanfmann, 1983, p. 146)

She and Abe understood one another, and she became close to Bertha his wife, to whom she wrote following Abe’s death, reminiscing over two decades at

Brandeis: “Yesterday after a distressing session with Ric about who is to be the next chairman, I kept thinking about the good old times . . . I felt like a lonely remnant” (Hanfmann, 1971, paragraph 1). Without Maslow’s backing, the counseling center was transferred in the 1970s to the medical model under a psychiatrist, a source of great disappointment to her.

Maslow went to bat for her financially, too.

Hanfmann and I ought to be getting about \$15,000 . . . [Walter] Toman, [Dick] Jones, and Hanfmann are in a special supply and demand situation because good therapists can count on an income of \$35,000 or \$40,000 in independent practice. This means that for these people academic life is a terrific financial sacrifice . . . These three are practically irreplaceable.” (Maslow, 1959)

Yet Brandeis dealt shabbily with her in terms of salary, Marianne Simmel recalled (Simmel, personal communication, September 17, 2009).

She maintained lifetime friendships with her former boss David Shakow through his wife as well. For example, she sent news of her consulting work with this affectionate note “with my love Genia” (Hanfmann, 1970). A photograph from around 1970 shows her with other faculty wives in a gender-segregated setting designated by “Mrs.”: Mrs. Kurt Lewin (Gertrude), Mrs. Wolfgang Köhler, Mrs. Carroll Pratt, Mrs. Hans–Lukas Teuber, Dr. Eugenia Hanfmann, Mrs. Richard Held (Archives for the History of American Psychology, University of Akron). (see Figure 3)

Asked about her views on marriage, she answered,

My staying single was not due to a deliberate decision: It had its roots in the unhappy experiences caused by the breakup of my parents’ marriage. When I became aware later of the various anxieties and conflicts underlying my avoidance of marriage, I tended for a while to overestimate the advantages of the married state and its value as an index of “normal adjustment.” I was disabused of these notions after participating in a study of Vassar alumnae, 20 years after graduation. I found no lesser incidence of neurotic disturbance in the married majority than among those remaining single, many of whom in fact had developed into inter-



Figure 3. Faculty wives of professors from the University of Iowa (**Lewin**), Dartmouth University (**Köhler**), Princeton University (**Pratt**), Massachusetts Institute of Technology (**Teuber**), and Brandeis University (**Held**). **Hanfmann** stands second from right facing away. Solomon Asch Papers. Courtesy of the Archives of the History of American Psychology.

esting, non-stereotyped people. I realized that not raising a family had given me freedom to make use of the opportunities that came my way—even though I have been greatly involved in the lives of my large family and of my friends and have often given personal matters priority over the professional ones. (Hanfmann, 1983, p. 148)

Kurt Koffka as Compassionate Sponsor of Dembo and Hanfmann

One psychologist in North America sponsored two of these women in 1930, thanks to networks of colleagues cemented by scientific community regardless of ethnicity or religion. Thus the mentor of Eugenia Hanfmann (1905–1883) in Jena, Wilhelm Peters, recommended her to Kurt Koffka. Koffka's own mother Luise Levy was "of Jewish descent" but became Protestant (Ash, 1995, p. 108).

Koffka's extensive correspondence with Molly Harrower documents his key role in the emigration of Dembo and Hanfmann. As an immigrant himself in 1928, Koffka was familiar with the immigration process and the importance of having a sponsor for immigration. Koffka's student and confidante, Molly Harrower, was an immigrant of Scottish parents from South Africa and England, and she evidently shared his concern and empathy. Koffka remarked "While I was writing this Dembo called, to say that she would like to ask me a few more questions. No word from Hanfmann" (Koffka, 1930a). He was a reliable lifeline: "Letters from Hanfmann, who has not got her nonquota visa" (Koffka, 1930b). "This morning I had a wire that Dembo had been taken to Ellis Island. Fancy that. I spoke at once to the college secretary who will wire immediately. No word from Hanfmann" (Koffka, 1930c). (see Figure 4)

An incident over 2 years later reveals Koffka's continuing compassion for these women students: He showed similar automatic support when his mother and brother resolved to emigrate in 1938 (Harrower, 1983):

My beloved [referring to MH, age 27, lecturing at London University in 1933–34], Friday night after a very spirited seminar in which I talked a great deal, I drove home with Dembo by way of my garage. I inquired about her prospects & found them absolutely tragic. Some weeks ago she & Hanfmann had been told that they would be able to continue for another year on the same terms as this. Since then two patients of the hospital have committed suicide & one has murdered an attendant which brought the terrible situation of an understaffed institution [word?] to the authorities. They had directed some of their funds for research work, but now this money will be, quite legitimately, returned to the fund for attendants. So the best that can happen to the two girls is that they are kept on for board & lodging without a cent of salary. When I asked Dembo whether she would get some money from her parents she answered without embarrassment that not only was this out of the question, but that during this year she had to send every penny she could spare to them. So she has not a cent saved! And then, you know, she has no prospect of her position ever improving, since she is here on a student's visa & therefore unable to accept any paid position even if she could get one. She never complains but shows the most admirable courage. But I feel that something should be done to help her. Do you think she could get anything in England, say in a private school as teacher of German with the chance of earning some extra money by giving private Russian lessons? I thought you might know of something. And you are always willing to help other people. So you will forgive me for asking a new favor from you. (pp. 169, 173)



Figure 4. **Kurt Koffka and Molly Harrower.** Molly Harrower Papers. Courtesy of the Archives of the History of American Psychology.

Unfortunately, Harrower's letters were stored in a suitcase that was lost when Koffka died prematurely, even though she was his executor (Koffka, 1933). Surely here is a glimpse of the feeling of collective concern felt by émigrés that rested on personal friendship crossing gender lines. Here is an instance of informal Jewish networks supplemented by non-Jewish ones. The common element may have been European culture and émigré status.

In addition, this Gestalt psychology group had the common background of exposure to Köhler's Gestalt lectures on "values in a world of facts" (Köhler, 1938), and of Lewin's dynamic spatial diagrams of groups and human fields of force. Then too, Koffka was lecturing on Gestalt visual perception when these Russian women were auditing his seminar (Koffka, 1930–1934). He also mentored Harrower's dissertation and publication on "organization and mental processes" (1932) in this period. The Topology Group (see Figure 5), as they called themselves in the United States, met annually for a day of several invited lectures during a 1-day get together between Christmas and New Years.

As this 1935 photo shows (Figure 5), the group contained representatives of developmental (W. Stern visiting Koffka), personality (Zener, Mackinnon), counseling (Hanfmann, Harrower), rehabilitation (Dembo), and social psychology (Lewin, Heider, Krech). The foundation support was represented by Lawrence K. Frank. Also present were two wives, Grace Heider and Lorene Wright, along with psychologist Wally Reichenberg–Hackett. In the second generation, it was not unusual for wives to play a supportive role for the husband who had the academic



Figure 5. Topology Group in 1935. David Krech Papers. Courtesy of the Archives of the History of American Psychology.

position. Gestalt had perhaps served out its usefulness as a group identity. No longer was the term “chatting line” for Lewin’s Berlin group appropriate in the United States. Now the metaphor of this amalgam of Russian–German–North Americans became “topology.” And the theoretical focus was shifting from individual to group dynamics and social-emotional relationships, for example, for Dembo, “The suffering of handicapped people . . . entails particular social-emotional relationships such as being devalued, being dependent, being a burden, needing help, respect and acceptance” (de Rivera, 1999, p. 43).

Informal Jewish Networks

Amid the extensive literature on emigration, there is a conspicuous number of books on Jewish émigrés, and more recently, on Jewish women émigrés. In the seminal work of Harriet Pass Friedenreich on *Women, Jewish, and Educated. The Lives of Central European University Women* (2002), we learn that 18% of university students overall were female (12,303 women), 7.2% overall were Jewish (884 women), and 13.2% of women students in social sciences at German universities were Jewish (62 women; p. 212). Just two held research positions: Charlotte Buhler at the University of Vienna, and Christine Leubuscher in political science at the University of Berlin. Both were baptized in childhood, and Jewishness seemed not to be an initial obstacle to their careers (Friedenreich, 2002, p. 77).

Overall, therefore, the representation of Jews among women overall is substantial. The reasons for this include the emphasis on education in middle-class childhood homes, which sometimes extended to daughters. Also, Jews did not belong to the agrarian class of serfs, coming rather from a middle domain of craftsmen, bureaucrats, and advisors to nobility (Shahak, 1994). Thus, they possessed a measure of financial resources and mobility. This is not to overlook the discrimination and adversity Jews faced as outsiders in Eastern Europe, perceived as such by substantial numbers of non-Jews and by themselves. In any case, their destinations in emigration were various, and in her sample only two of 215 before 1945 went to the United States (Friedenreich, 2002, p. 217). Yet in my sample, all three of three came here.

One can ask, following another theme in this literature on Jewish women émigrées, whether the Jewish psychologists Hanfmann and Dembo retained a

Jewish identification. Was being Jewish simply what one was, rather than what one did or believed? This type Friedenreich calls “Just Jews,” those who through education and contact with educated non-Jews felt less in common with coreligionists. At the other extreme would be “Jewish Jews,” who practiced Jewish observances in their homes, advanced Jewish knowledge, adhered to German–Jewish liberalism, became involved in Jewish organizations, or identified themselves as sharing Jewish nationality or Zionism.

And did they experience their ethnicity as a career obstacle? Was Jewish background a liability on the professional job market? It seems to have operated beneath the surface of the recommendation letters of E. G. Boring and R. S. Woodworth “As his name indicates,” he is Jewish. He shares “the defects of his race” (Winston, 1996, 1998). I have not combed the archives of potential employers from this perspective. What I have done is to explore the archival holdings of these women and their closest mentors and patrons. Here I found warm allegiances in a predominantly but not exclusively Jewish network.

Writing on refugee scholars in the social sciences, Lewis Coser (1984) noted that “anti-Semitism quite often hampered the attempts of refugee scholars to secure academic positions” (p. 23). Passed over at Stanford, Lewin could only gain a foothold in nontenure track positions at the Iowa Child Welfare Research Station and the MIT Research Center for Group Dynamics. However, Ash (1992b) answered Coser:

In the conventional secondary literature (Mandler & Mandler, 1969; Coser, 1984) these sites are evaluated negatively, even as discrimination against Lewin . . . It is overlooked that precisely these two institutions belonged to the best psychological research arrangements in the U.S. through the research program of the Laura Spellman Rockefeller Fund. (pp. 194–195)

Though Lewin did not receive an appointment from Stanford through Lewis Terman, the position went to Ernest Hilgard, certainly a stellar psychologist in his own right. Yet Winston (1998) argued persuasively that “it remains likely that anti-Semitism played some role in Lewin’s career options” (pp. 35–36).

David Hollinger (1996) raised another issue of relevance to my focus on “informal Jewish networks”—the booster–bigot trap. The trap is the temptation to single out Jewish contributions or to complain of undue Jewish influence. Neither one seems desirable yet the distinction draws a fine line. It has become fashionable and important to recognize gendered and cultural group identities. Multiculturalist scholars tend to speak of ethnic “gifts” and downplay ethnic criticism due to “the risks of appearing akin to the bigot.” Hollinger suggested some assumptions to underscore as we speak of group identities: (1) the group we have chosen is not a cultural monolith, (2) individuals in any group had diverse origins, (3) persons had different generational experiences in entering academia, and (4) the assimilation into Protestant or Catholic America was not a one-way street but a dialectic of assimilation and resistance by multiple minority groups (pp. 12–13).

Conclusions

Summing up, these three women created opportunities for themselves by superior academic and professional work. Compared with first generation women

in psychology, they brought diversity. They showed flexibility and tremendous initiative in cultivating contacts with eminent men and proving their loyalty by first-rate work. I found no evidence that any of these women adhered to traditional Jewish practices. They did value friendships and collegial relationships. Dembo and Hanfmann were probably assimilated secular Jews—“just Jews”—who nevertheless enjoyed many Jewish friendships; they can be located somewhere between Christian baptism and Jewish orthodoxy (Freidenreich, 2002, p. 33). Rickers–Ovsiankina benefited from the same informal networks. They exhibited the family claim in that they sent money home to Russia or, in Dembo’s case, Berlin. All benefited from Jewish mentors and friends (Wilhelm Peters, Lewin, K. Koffka, Shakow, Maslow, Heinz Werner, Lawrence K. Frank, Norman Maier, and David Krech). However they also had non-Jewish sponsors (Donald Adams, Gordon Allport, Barbara Burks, F. W. Buytendijk, Donald Mackinnon, W. Köhler, Gardner and Lois Murphy, Harry Murray, and E. C. Tolman). As a leading authority put it, Jewish writers, “while maintaining close relationships with their other colleagues, reserved a special intimacy for fellow Jews” (Heinze, 2001, p. 3).

Dembo and Rickers–Ovsiankina got their professional opportunity by authoring important topological publications in diverse fields (e.g., Barker, Dembo, & Lewin, 1941, 1943; Hanfmann & Kasanin, 1942; Rickers–Ovsiankina, 1960), thanks to democratic work style of Lewin and the prominent mention in the Adams and Zener book. They maintained female professional and personal friendships from Berlin (Anitra Karsten, Bluma Zeigarnik, Gita Birenbaum, Sara Fajans, Sarah Sliosberg) but they also made new friends, chiefly with European émigrés in America (Sibylle Korch Escalona). They networked through an annual meeting as the Topological Group. They preferred research and clinical practice to academic teaching; their own research programs developed gradually (counseling, rehabilitation). They achieved full professorships on average later: Rickers–Ovsiankina at Wheaton, a women’s college, somewhere between 1935 (age 37) and 1949 (age 51), Hanfmann at 47 at Brandeis, and Dembo at 61 at Clark University. They may have surrendered marriage for career, yet they thrived on close personal and professional ties formed during their early years in Germany and the United States (for a counterexample of a German émigré who did not gain a professional foothold, see Kressley–Mba & Jaeger, 2003).

In keeping with many other women of the second generation, all three Russian women belonged to the category of women with no children, 59 out of 119 (Johnston & Johnson, 2008, p. 51). We do not know their sexual orientations, though Hanfmann thought about marriage. Discrimination based on gender or ethnicity does not loom large in their written records, which probably means that they did not acknowledge it in their letters to male patrons or perhaps even recognize it in communications with women friends. A similar disinclination to admit to discrimination may be based in a desire to get ahead on one’s own merits (Johnson & Johnston, 2009). Like the first generation, “the women did not challenge conventions in an audacious way” (p. 165). None would have considered herself a feminist. They began in research careers, moving gradually into academia. Dembo ran Lewin’s laboratory for years, leaving only in her 40s. Rickers–Ovsiankina left a women’s college for a state university, Hanfmann landed at a predominantly Jewish small coeducational college, and Dembo settled

at a small liberal arts college, Clark University, among Jewish colleagues, after a stint at the New School. By comparison, another Jewish refugee and faculty wife, Else Frenkel-Brunswik, taught without a formal teaching appointment at the University of California, yielding no doubt to nepotism rules (Levinson, 1968; Smith, 1980; Sprung 2002). They benefited from the patronage of many men; in the case of an invitation to the New School, one suspects that the argumentative Mary Henle played some role in Dembo's coming and leaving. What stands out is their resourcefulness and competence. That competence was clinical/developmental for Rickers and Hanfmann, and social/developmental/rehabilitation (Johnston & Johnson, 2008, p. 48, cf. de Rivera, 1995) for Dembo. This conforms with the predominance of clinical (30%), developmental (19%), and educational (12%) subfields for the women in the second generation (Johnston & Johnson, 2008, p. 46).

The second generation made inroads into coeducational institutions: University of Connecticut (Rickers, age 51), Clark (Dembo, age 51), Brandeis (Hanfmann, age 47), but at advanced ages. Graduate training was not as difficult as the first generation, in part because it was opened to women earlier in Europe and in part because it was state subsidized. They initially occupied positions on the margins, but they parlayed this experience into clinical and experimental careers, as "creative opportunists" relying on male sponsors. Among these sponsors, about half were old world émigré Jews, and half were Americans—some of whom had spent time in Germany and were more understanding of foreigners. In employment, gender, and ethnic diversity seemed to become more acceptable in the second generation (Johnston & Johnson, 2008, pp. 62–64). They manifested cultural affinities with German-speaking émigré Europeans in their circles of sponsors, patrons, coauthors, and in one case, husband. They showed no signs of participation in organized feminism in psychology or in psychology at large. They did embark on research that would now count as feminist in its aims: counseling, rehabilitation, prejudice reduction, authoritarianism (Rossiter, 1982). They stayed close to the ivory tower but at the margins, as when Rickers-Ovsiankina retired but struggled for grants at Berkeley, with some assistance from Else Frenkel-Brunswik there. As outsiders, they had all they could do to gain employment and send money home in their adopted country.

The "family claim" worked in various ways that were not experienced by their U.S. counterparts of the first generation (Scarborough & Furumoto, 1982). For Hanfmann, it meant ultimately settling close to her brother in the Boston area, a famous archeologist at Harvard. For Rickers-Ovsiankina and Dembo, it meant sending money home to Russia and Berlin. Relatedly, all put survival and family ahead of marriage—if indeed they had opportunities. It appears that three of them lacked a pool of suitors suited to their cultural backgrounds. By contrast, Lewin brought his wife with him, Heider married an American, Koffka consorted with a student mistress from Europe, Köhler was accompanied by his wife, as was Wertheimer. The men managed to have it all.

Finally, "fractured lives" characterize all three immigrants (Scarborough & Furumoto, 1982). They endured a double migration, which brought change and hybrid vigor to their research and clinical experience. Thanks to the patronage of outstanding scientists and friends, they made the most of their opportunities in Germany and the United States. I have tried to address émigrée status and why it

mattered. It was not easy for them to gain a foothold. How many others lived in a room in a psychiatric hospital for little or no pay? Some of them learned informally while auditing lectures of Lewin in Berlin or Koffka in Northampton. All three had to learn a third language for their professional work: English. All three began life in the United States in semi-isolation as cultural oddities. Minority status as Jew mattered for Hanfmann and Dembo. Minority status as woman and immigrant mattered for Rickers–Ovsiankina. However all three had helpful Jewish mentors. As Heinze (2004) eloquently argued, “dozens of Jewish women entered the more serious domain of professional psychology” (p. 298), and he even listed Dembo and Hanfmann. His overall argument gained support here: “Jews played a disproportionate role in marketing psychological ideas, but scholars have not systematically grappled with this fact as a problem of intellectual and cultural history” (Heinze, 2001, p. 1). “Race matters” in a way perhaps underexplored in history of psychology, as mentor and mentee, that is, in the arena of patronage. In summary, I tried to strengthen the second generation context while preserving and developing two other historiographic contexts: émigré history and ethnicity. In so doing, I have also confirmed and extended the observations of Elizabeth Valentine about pioneer women psychologists in England and America born between 1897 and 1922 (Valentine, 2006, p. 166), that “despite the barriers, these women persisted and obtained training if not always recognition of the standards they had achieved . . . They faced the conflict of autonomy and affiliation and, in most cases, the choice between marriage and career. Many of them remained unmarried and few had children . . . Despite subordinate positions, isolated working conditions and few graduate students, with the consequent inability to develop ‘schools’, they made their mark and received due recognition for their achievements. The eminent pioneers were not restricted to ‘feminine’ fields of work or subject to the ‘territorial segregation’ that became more common in later years” (p. 175).

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