

ENDURING COMPETITION

German Theater in Argentina, 1946–1965

After rising to power in the military and then as minister of labor and vice president, Juan Domingo Perón was elected president of Argentina in 1946 and held power until late 1955 primarily by advocating for the nation's lower classes. Catalyzed by Eva Perón, the government granted women's suffrage and funded an array of social welfare programs, subsidizing workers' access to housing, health care, education, and leisure activities. At the same time, the regime purged dissidents from the government, media, and education sectors. Controversially, Perón encouraged European immigration to Argentina, particularly from Germany. From 1945 to 1955 approximately 400,000 Europeans emigrated to Latin America, and Argentina quickly became a first choice for many German and Austrian citizens.¹ According to Gerald Steinacher, Argentina received just over 100,000 German- and Austrian-born emigrants

1. Pace, *La via del demoni*, 4.

in the decade following World War II; however, many of them later remigrated, leaving Argentina with a net gain of approximately 20,000.² While the majority were anonymous and politically disinterested, the new arrivals also included an estimated 40,000 war criminals. Numerous high-ranking Nazi functionaries and collaborators were among the new arrivals, including Adolf Eichmann and his adjutant Fritz Stangl; physician and SS captain Josef Mengele; Wilfred von Oven, Joseph Goebbels's press secretary; Belgian Rexist Pierre Daye; industrialist and banker Ludwig Freude; and decorated pilot Hans-Ulrich Rudel.³ Bilingual articles in the nationalist German press in Buenos Aires encouraged postwar immigration,⁴ which scholars and members of the pre-1945 nationalist community claim increased sympathy and nostalgia for Nazism among Germans in Argentina.⁵ Statistically, the total number of emigrants during the postwar period roughly equals figures between 1933 and 1945.⁶ Antifascists and nationalists alike referred to migrations of both periods as diasporas.⁷

In the media landscape this last large wave of German emigrants to Argentina supported several new nationalist publications. The *Freie Presse* first appeared at newsstands in Buenos Aires in December 1945. Although the *Deutsche La Plata Zeitung* had been banned following Argentina's declaration of war on Germany that March, the *Freie Presse* was its direct successor. The *Freie Presse* featured many of the same staff as the *La Plata Zeitung*, including its founder, Frederico Müller, and likely was under the same ownership.⁸ Like the *Argentinisches Tageblatt* during the 1930s,

2. Steinacher, "Argentinien als NS-Fluchtziel," 243–244.

3. Holger Meding, "La emigración a la República Argentina de los Nacional-socialistas buscados: Una aproximación cuantativa," *Estudios migratorios latino-americanos* 43 (1999): 241–259.

4. "Gobemnar es poblar/Regieren heißt bevölkern," *FP*, May 15, 1947.

5. Michael Frank, *Die letzte Bastion*; Lamm, interview by author, December 10, 2010; Ney, interview by author, February 3, 2009.

6. Holger Meding, "Der Nationalsozialismus und die deutsche Einwanderung an den Río de la Plata," in Eick, *Nach Buenos Aires!*, 36.

7. "Geistige Lage des Nazismus heute," *AT*, May 31, 1949; "Die Lüge der sechs Millionen," *Der Weg*, March 1955.

8. Ismar, *Pressekrieg*, 197.

the *Freie Presse* gained readers and writers by targeting German emigrants to Argentina. Its circulation rose steadily throughout the 1950s, reaching 30,000 by the end of the decade. For much of the 1950s and 1960s, it had the highest circulation of any German-language newspaper printed outside of Europe.⁹ Politically, the *Freie Presse* was equivocal. Despite links to the *La Plata Zeitung*, the *Freie Presse*'s vehemently anti-Communist tone garnered it support among West German diplomats in Buenos Aires.¹⁰ It also eventually distanced itself from blatantly neo-Nazi publications like *Der Weg*. Nonetheless, in 1952 Wilfred von Oven, formerly Joseph Goebbels's press secretary, became editor in chief of the *Freie Presse*. Although West German diplomats defended the paper,¹¹ von Oven himself described the *Freie Presse* as a National Socialist publication.¹² The war of words between the *Argentinsches Tageblatt* and the *Deutsche La Plata Zeitung* from 1914 to 1945 continued largely unabated between the *Tageblatt* and the *Freie Presse* in the postwar period.

Another prominent voice among Argentina's postwar German-language media was the monthly magazine *Der Weg*. Founded in 1947 by the Hitler Youth leader and Nazi pedagogue Eberhard Fritsch, *Der Weg* was published by the Dürer Press in Buenos Aires. Authors published by Dürer read like a who's who of unapologetic Nazis, including Johann Leers, Mathilde Ludendorff, Wilfred von Oven, Hans-Ulrich Rudel, Rudolf Heß, and Reinhard Kopps (alias Juan Maler). Although *Der Weg* and the *Freie Presse* had partially coinciding readerships, the former was a stridently neo-Nazi publication that was banned in occupied Germany and Austria in 1949.¹³ After Perón's downfall in 1955, various overlapping antifascist, Jewish, and governmental groups campaigned against *Der Weg*. It lost many advertisers, including the *Freie Presse*, and

9. Ismar, *Pressekrieg*, 198–199.

10. West German Embassy (WGE) to Federal Foreign Office (FFO), November 16, 1962, Bestand B33, Band 248, PAAA.

11. WGE to FFO, September 30, 1965, Bestand B33, Band 386, PAAA.

12. Meding, *Flucht vor Nürnberg?*, 268.

13. Meding, *Der Weg*, 116–117.

folded in 1957.¹⁴ Known for its political content, initially *Der Weg* was chiefly an arch-conservative cultural magazine, which reported regularly on Ludwig Ney's ensemble.

The Free German Stage: Stymied Reconciliation, 1945–1953

Admired internationally for its accomplishments as the world's only regularly performing exilic theater during World War II, after the conflict the Free German Stage featured guest performances by some of the most famous names in German theater, including Ernst Deutsch (1946), Ellen Schwanneke (1946), Hans Moser (1948), Viktor de Kowa (1949, 1952), Theo Lingen (1954), and the entire ensembles of the Viennese Theater in the Josefstadt (1956) and the Berlin Comedy (1957). In the 1950s the FGS grew increasingly dependent on subventions from Bonn, which sponsored performances throughout the Southern Cone and financed the troupe until 1965. Thus, from 1940 to 1965 the theater reversed roles from debunking to projecting German soft power.

Paul Walter Jacob saw the war's end as an opportunity to fulfill both political convictions and professional ambitions. Jacob hoped that the FGS could help to heal ill will between Argentina's German populations, and he also realized that the company needed to expand beyond the refugee population. Aging, remigration, and integration into Argentine society would cause audiences from this group to shrink in the ensuing years. New emigrant theatergoers and thespians were arriving in the postwar emigration from Europe, but the FGS would alienate itself from them unless it mended relations with German nationalists. On the other hand, its public would more than double if the group could establish itself as a less political, more inclusive German-language theater abroad for both colonies. As early as 1943 Jacob had begun planning for this maneuver, which he believed was the only path to long-term financial

14. Meding, *Der Weg*, 138.

solvency for the stage.¹⁵ Yet the director's ambitions threatened to sow deeper discord within the already contentious antifascist population, because many of its members had no wish for reconciliation and opposed his strategy.

The media landscape quickly reflected the changing tactics of the FGS. In one of its very first issues, the *Freie Presse* began reporting on Jacob's troupe. With effusive praise, the paper even undertook to endorse the stage retroactively by weaving applause for past performances into reviews of current productions.¹⁶ Jacob advertised regularly in the *Freie Presse*, which he perceived as a conduit to the nationalist population. The relationship developed into a close partnership. The awkward coupling of the antifascist, predominantly Jewish Free German Stage and the nationalist *Freie Presse* was underscored visually when the paper published a review of the theater's 1947 almanac alongside an advertisement for a local screening of the Nazi propaganda film *Der Herrscher* (1937).¹⁷ In another instance, Jewish Jacques Arndt's reports from Vienna in 1950 were printed next to advertisements for books such as Hans-Ulrich Rudel's *Nevertheless* and Wilfred von Oven's *With Goebbels until the End*.¹⁸ Still, both parties advanced their cooperation. On December 30, 1947, Jacob sent the founder of the *Freie Presse*, Frederico Müller, his best wishes for the coming year and thanked him for being a true friend and supporter of the FGS.¹⁹

Their cooperation elicited divisive reactions throughout German Buenos Aires. The Free German Stage offended its extant public by advertising in the *Freie Presse*, which was taboo among Jews.²⁰ Most Jews, antifascists, and nationalists were against reconciliation, and refused even to read the other colony's newspaper. Members of the nationalist colony, too, were baffled by this development. One

15. Jacob to Berger, November 22, 1943, PWJAK.

16. "FDB: *Marilou*," *FP*, December 3, 1945.

17. "Deutsches Kino," *FP*, April 15, 1947.

18. "Wiener Theaterbrief," *FP*, January 8, 1950.

19. Jacob to Müller, December 30, 1947, PWJAK.

20. Ernesto Curt Damerou to Jacob, March 22, 1950, PWJAK.

reader, who explained that she had lived in Argentina for decades and was writing on behalf of many prewar emigrants, asked Jacob directly: “Is the FGS a German-language theater for the Jewish colony, or not?”²¹ The overwhelming number of Jews in its public, cast, and repertoire indicated that it was, and the group’s name also displeased many of her acquaintances. In Germany and especially in Argentina, there were no “unfree” German theaters. But then again, she went on, Jacob continually advertised in the *Freie Presse*, the paper of the “other” German-speaking population in Buenos Aires. The writer of the letter concluded that Jacob would have to be more consequential. If he wanted to expand his public, he had to change the cast. Representatives from both colonies needed to be onstage; otherwise readers of the *Freie Presse* would feel alienated from Jacob’s troupe.

The director appears to have taken her advice to heart. In addition to organizing celebrity guest performances, he engaged Werner Zamelka, Egon Straube, and Ina Maria Müller, all of whom had been members of Ludwig Ney’s company during the war. He also attempted to contract Roman Riesch, who had starred in a 1935 guest performance sponsored by the German consulate and Strength through Joy.²² Indicating ongoing political divisions, Riesch declined the offer.²³ Jacob’s strategy also encountered stiff resistance among the refugee population. Despite their turbulent relationship, the Zionist *Jüdische Wochenschau* had publicized the FGS since 1940; however, in 1948 the *Jüdische Wochenschau* desisted from further reporting on the ensemble. The antifascist organization and journal *Das Andere Deutschland* had already reduced its coverage toward the end of the war and, although Jacob protested personally to its editor, August Siemsen, *DAD* continued this trend during the postwar period.²⁴ There was also fallout with the leftist Forward Club, where Jacob previously had lectured and directed the choir. By 1946, however, Jacob complained that his

21. Frau Rosenlöcher to Jacob, July 28, 1947, PWJAK.

22. Breslauer to Riesch, February 4, 1946, PWJAK.

23. Roman Riesch to Breslauer, February 12, 1946, PWJAK.

24. Jacob to Siemsen, July 29, 1946, PWJAK

efforts had not been reciprocated. He discontinued his membership and broke off all contact in August of that year.²⁵

The Free German Stage's relationship with the *Argentinisches Tageblatt* suffered the worst repercussions. Long his greatest champion, the *Tageblatt* was infuriated by Jacob's decision to advertise in the *Freie Presse*. The deterioration in the paper's relationship with the FGS was evident in its coverage of the 1946 season, which, despite celebrity guest performances by Ernst Deutsch and Ellen Schwanneke, was markedly shorter and less prominently positioned than in the past. The *Freie Presse*, by comparison, consistently published much longer reviews on the front page of its arts section.²⁶ The 1946 theater almanac, in which shorter excerpts from the *Tageblatt* were printed beneath lengthier quotes from the *Freie Presse*, also evinced the ramifications of the alienation between the former and the FGS. Announcing his intent to break off all contact with Jacob, the *Tageblatt's* theater critic, Werner Katzenstein, cited the director's friendship with the *Freie Presse* as his primary motive. Katzenstein felt personally slighted that after all the *Tageblatt* had done to aid his enterprise during its tenuous first years, Jacob had established close relations with its primary commercial and political competitor.²⁷ Jacob did not answer Katzenstein, but days later he complained to Sigmund Breslauer that the *Tageblatt* had slashed coverage of the FGS but printed page-long reports on amateur stages in Rio de Janeiro and Montevideo. Despite Katzenstein's explanations, Jacob described this treatment as bewildering and then complained that the paper "intentionally harms us with every theater article."²⁸ The quarrel worsened when a leading journalist for the *Tageblatt*, Peter Bussemeyer,

25. Jacob to Forward Club, August 21, 1946; Vice President Sternberg to Jacob, September 2, 1946, PWJAK.

26. This began at the outset of the 1946. Compare "Ball im Savoy," *FP*, April 14, 1946 and "Ball im Savoy," *AT*, April 10, 1946; "George Bernard Shaw Frau Warrens Gewerbe," *FP*, April 28, 1946 and "Shaws Frau Warrens Gewerbe," *AT*, April 28, 1946; "Frühlingswind, Lustspiel von Johann von Bokay," *FP*, May 5, 1946 and "Frühlingswind in der FDB," *AT*, May 5, 1946.

27. Katzenstein to Jacob, March 13, 1947, PWJAK.

28. Jacob to Heinrich Fränkel, April 16, 1947, PWJAK.

published an article in the New York magazine *Aufbau* attacking the “readiness to reconcile” of Jacob and others who seemed to have already forgotten about the catastrophe of Nazism. The Free German Stage had abandoned the “Free” in its name and now spurned antifascist thespians in favor of actors from the former “Nazi theater” in Buenos Aires as well as artists associated with the Miklós Horthy government in Hungary. Furthermore, Bussemeyer lauded Alexander Berger for leaving the troupe and forming a rival, moral theater company.²⁹

The imbroglio did not abate. Compared to previous years, Alemann’s paper had cut the average length of its reviews by half.³⁰ After the Latin American premiere of Carl Zuckmayer’s *The Devil’s General* (1946) in 1948, Liselott Reger complained from Uruguay that the *Tageblatt*’s reporting was so colorless that she could not tell whether the sold-out, widely acclaimed production had been a success.³¹ For this information Reger could have turned to the *Freie Presse*, which ran a 1,225-word review of the performance as opposed to the 425-word report in the *Tageblatt*. The tension impacted Jacob’s journalistic activities, too. In 1945 he published forty-one articles in the paper; just a year later the number had dwindled to six and did not recover. Jacob’s lukewarm farewell letter to Ernesto Alemann before his departure for Europe, in which he thanked the *Tageblatt* owner for having supported the FGS “a good while,” indicated the unhealed rift.³²

Jacob’s strategy of reconciliation and expansion created controversy behind the curtain, too. Several actors were irate when Jacob began cooperating with the *Freie Presse* and contracted thespians formerly in Ney’s cast. To conclude the 1945 season, the stage

29. “Jannings ist nur ein Symptom,” *Aufbau* 13 (1947): 11.

30. Compare 1948 and 1943: “*Vergelt’s Gott*,” *AT*, April 28, 1948; “*Schneider im Schloss*,” *AT*, May 12, 1948; “*Gaslicht*,” *AT*, May 25, 1948; “*Fuhrman Henschel*,” *AT*, June 9, 1948; “*Saison im Kurhotel*,” *AT*, May 23, 1943; “*Zweiter Stock, Tür 19*,” *AT*, May 30, 1943; “*Das Schwedische Zündholz*,” *AT*, June 6, 1943; “*Dorine und der Zufall*,” *AT*, June 13, 1943; “*Dr. Juci Szabo*,” *AT*, June 26, 1943.

31. Reger to Jacob, June 24, 1948, PWJAK.

32. Jacob to Alemann, March 3, 1950, PWJAK.

commemorated the twenty-fifth anniversary of FGS member Annie Ernst's acting debut with the world premiere of *Marilou* (1945), an operetta by composer Lyle Frey and librettist Karl Völlmer, both emigrants to Argentina. Between acts Alexander Berger gave a speech to honor Ernst. The gesture struck the *Jüdische Wochenschau* as heartwarming and passed without comment by the *Tageblatt* and *Freie Presse*.³³ Jacob, on the other hand, was incensed because a fellow actor felt the speech was deliberately offensive to "Aryans." Berger retorted that only antifascist Aryans had visited the FGS during the war. All others attended Ludwig Ney's German Theater. They had boycotted, besmeared, and threatened Jews at every opportunity. Berger concluded that antifascists could only have applauded his speech, and if the second group "was offended by my 'slap in the face' (your words), then I am delighted."³⁴ Just days later Max Wächter, a founding member of the ensemble, reinforced Berger's actions when he accused Jacob of flirting with the Nazis.³⁵ The rancor within his own cast imperiled Jacob's project of reconciliation through theater, and it even put the FGS itself at risk.

The mounting tension culminated when, for the first time since its inauguration, the Free German Stage broke apart. Eight long-time members formed their own competing ensemble, the Musical Players, which performed six operettas during the 1946 season. In response Jacob partnered with the exilic Independent Hungarian Theater and Otto Werberg's ballet group to perform a competing program of prewar German, Austrian, and Hungarian operettas. Noting that Ernő Szilágy's orchestra and the Hungarian actors' accents created an exotic atmosphere, the *Jüdische Wochenschau* reported that the operettas filled thousands of seats as well as the coffers of both stages.³⁶ Various Spanish-language newspapers also lauded the presentations.³⁷ The upstart Musical Players were

33. "FDB: Uraufführung von *Marilou*," *JW*, December 7, 1945.

34. Berger to Jacob, January 3, 1946.

35. Wächter to Arndt, January 15, 1946, JAC.

36. "FDB und Ungarische Bühne *Gräfin Mariza* von Kalman," *JW*, May, 17, 1946.

37. "Tiene Éxito la Opereta de P. Abraham," *La Hora*, July 25, 1946; "Bilingüe," *Hoy*, September 7, 1946.

overmatched, and in 1948 they dissolved and most re-signed with the FGS. Paul Walter Jacob's collaboration with the Independent Hungarian Theater again ratified his strategy of drawing from the strength of intercultural partnerships to overcome external threats and internal dissension. Nevertheless, the widespread aversion to his rapprochement with German nationalists portended that the divisive theatrical energies unleashed during the war had woven a web of hostilities that would not easily be undone.

From 1946 on, wagering that the broad appeal of international theater and film stars could surmount tenacious animosities in German Buenos Aires, Jacob organized numerous celebrity guest performances. Another goal was to reestablish ties to Germany, specifically West Germany. Ernst Deutsch (1946), Ellen Schwanneke (1946), Hans Moser (1948), Fritz Gehlen (1948), Viktor de Kowa (1949, 1952), and Theo Linggen (1954) visited the FGS. These events were acclaimed throughout the Argentine capital. Leading personalities of the Argentine entertainment industry gave speeches at Ernst Deutsch's welcome reception, including the president of the Argentine Actors Association, Florindo Ferrario, and Faustino Tezanos, general intendant of the Buenos Aires theater system. The director of the Smart Theater, Nestor Ibarra, requested permission to attend all Deutsch's rehearsals, and the Emelka television program announced plans to film the dress rehearsal for Ibsen's *Ghosts* (1882). Afterward, with Deutsch in attendance for the FGS's 150th premiere and 500th production, Hans José Rehfisch's *Water for Canitoga* (1936), Jacob declared to the audience that the exiled Jewish actor's presence initiated a new epoch in the stage's existence.³⁸

Deutsch's agenda in Buenos Aires included an evening of poetry recitations as well as performances of *Ghosts*, John Galsworthy's *Loyalties* (1922), and the world premiere of Alfred Neumann's *Abel* (1946). Although Deutsch was famous for playing the title role in Lessing's *Nathan the Wise* (1779), the repertoire during his stay prioritized caution and inclusion. Jacob and his donors had

38. "Ernst Deutsch in Südamerika," *Sonntagsblatt Staatszeitung und Herold*, June 7, 1946.

engineered the guest performances to establish the FGS as *the* German theater in Buenos Aires, and they refused to jeopardize this endeavor.³⁹ The approach proved effective. *La Nación's* drama critic, Samuel Eichelbaum, devoted a full-page article to Deutsch's depiction of Oswald in Ibsen's *Ghosts*, which he compared to the renowned Yiddish actor Ben Ami's portrayal in 1941 and hailed as a landmark in Argentine theater history.⁴⁰ Theater reviewers for dozens of local newspapers, including German, Spanish, Hungarian, Polish, and Italian media, gushed over Deutsch's sold-out performances at the National Theater.⁴¹ The Free German Stage had appeared in some of these publications before, but never had so many of them covered the company in such depth at once.

A month later Ellen Schwanneke arrived in Buenos Aires. Her performances in Dario Nicodemi's *Scampolo* (1932), George Bernard Shaw's *Saint Joan* (1923), and Christa Winsloe's *Yesterday and Today* (1930) brought the FGS another round of publicity in Buenos Aires and beyond.⁴² But unlike Deutsch's visit, which

39. Deutsch to Lifezis, December 12, 1945; Fränkel to Jacob, January 10, 1946; Lifezis to Jacob, January 18, 1946, PWJAK.

40. "Ernst Deutsch en *Espectros*," *LN*, June 3, 1946.

41. The following is a sampling; many newspapers printed multiple articles on Deutsch's visit: "Gastspiel von Ernst Deutsch," *JW*, May 13, 1946; "*Gespenster* und *Oswald* . . . Ernst Deutsch," *FP*, June 1, 1946; "Actuó Ernesto Deutsch," *El Pueblo*, June 1, 1946; "La temporada de Ernst Deutsch," *La Hora*, June 1, 1946; "Presentóse anoche con *Espectros*," *La Prensa*, June 1, 1946; "E. Deutsch se presentó en El Nacional," *La Razón*, June 1, 1946; "Aplaudióse al actor Ernst Deutsch," *El Mundo*, June 2, 1946; "Ernst Deutsch," *Kurjer Polski*, June 2, 1946; "El actor Alemán Ernesto Deutsch," *El Diario*, June 2, 1946; "E. Deutsch *Gesellschaft* von Galsworthy," *AT*, June 18, 1946; "Entrevistamos al intérprete Alemán Ernst Deutsch," *Noticias Gráficas*, July 5, 1946.

42. "Ellen Schwanneke en Buenos Aires," *La Tarde*, August 8, 1946; "Muchachas de uniforme," *Antena*, August 20, 1946; "Veremos hoy a Schwanneke," *La Hora*, August 13, 1946; "Ellen Schwanneke Makes Her Debut," *BAH*, August 14, 1946; "Mädchen in Uniform," *The Standard*, August 14, 1946; "Se presentó anoche Ellen Schwanneke," *La Prensa*, August 14, 1946; "Ellen Schwanneke en *Internado de Señoritas*," *Argentina Libre*, August 15, 1946; "Gastspiel Ellen Schwanneke," *AT*, August 15, 1946; "Presentóse Ellen Schwanneke," *El Lider*, August 15, 1946; "Debutó Ellen Schwanneke," *La Argentina*, August 15, 1946; "Pierwszy Występ Ellen Schwanneke," *Kurjer Polski*, August 15, 1946; "Ellen Schwanneke interpretó una pieza de Nicodemi," *LN*, August 21, 1946; "FDB:

was universally praised and caused no discernible controversy, Schwanneke's sojourn revealed simmering tensions in Buenos Aires. Her signature performance was Winsloe's *Yesterday and Today*, which also had been produced as a film, *Girls in Uniform* (1931), by Carl Froehlich, with Leontine Sagan as director. Both Schwanneke as Ilse von Westhagen and the FGS's Hedwig Schlichter-Crilla as Fräulein von Kesten had played major roles in the film, which denounced the militaristic atmosphere at a Prussian boarding school for girls. The film was an international success, and the *New York Times* singled out Schlichter-Crilla's performance as "deserving of the highest praise."⁴³

Although it had potential to stir polemics, the presence of two stars from the movie compelled the FGS to stage the play. Conflict rapidly ensued. The *Freie Presse's* report on Schwanneke's arrival mentioned the Nazi period just twice and emphasized that the actress had left Germany voluntarily in 1933.⁴⁴ Then, its review of *Girls in Uniform* denounced the Allied occupation, noting that Winsloe had been shot mistakenly in France in 1944. It also dismissed the play's condemnation of militarized education in interwar Germany as a world of backward nobility that had disappeared decades earlier. By contrast, the *Argentinisches Tageblatt* contended that *Girls in Uniform* proved the obvious—that, for example, young people require compassionate teachers, and the traditional Prussian method of education forever damaged children's souls by forcibly turning children into mindless robots compliant with the authoritarian state.⁴⁵ The *Jüdische Wochenschau* was

Gastspiel Ellen Schwanneke *Scampolo*," *JW*, August 23, 1946; "Ellen Schwanneke en El Nacional," *Hoy*, August 28, 1946; "Pequeña comedia fue estrenada anoche," *El Pueblo*, August 28, 1946; "Animó E. Schwanneke una graciosa comedia," *El Mundo*, August 29, 1946; "Ellen Schwanneke, estrella de *Internado de Señoritas*," *La Película*, August 30, 1946; "Ellen Schwanneke in Buenos Aires," *New Yorker Staatszeitung*, September 8, 1946; "Ellen Schwannecke in Buenos Aires," *Hamburger Volkszeitung*, September 8, 1946; "En la voz reside el mágico secreto," *Qué*, September 12, 1946. "Die heilige Johanna in der Freien Deutschen Bühne," *DAD*, September 15, 1946;

43. "Girls in Uniform," *New York Times*, September 12, 1932.

44. "Grüß Gott, Ellen Schwannecke!," *FP*, August 7, 1946.

45. "Gastspiel Ellen Schwanneke," *AT*, August 15, 1946.

more explicit, asserting that Winsloe unmasked a national German pedagogy responsible for sowing the evil ideology that had brought Nazism into the world.⁴⁶ Spanish-language media uniformly corroborated the *Tageblatt's* interpretation, and many newspapers, from the proletariat *El Pueblo* to the bourgeois *La Nación*, directly accused Prussian educators of systematically inculcating their pupils with totalitarian, militaristic values to avenge Germany's defeat in the First World War.⁴⁷ Of fifteen reviews in Argentina and abroad, only the *Freie Presse* did not directly link *Girls in Uniform* to the militarization of German society during the interwar period.

Further controversies followed. In 1948 Jacob contracted the Viennese comic Hans Moser. Although his wife was Jewish, Moser had acted in over thirty films between the Nazi annexation of Austria and 1945. Since the *Argentinisches Tageblatt* mentioned only the actor's postwar work,⁴⁸ one reader solicited clarification of Moser's position toward Nazism, noting rumors that he had starred in an early anti-Semitic film.⁴⁹ The *Revista Familiar Israelita del Uruguay* argued that Moser only could have continued acting after 1938 if his political views had coincided with the Nazi regime.⁵⁰ One theatergoer pressured Jacob for an explanation, claiming the widespread rumors about Moser warranted a response in the *Revista Familiar Israelita* and the *Tageblatt*. This would convince skeptics to attend the presentations.⁵¹ Three days later, Jacob blamed lackluster sales on "anti-Moser propaganda."⁵²

46. "FDB: Gastspiel Ellen Schwanneke *Mädchen in Uniform*," *JW*, August 16, 1946.

47. "En torno a la presentación de Ellen Schwanneke," *El Pueblo*, August 15, 1946; "Ellen Schwanneke ha sido aplaudida en El Nacional," *LN*, August 15, 1946; "Ellen Schwanneke en *Internado de Señoritas*," *Argentina Libre*, August 15, 1946; "E. Schwanneke rebutó en el teatro alemán," *La Hora*, August 17, 1946.

48. "Hans Moser eingetroffen," *AT*, May 15, 1948.

49. "Ein mit Grund Neugieriger," *AT*, June 13, 1948. The film goes unnamed, but the letter likely references erroneously an interpretation of Moser's portrayal of the anti-Semitic lawmaker, Rat Bernhard, in Hans Breslauer's *Die Stadt ohne Juden* (1924).

50. "Carta a la redacción," *Revista Familiar Israelita del Uruguay*, August 27, 1948.

51. Kraemer to Jacob, August 28, 1948.

52. Jacob to Reger, September 1, 1948, PWJAK.

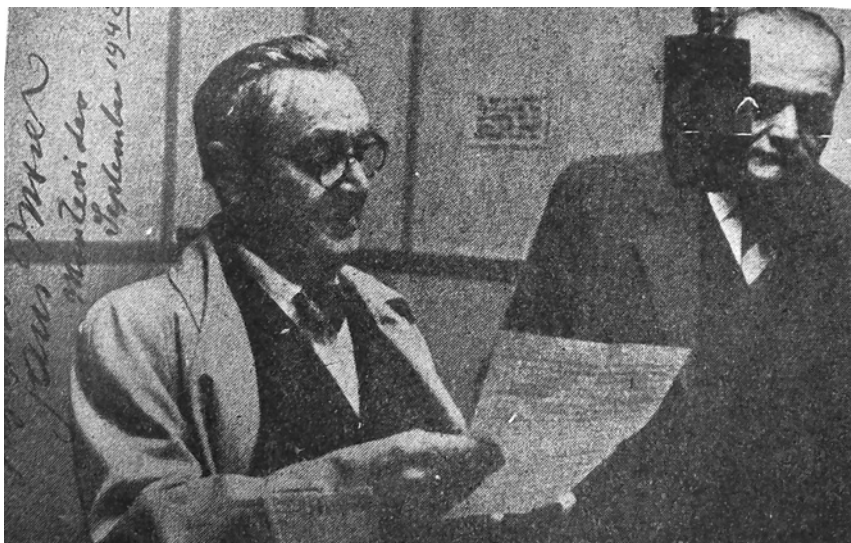


Figure 8. Hans Moser and Paul Walter Jacob on the *Voice of the Day* radio program in Montevideo, Uruguay, 1948.

Source: Paul Walter Jacob, ed., *Almanach der Freien Deutsche Bühne in Buenos Aires* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Jupiter, 1948), 49.

The dissension continued during Moser's visit, and Jacob felt compelled to address the situation after his closing performance in Herrmann Mostar's *When the Snow Melts* (1948). Attended by Austrian consul Otto Günther, the production benefited the newly formed Austrian Charity, which led the *Freie Presse* to describe the FGS as the epitome of Schiller's concept of the theater as a moral institution. After the final curtain Jacob gave a farewell speech, expressing the hope that the FGS could thaw the snow in Buenos Aires, which still kept many people away from its performances.⁵³ Yet Moser's visit, including the charity performance, had the opposite effect. Jacob's publicist in Montevideo even advised against publishing a theater almanac for the 1948 season. He could not find any advertisers, because the FGS had become too divisive. The benefit had angered many Jews, who protested that the Austrians

53. "Wenn der Schnee schmilzt," *FP*, September 15, 1948.

had behaved no better than the Germans during the Nazi period. Jacob's support for reconciliation between Jews and Austrians riled Zionists and antifascists, costing him longtime supporters, who felt betrayed.⁵⁴ An almanac did appear for the 1948 season, and it was warmly received in the local and international press;⁵⁵ however, when Jacob engaged Viktor de Kowa in 1949, he took preemptive measures against resurgent polemics.

The guest performances brought Paul Walter Jacob notoriety in Europe. In 1949 he and the well-known actor and director Viktor de Kowa elaborated a plan for individual appearances in Buenos Aires and Berlin during alternate years, to which they would add more ensemble members over time.⁵⁶ The arrangement appealed to both parties, but De Kowa's biography was problematic. De Kowa had continued acting during Hitler's regime, featuring in thirty-five films from 1933 to 1945, and was named to the Important Artist Exempt List to shield him from military service. Unlike Moser, De Kowa had been a member of the NSDAP and directed overtly propagandistic productions, such as the 1941 film *Chin Up, Johannes!* The film commended the transformational education and character development that young Johannes, an ethnic German from Argentina, receives in the Nazi National Political Institutes of Education. The visit of an actor and director with such a background augured a *casus belli* in German Buenos Aires.

To finalize the contract, Jacob visited De Kowa in Berlin in April 1949 and, while he was there, wrote a piece about his impressions for the *Argentinisches Tageblatt*. In addition to the city's political climate, sights, and citizens, Jacob reported on a concert by Rudolf Nelson at De Kowa's Berlin Tribune theater. A pianist, composer, and founder of the illustrious Nelson Review cabaret, the Jewish artist was performing in Berlin for the first time after fifteen years in exile. Jacob quoted from De Kowa's introduction, in

54. Widetzky to Jacob, October 1, 1949, PWJAK.

55. "Theater-Almanach auf das Goethe-Jahr 1949," *FP*, March 12, 1949; "10 Jahre FDB," *Frankfurter Rundschau*, January 12, 1949; "FDB Almanach," *Basler Nationalzeitung*, January 29, 1949; "Freie Deutsche Bühne," *Detroitter Abend-Post*, June 19, 1949.

56. De Kowa to Jacob, April 16, 1949, PWJAK.

which the actor professed his own culpability and begged Nelson's forgiveness. Then, as if to be sure that nobody missed the message, Jacob reiterated that in private conversation it was impossible not to be moved by De Kowa's sincerity and his uncompromising commitment to reconciliation and pacifism.⁵⁷ Operating in the guise of travel journalism, Jacob's main objective was to forestall attacks against De Kowa during his visit to Buenos Aires.

Upon his arrival in Argentina, the *Freie Presse* and *Argentinisches Tageblatt* ran reports characterizing De Kowa as a pacifist whose credo, peace is the precondition for mankind's happiness, would resonate in Buenos Aires.⁵⁸ When the curtain rose, De Kowa performed J. B. Priestley's *Ever since Paradise* (1946), Marcel Achard's *I Know My Love* (1946), a variety show entitled "The Unknown Goethe," and Charlotte Reißmann's *Promise Me Nothing* (1936). He received rave reviews from the *Tageblatt*, which exclaimed that Achard owed the guest a medal of honor and fawned over De Kowa's direction of the intercultural Goethe variety evening. A week later, however, the German-language radio program from Montevideo, *The Voice of Day*, told of a different reaction. In a segment entitled "Viktor de Kowa and the Malice," the program's producer, Hermann Gebhardt, reported that the visitor had received several anonymous letters upbraiding him for acting with a Jewish theater. Then, when he arrived in Montevideo, emigrants vilified him for being a Nazi. Himself an antifascist refugee, but one whom Zionists assailed for advocating rapprochement, Gebhardt concluded that these threats represented larger blocs of agitators in both German-speaking populations.⁵⁹ Instead of striving for peace, both factions stoked rancor in an enduring pattern of systemic group hatred. Jacob and Gebhardt were willing to draw a distinction between Germans who had remained active in Hitler's Germany and those who had not. In the case of De Kowa, they also accepted apologies from a person whom they saw as a truly

57. "Mit Viktor de Kowa im blockierten Berlin," *AT*, July 18, 1949.

58. "Empfang bei Viktor De Kowa," *FP*, July 9, 1949; "Hoppla, es ist ja Frieden!" *AT*, July 15, 1949; "Viktor De Kowa und der Weltfrieden," *FP*, July 19, 1949.

59. "Viktor de Kowa und die Bosheit," *La Voz del Día*, August 30, 1949.

repentant collaborator. Many other emigrants, however, were not open to reconciliation—let alone forgiveness—in either instance.

Jacob faced staunch, multifold resistance to his efforts to render the FGS the theater of all Germans in Buenos Aires. His strategy did not win over enough people from the nationalist colony to increase attendance significantly and, furthermore, alienated many former supporters and ensemble members. The upshot of theatergoers' intransigence was insolvency. As the stage ran ever deeper deficits, its sponsors grew impatient. Heinrich Fränkel, the primary donor to the stage, complained with increasing vehemence about having to fund the enterprise month after month.⁶⁰ Eventually, as he fretted to conductor and frequent spectator at the FGS, Fritz Busch, Jacob worried not about funding the stage from season to season, but from weekly premiere to weekly premiere.⁶¹ Busch himself had to intervene, meeting with several leading members of the antifascist colony to convince them to save the theater. He argued that its closure would irrevocably damage the cultural prestige of the anti-fascist movement, "our cause."⁶² As a motivation to save the stage, Busch invoked the enmity that Jacob was trying to overcome. The group created a theater commission to shore up the FGS's finances, but this precarious endeavor was founded on the very polarization that precluded the enterprise's solvency.

The intractable animosity in German Buenos Aires, the distressing state of the theater's finances, and his own professional ambition all convinced Jacob that his future was in Europe. Through the Free German Stage, he had made a name for himself in Germany,⁶³ Switzerland,⁶⁴ the United States,⁶⁵ and England.⁶⁶ Jacob parlayed

60. Fränkel to Jacob, July 3, 1947, PWJAK.

61. Jacob to Fritz Busch, August 1, 1947, PWJAK.

62. Busch to Fränkel, Alemann, Koch, Zacharias, (date illegible) 1947, PWJAK.

63. "Ellen Schwannecke," *Der Spiegel* 16, April 19, 1947; "Spielzeitbeginn in Buenos Aires," *Der Morgen*, April 16, 1948; "Theater in Buenos Aires," *Telegraf*, April 29, 1948; "Deutsches Theater in Argentinien," *Main Post*, June 1, 1948.

64. "Grüße," *Luzerner Neuste Nachrichten*, May 5, 1948; "Deutsche Bühne in Buenos Aires," *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, May 26, 1948; "Theaterrundschau," *Basler Nationalzeitung*, June 16, 1948.

65. "185 Premieren in 8 Jahren," *Aufbau* 14, April 16, 1948; "Deutsches Theater in Argentinien," *Sonntagsblatt Staatszeitung und Herold*, May 16, 1948.

66. "Old Acquaintances," *Association of Jewish Refugees Information*, July 1948.

this fame into guest performances in Germany with the goal of gaining a high-level position in Europe. In 1948 and 1949 he appeared as an actor and director in Baden-Baden, Nuremberg, Mainz, and Essen,⁶⁷ and lectured on Argentine music and theater in Cologne, Frankfurt, Vienna, Munich, and Berlin.⁶⁸ He also applied for the position of general intendant at numerous state theaters, ultimately with success in Dortmund.⁶⁹ Jacob initially planned to continue managing the FGS from Dortmund together with Sigmund Breslauer, its administrative manager since 1946; however, this proved untenable.⁷⁰ Neither was satisfied with sharing influence, and, furthermore, the evolving political and economic situation in Argentina alienated Jacob from the reality Breslauer had to navigate. In 1952 they agreed that Jacob would cease his involvement with the enterprise, which would be renamed the German Stage of Buenos Aires. The 1953 season was a watershed year for the troupe. Not only did its founder, first actor, artistic director, and business manager leave Buenos Aires for good, but shortly thereafter Hermann Terdenge arrived as the first West German ambassador in Argentina. The German Stage's divorce with Jacob swiftly transitioned to a cozy coupling with the new leading man from Bonn.

The failure of Paul Walter Jacob's strategy to make peace with the nationalist colony and grow the FGS's audience beyond the small and factious refugee colony is attributable in part to several theatrical energies that have surfaced throughout this book. For years both the FGS and the German Theater had deployed dramatic performances to construct bitterly competitive communities on the River Plate. The constitution of these communities relied on tactics of exclusion and stigmatization. The Free German Stage was anathema to nationalist Germans, who would not commit cultural treason and abandon Ludwig Ney to visit a theater made up of Germany's enemies and castaways. Meanwhile, the dissentious

67. "Rückkehr von P. Walter Jacob," *AT*, June 26, 1949.

68. Jacob to Antonio Castro (President, Argentine National Culture Commission), December 17, 1948, PWJAK.

69. Jacob to Mannheim Secretariat of Culture, March 21, 1949; Jacob to Heidelberg Secretariat of Culture, March 1949; Erich Otto to Jacob, May 24, 1949; Jacob to Kassel Secretariat of Culture, February 2, 1950.

70. "P. Walter Jacob in Dortmund," *AT*, March 17, 1950.

refugee colony had at times been united by nothing other than their bitter opposition to Nazism. At least in the immediate postwar years, many refugees hardly differentiated between Nazis in Germany and their supporters in Argentina. In this polarized atmosphere, Herbert Blau's concept of theater as a memory machine had potent, divisive force. If, as Blau postulates, the audience is not so much a gathering of human beings, but "a body of thought and desire," the nucleus of this entity at both theaters was competition against their crosstown rivals.⁷¹

Ludwig Ney: Further Fascism and the Nazi Diaspora, 1945–1951

Ludwig Ney was dealt a heavy blow when the Argentine government issued a ban on his group after declaring war on Nazi Germany in late 1944. Even after he returned to the stage, the actor must have lamented the remarkable reversal of fortunes he and his antifascist adversaries experienced. In contrast to the Free German Stage, which had reached new levels of fame and prestige, if not solvency, in the postwar period, Ney found himself with no theater, very little institutional support, a precarious legal situation, and a downtrodden public in political, financial, and psychological crisis. As Ney reeled from the ban of his group and the loss of funding from the German Labor Front and embassy, the FGS had intensified competition against him by taking over the lease of the National Theater, vying with him in nationalist media, and prying away members of his ensemble.

Amid this array of challenges, when Ney's group resumed performing in 1948 the embattled director renewed his coalition with German nationalists in Argentina. Renamed the New Stage, the troupe instituted a program that was consistent with its wartime repertoire, ranging from the German classics to lighter comedies and excluding all authors who had been prohibited in Nazi Germany. Both the *Freie Presse* and *Der Weg*, to which Ney contributed

71. Blau, *Audience*, 25.

several articles, covered the theater. Initially the fascist Dürer publishing house, which printed numerous neo-Nazi publications including *Der Weg*, functioned as a box office for the ensemble's productions.

The New Stage renewed and contemporized nationalist German unity by presenting dramas written by recent and prewar emigrants, such as Julius Demuth's *Didi* (1952) and Otto Czerski's *Ulrich of Hutten* (1949), respectively. Although plans for a guest performance by Emil Jannings did not materialize, numerous European emigrant thespians acted with the New Stage.⁷² Angelika Hauff, who later earned the honorary title of Chamber Actress for her work at Vienna's Court Theater, visited in 1948 and 1950,⁷³ and Zita Szelezcky, Hungarian actress and prizewinner at the 1941 Venice Film Festival, performed with Ney from 1948 to 1953.⁷⁴ Arpad Bubik, theater director in Budapest and Berlin, directed several productions in 1949,⁷⁵ Rexist journalist Pierre Daye was a frequent reviewer,⁷⁶ and in 1948 the theater put on the world premiere of *Hundreds of Millions* by Heinz Coubier, whose brother lived in Argentina.⁷⁷ Echoing antifascist media from a decade earlier, *Der Weg* editor Eberhard Fritsch emphasized the New Stage's edifying role in times of spiritual hardship, positing it as a guardian of German cultural heritage for future generations in exile.⁷⁸ Ney's troupe played a key part in reconstituting a cohesive community of German nationalists, as well as incorporating postwar emigrants into its fold.⁷⁹

Reviews of dramatic performances from this period, such as *Mary Stuart* in 1948, are strikingly analogous to coverage during

72. "Emil Jannings Gastspiel," *FP*, February 1, 1948.

73. "Angelika Hauff, Star in Argentinien," *FP*, August 31, 1950.

74. "Interview mit Fräulein Ypsilon," *FP*, October 4, 1948.

75. "Der bedeutende Berliner Spielleiter Arpad Bubik als Gastregisseur in Buenos Aires," *FP*, May 4, 1949.

76. "Das deutsche Theater in Buenos Aires," *Der Weg*, March 1950.

77. "Neue Bühne Ludwig Ney," *FP*, June 3, 1948.

78. "Die Spielzeit 1949 der Neuen Bühne Ludwig Ney," *Der Weg*, December 1949.

79. "Zufällige Zuschaueremenge oder Theatergemeinschaft?," *Der Weg*, April 1949.

World War II. Although numerous critics warned against drawing such concrete parallels, the postwar publications *Der Weg* and the *Freie Presse* correlated Schiller's drama to current events in Germany, just as the *La Plata Zeitung* and *Der Deutsche in Argentinien* had done years earlier.⁸⁰ Verging on apologism for National Socialism, *Der Weg* construed Schiller's "contemporary" drama as well-warranted opprobrium against the concurrent Nuremberg trials, which were dominated by the suffocating rationalism and boundless vengeance of intellectual statesmen similar to the figure of Lord Burleigh in *Mary Stuart*, who strove to purge Germany of its fervent humanity.⁸¹ Recalling the Nazi press's harangues on the legal system in the Weimar Republic, *Der Weg* praised Ney for setting an ambitious and noble goal for the evening: to defend human rights and human dignity against the "devious distortion and diabolical perversion of the law, which characterizes the most urgent of today's world crises."⁸² The *Freie Presse* depicted Mary Stuart and Burleigh as a falsely accused defendant and a vengeful Allied politician, respectively: "Mary was already hopelessly lost before the beginning of the trial. The court issued the death sentence based not on evidence, but solely in compliance with Burleigh's agenda. Power, not justice, drags her to the gallows."⁸³ Particularly in such godless times of material and moral destruction, the *Freie Presse* declared, audiences longed for the catharsis, spiritual purification, and moral guidance of the classics: "Schiller is *the* author of our times. His poetic fire invigorates those who, tired and broken, contemplate the ruins of their homes and of their ideals."⁸⁴ The defeated, devastated, and plundered German people could not allow themselves to be further denigrated, the paper continued; they required Schiller to revitalize their moral fortitude. Finally, both the

80. Gert Vonhoff, "Maria Stuart," in Luserke-Jaqui, *Schiller-Handbuch: Leben—Werk—Wirkung*, 164.

81. "Maria Stuart," *Der Weg*, August 1948.

82. "Goethes 'Götz von Berlichingen,'" *DiA*, June 1940; "Gedanken zur 'Faust'-Aufführung durch das Deutsche Theater, Buenos Aires," *DLPZ*, March 8, 1943; "Maria Stuart," *Der Weg*, July 1948.

83. "Maria Stuart," *FP*, June 26, 1948.

84. "Maria Stuart," *FP*, June 26, 1948 (emphasis in original).

Freie Presse and *Der Weg* emphasized the exemplary, proud, well-trained delivery of the drama's blank verse; language represented a vital cultural bulwark for Germans abroad during this crisis.⁸⁵ Peppered with a litany of Nazi cultural tropes as well as tenets of conservative drama, the reviews agreed with earlier coverage in the now banned *Deutsche La Plata Zeitung* and *Der Deutsche in Argentinien*.

As a result of strong demand, *Mary Stuart* ran through August in the Smart Theater, a midsize venue with a capacity of 700 spectators. The final production sold out in advance despite conflicting directly with Hans Moser's appearances at the FGS.⁸⁶ While Paul Walter Jacob lamented lackluster ticket sales, blocks away Ludwig Ney was drawing full houses. Sites of bitter disputes about post-war identity and Allied politics, theatrical performances hardened hostilities in German Buenos Aires. Antifascist concerns about deficient denazification were countered by conservative theater critics who defended Nazi officials, upheld German nationalism, furthered fascism, and accused the Allies of war crimes against their desecrated, fettered fatherland.⁸⁷

Aside from the German classics, comedies formed the backbone of the New Stage's repertoire during the crisis-ridden postwar years, including for the 1948 season Rudolf Presber's *Queen of Hearts* (1932), Hans Müller-Nürnberg's *Cool Wind* (1936), Ludwig Bender's *Sparrows in God's Hand* (1934), and Maximilian Böttcher's *Trouble Backstairs* (1934). Apart from *Queen of Hearts*, all these plays premiered in Hitler's Germany, and Presber, Bender, and Böttcher each had featured at the German Theater during the war. Writing for *Der Weg*, critic Charlotte Thomas posited the theater as a refuge from a troubled reality: "Life has performed many tragedies during the past years. We all are looking for hours of relaxation, and where would we find them more than in witty

85. "Maria Stuart und die geschichtliche Wirklichkeit," *FP*, July 2, 1948; "Maria Stuart," *Der Weg*, August 1948.

86. "Maria Stuart Wiederholung," *FP*, August 15, 1948.

87. "Entnazifizierung von Auslandsdeutschen," *AT*, March 7, 1946; "Renazifizierung," *AT*, January 13, 1948.

renditions of the spoken word?”⁸⁸ Thomas’s conclusion evoked the therapeutic function of the FGS for Jewish theatergoers, but within the theoretical framework espoused by Nazi poet laureate Hanns Johst and Professor Julius Petersen, who emphasized the primacy of the spoken word.⁸⁹ Reviews of *Trouble Backstairs* and *Cool Wind* extended the continuity with expressions such as “people’s poet,” “pure and uncorrupted Berliner north,” “true-to-life German figures,” “people of flesh and blood,” and “fountain of ethnic humor.”⁹⁰ All repeated earlier coverage in the Nazified press nearly verbatim.⁹¹

Unlike the FGS, in the aftermath of World War II Ludwig Ney perpetuated a politically and ethnically insular approach to sustaining his theater. Eschewing intercultural collaboration with Argentine artists as well as anything remotely resembling reconciliation with the antifascist colony, the New Stage held fast to National Socialist repertory and fascist drama theory to retain the allegiance of conservative media and theatergoers, as well as attract postwar emigrants. Meanwhile, the *Freie Presse* and *Der Weg* seized on performances to abet enduring sentiments of nationalism and fan resentment against the Allied occupation of Germany. Although the strategy was initially effective, both Ney and the *Freie Presse* would soon question the long-term viability of exclusionary ethnocentric survival tactics. Eventually both came to recognize that sectarian politics and fascist drama theory were malleable within the dynamics of live theater. Onstage, both could coalesce with the intercultural imperative inherent in preserving German cultural heritage amid immigratory dispersion.

88. “Kleine Plauderei,” *Der Weg*, May 1948.

89. Biccari, “Zuflucht des Geistes”?, 85–87.

90. “*Krach im Hinterhaus*,” *FP*, April 14, 1948; “Neue Bühne Ludwig Neys,” *FP*, April 25, 1948.

91. See “Zum Spielplan der Ney-Bühne,” *DiA*, September 1940; “Geschichte einer jungen Schauspielschule,” *DiA*, June 1941; “*Krach im Hinterhaus*,” *DLPZ*, July 30, 1942; “*Krach im Hinterhaus*,” *DLPZ*, August 13, 1942; “*Frischer Wind*,” *DLPZ*, May 13, 1942.

Bowing to Bonn: The German Classics in the Cold War, 1955–1965

In the immediate aftermath of the Second World War, before the West German embassy opened in Argentina, the two colonies relentlessly expressed deeply discordant views of modern German history. Thus, although both populations esteemed Carl Zuckmayer's *The Captain of Köpenick* (1931) as a contemporary "classic," and donors saw nothing polemical about the play, it should have been no surprise that the drama's presentation at the Free German Stage triggered derisive disputes about the Wilhelmine monarchy.⁹² For the *Jüdische Wochenschau* the play augured Nazism, laying bare the pernicious defects of an authoritarian Prussian state machinery that recently had threatened to become the world order.⁹³ The *Argentinisches Tageblatt* saw the piece as a dire, sadly unheard warning; the world would have been spared an ocean of blood and tears had it heeded Zuckmayer's message.⁹⁴ The *Freie Presse* demurred. Blithely dubbing the drama a "cheerful idyll from the Serenissimus period," it declared categorically that Zuckmayer's *Captain* was not relevant to later events.⁹⁵ Whereas nationalists regarded Wilhelmine Germany with fond nostalgia and posited Nazism as anomalous (at worst), antifascists insisted that National Socialism had its origins in the monarchy, and vigorously denounced the militaristic authoritarianism of both eras.

The Allied occupation of Germany was another thorny subject. The *Freie Presse* exploited Zuckmayer's *The Devil's General* (1946) to denounce the occupation as a slap in the face to justice, equating the ruthlessness of Allied authorities with the Gestapo.⁹⁶ The *Tageblatt* also linked distinct epochs, praising Zuckmayer for exhibiting the same political acumen and creative talent in

92. Fränkel to Jacob, July 17, 1946, PWJAK.

93. "Der Hauptmann von Köpenick," *JW*, May 4, 1947.

94. "Der Hauptmann von Köpenick," *AT*, May 4, 1947.

95. "Der Hauptmann von Köpenick," *FP*, May 4, 1947.

96. "Des Teufels General," *FP*, June 23, 1948.

his depiction of Hitler's Germany as he had in portraying the Wilhelmine monarchy. Both the *Tageblatt* and the *Buenos Aires Herald* highlighted Wolfgang Vacano's portrayal of the "quietly dignified" resistance fighter, Oderbruch, a figure the *Tageblatt* already had lauded when discussing the piece's reception in Germany.⁹⁷ The *Freie Presse* commended Zuckmayer for his nuanced portrayal of German society and affirmed his differentiation between the eternal Germany of Goethe and the ephemeral Hitler regime. On the other hand, although Zuckmayer had written earlier in the *Hannoversche Presse* that surely everyone could agree that artists must eulogize German resistance fighters so they would serve as role models for future generations, the *Freie Presse* repudiated Oderbruch. His arguments were highly controvertible, and Oderbruch himself was a murderer for conspiring in deadly acts of sabotage against German soldiers. The *Argentinisches Tageblatt* and the *Freie Presse* agreed that Zuckmayer's dramas were modern German classics—the papers called him a "living legend" and the "greatest living German dramatist," respectively—however they vehemently disagreed about the moral obligations of ordinary Germans to resist Hitler's regime.⁹⁸ While their conflicting positions on Nazism and modern German history always were evident, this divergence rarely found direct, concurrent expression in both papers. Theatrical performances potentiated their quarrel. Zuckmayer's plays represented clear instances of hyper-historian actors working in tandem with dramatic texts, directors, and designers to create an aesthetic experience that presented something genuine from the past.⁹⁹ Audiences ratified the historicity of the depictions, yet their interpretations of the relevance of both the historical and the theatrical event were passionately oppositional. These emotive instances of performing history catalyzed immediate, simultaneous, reverberant clashes between the antifascist and nationalist populations.

97. "Des Teufels General," *AT*, June 23, 1948; "The Devil's General," *BAH*, June 25, 1948; "Des Teufels General in München," *AT*, March 28, 1948.

98. "Carl Zuckmayer, der lebende Klassiker," *AT*, September 9, 1951; "Carl Zuckmayer, der größte deutsche Dramatiker," *FP*, August 9, 1950.

99. Rokem, *Performing History*, 35.

In 1952, against this backdrop of antagonism, the West German embassy opened in the Argentine capital. Aiming to assemble a robust bulwark against Communist expansion in South America, West German diplomats viewed the New Stage and the Free German Stage as mechanisms to push Buenos Aires's German populations to reconciliation.¹⁰⁰ Wary of divisive dramatists, such as Zuckmayer, the embassy avoided tendentious plays and touted the German classics, which it saw as having timeless cultural validity for all Germans in Argentina.¹⁰¹ This approach was burdened by problematic precedents. Schiller's *Mary Stuart* had failed when the FGS put on the play in 1940, and the German embassy had conscripted both Schiller and Lessing into its propaganda machine. More recently, the New Stage's performance of *Mary Stuart* had redoubled belligerent nationalist sentiments. Even so, shortly after the war voices in both factions hoped that canonical dramas by the likes of Lessing, Goethe, and Schiller could initiate a dialogue.¹⁰²

Despite obvious direct links between the *Freie Presse* and the *La Plata Zeitung*, the West German embassy reported to Bonn that upon its founding the *Freie Presse* had assumed responsibility to counteract the mistaken views of its readers and reeducate them.¹⁰³ The paper's interpretations of the classics were ambivalent, ranging from traces of Nazi sympathy to cooperation with the Western powers against the new foe of communism. In 1943 the *La Plata Zeitung* had twisted Schiller's *Robbers* into a prescient apotheosis of Adolf Hitler; however, thirty months later its successor boasted that the drama had catalyzed the French Revolution and earned its author honorary French citizenship. In another heretofore unthinkable passage the *Freie Presse* compared Schiller to Ben Franklin, claiming that both men had ripped the scepter from the grasp

100. Moltmann (FFO) to WGE, October 18, 1956, Bestand B33, Band 010; Guild of the German Stage to FFO, July 8, 1958, Bestand B95, Band 765; WGE to FFO, April 2, 1959, Bestand B95, Band 558; WGE to FFO, September 10, 1959, Bestand B95, Band 765; WGE to FFO, January 17, 1963, Bestand B95, Band 907, PAAA.

101. WGE to FFO, March 25, 1958.

102. Rudolf Baer to Jacob, January 11, 1944, PWJAK.

103. WGE to FFO, May 10, 1962, Bestand B33, Band 248, PAAA.

of tyrants.¹⁰⁴ A few years later, framed by the incipient Cold War, the newspaper declared that Schiller, too, would have fled from East Germany to West Berlin.¹⁰⁵ No longer a proto-Nazi visionary, the playwright now was posited as a trailblazer for European democracy.

Other articles, however, were equivocal. Beyond the polemical reviews of Ney's *Mary Stuart*, a 1947 historical overview of Schiller reception referred to the poet as a "führer," leading Germany to glory and overpowering the world's resistance with his indomitable "heroic will." Literati and intellectuals of the Weimar Republic often misconstrued Schiller, but soon thereafter the German people, who had always understood him intuitively, liberated their national poet from the shackles of academic formulas and raised him to the pedestal of his own rightful "Reich"—the stage.¹⁰⁶ Another piece trashed Hannes Razum's 1948 production of *The Robbers* in Hamburg. In the rapid, two-hour performance, Karl Moor's robbers spoke soldiers' jargon and wore military uniforms and prison jumpsuits. The *Freie Presse* sneered that the protests of theatergoers must signify German citizens' lamentations over recent military strength and current pride for demilitarization. Certainly, the reviewer acerbically concluded, the "storm of whistles" had nothing to do with the Allied occupation nor Razum's treatment of the national poet.¹⁰⁷ The *Freie Presse* conscripted Schiller into a nascent anti-Communist political front while simultaneously invoking him to perpetuate nostalgia for Nazism and rebel against Allied influence in postwar Germany. Its commentary on Schiller in the late 1940s is the ambivalent voice of a publication in transition.

By the time of the 150th anniversary of Schiller's death in 1955, however, both German colonies had sided decisively with the West against the USSR and obligingly converted Schiller into a Cold Warrior. Both in 1955 and four years later, on the 200th anniversary of his birth, dozens of articles in the *Freie Presse* and

104. "Gedanken über Schiller," *FP*, March 21, 1946.

105. "Auch Schiller floh nach West Berlin," *FP*, May 21, 1950.

106. "Schiller im Wandel der Zeiten," *FP*, February 2, 1947.

107. "Schiller contra Razum," *FP*, December 23, 1948.

the *Argentinisches Tageblatt* shared a litany of references to freedom. Quoting from “On the Sublime,” the *Tageblatt* declared that Schiller’s most significant contribution to the German people and, indeed, all of humanity was his ceaseless toil as an apostle of freedom under the mantra “Culture will set man free.”¹⁰⁸ For once, the *Tageblatt* concurred with the *Freie Presse*, which interpreted Schiller’s *Love and Intrigue* as a clarion call for freedom in choosing one’s spouse, while *The Robbers* and *Don Carlos* warned against despotism.¹⁰⁹ More broadly, the *Freie Presse* proclaimed that Schiller’s dramas upheld Western values, especially political, moral, and creative freedom.¹¹⁰ On May 1, 1955, there was a ceremony honoring Schiller at the Argentine-German Cultural Institute, which had closely collaborated with Nazi officials and, to the consternation of antifascists, reopened in 1952.¹¹¹ The homage included lectures by Professor Friedrich Wilhelm Wentzlaff-Eggebert and Werner Bock, and the Colón Theater’s Angel Mattiello sang Schiller’s ballads, accompanied by Werner Hoffmann on piano.¹¹² The event was noteworthy because surrogates of both German theaters participated. While Werner Bock was a poet and a cultural critic for the *Argentinisches Tageblatt*, Hoffmann and Mattiello had worked with Ludwig Ney. Schiller assembled previously inconceivable constellations of personalities and politics. Their stance against communism, alliance with the West German embassy, and mutual cultivation of the German classics demonstrated that a measure of common ground existed between Argentina’s German populations.

In June 1955, six weeks after West Germany had joined NATO, and East Germany the Warsaw Pact, the German Stage performed *Don Carlos* (1787) under the auspices of the West Germany embassy and the watchful eye of Ambassador Hermann Terdenge. The *Freie Presse* and the *Argentinisches Tageblatt* seized this moment

108. “Schiller über Freiheit und Menschenwürde,” *AT*, May 8, 1955.

109. “Schiller als Dramatiker der Gegenwart,” *FP*, May 9, 1955.

110. “Zu Schillers geistiger Gestalt,” *FP*, May 9, 1955.

111. Thermann to FO, October 4, 1940, Band R55, Akte 20553, BB; “20 Jahre Institución Cultural Argentino-Germano,” *DLPZ*, September 13, 1942; “Was wir vom Instituto Argentino-Germano erwarten,” *AT*, November 11, 1951.

112. “Institución Cultural Argentino-Germana,” *FP*, May 1, 1955.

to designate Schiller, the preeminent poet of the German people, a clairvoyant proto-Cold Warrior.¹¹³ Both papers emphasized the eternal preponderance of Schiller's manifesto for freedom, asserting that Marquis Posa's fight for freedom was against both current Soviet oppressors and the sixteenth-century Spanish court.¹¹⁴ The *Tageblatt* announced Schiller's "guiding principle of a single ideal: freedom!" which the *Freie Presse* corroborated by asserting that *Don Carlos* was not a historical play, but depicted "man's unending struggle for his moral freedom."¹¹⁵ In 1959, celebrations of the 200th anniversary of Schiller's birth were again synonymous with panegyrics to freedom. Nonetheless, the *Freie Presse* reflected with brazen hypocrisy that Bonn assiduously avoided politicizing the dramatist while in East Germany the Soviets arrogated his oeuvre to consolidate Communist terror.¹¹⁶ Meanwhile, the German Stage read aloud congratulations from Foreign Minister Heinrich Brentano and Chancellor Konrad Adenauer before inaugurating its twentieth season with Schiller's *Mary Stuart*, and Ambassador Georg Rosen and his entire staff presided over a guest performance of the play in Montevideo.¹¹⁷ The reception evinced a convergence of the two German colonies, since the New Stage had put on *Mary Stuart* in 1948. This time the *Tageblatt* and the *Freie Presse* showed malice against neither the Western powers nor each other. Instead both newspapers marched to the poet's politicized protocol: "The idea of freedom is Schiller's original ideal, the innermost demand of his being."¹¹⁸ Or, as the *Tageblatt* put it, "Schiller's political significance culminates in his ideas of personal freedom."¹¹⁹

Though to a lesser extent than Schiller, Lessing was also drafted into the crusade against communism. While scholars have noted that Lessing was depoliticized in postwar West Germany, this was

113. "Schiller und sein *Don Carlos*," *FP*, May 26, 1955.

114. "*Don Carlos*," *AT*, June 27, 1955.

115. "*Don Carlos*," *AT*, June 29, 1955; "*Don Carlos*," *FP*, June 29, 1955.

116. "Schiller —eine politische Bekenntniskraft," *FP*, January 31, 1959.

117. "*Maria Stuart*," *FP*, May 14, 1959; "Nachrichten aus Montevideo: *Maria Stuart*," *AT*, July 26, 1959.

118. "Der Freiheitsgedanke bei Friedrich Schiller," *FP*, September 15, 1959.

119. "Der Weg zu Schiller," *AT*, November 8, 1959.

not the case in Buenos Aires.¹²⁰ By the mid-1950s both the *Freie Presse* and the German Stage had grown increasingly dependent on subventions from Bonn, which conditioned the paper's reporting and the theater's performances.¹²¹ As I have stated above, the West German embassy deployed the theater to project soft power in the Cold War, and it also was wary of dissent against its agenda on stages in Argentina.¹²² When the popular actress Hedwig Schlichter-Crilla left the German Stage and founded the influential leftist theater group The Mask, the embassy criticized her project as an effective tool for spreading Communist propaganda.¹²³ It also is noteworthy that neither the German Stage nor Ludwig Ney ever staged an East German playwright, including Bertolt Brecht, his immense popularity in Argentina notwithstanding.¹²⁴ Despite the paper's reluctance to confront the past, repudiate Hitlerism, or even acknowledge Nazi war crimes and genocide, West German diplomats supported the *Freie Presse* for its anti-Communist tone. This political posturing found expression in the paper's criticism of Brechtian drama in its review of the German Stage's performance of Lessing's *Nathan the Wise* (1779) in 1956, which was presided over by Bonn's chargé d'affaires in Argentina, Dr. Luitpold Werz: "Arndt guarded himself against the epic theater, and its alienation technique."¹²⁵ The *Freie Presse*'s rapid transition from its predecessor's function as "Hitler's banner in Buenos Aires" to a dutiful ally of West German diplomats indicates that its politics likely were conditioned by conformism or opportunism as much as by

120. Eckardt, "Das Lessingbild im Dritten Reich," 75–76; Barner et al., *Lessing—Epoche—Werk—Wirkung*.

121. FFO to WGE, March 12, 1959; FFO to WGE, March 15, 1960, Bestand B33, Band 98, PAAA.

122. Moltmann (FFO) to WGE, January 26, 1956, Bestand B33, Band 010, PAAA; WGE to FFO, January 27, 1965, Bestand B33, Band 386, PAAA.

123. WGE to FFO, January 6, 1956, Bestand B33, Band 010, PAAA.

124. Jorge Dubatti, "El teatro de Bertolt Brecht en Buenos Aires: Observaciones de Teatro Comparado," *La Escalera* 22 (2013): 13–24; Osvaldo Pellettieri, "Brecht y el teatro porteño 1950–1990," in *De Bertolt Brecht a Ricardo Monti: Teatro en lengua alemana y teatro argentino 1900–1994*, ed. Pellettieri (Buenos Aires: Editorial Galerna, 1995), 37–53.

125. "Nathan der Weise," *FP*, June 27, 1956.

ideological conviction. Onstage and off, West German efforts to realign emigrants against the perceived Communist menace in the Cold War were evident. Coined in the common cultural currency of Lessing and Schiller, by 1956 dramatic productions occasioned utterances of unity from factious German Buenos Aires. Yet, this theatrical solidarity against a common foe was largely performative. Under the gaze and financial pressure of Bonn, metonymically represented by Ambassadors Terdenge and Rosen as well as Chargé d'affaires Werz, Germans on the River Plate affected a cohesion that was far more tenuous than outward appearances suggested.

From Emigration to Immigration, 1945–1965

Unlike the government-funded Ney Stage, during the Nazi period the Free German Stage was a private enterprise playing for small audiences composed mostly of impoverished refugees. Out of political conviction and economic necessity, it had formed intercultural alliances with Argentine artists from the start. By maximizing these partnerships and the publicity from celebrity guest performances, already in the late 1940s members of the FGS cast had gained a foothold in the South American entertainment industry. In 1943 Herman Geiger-Torel became conductor of the national SODRE (Official Service of Broadcasting, Television, and Entertainment) orchestra in neighboring Uruguay. Paul Walter Jacob directed a Spanish-language production of Bert Rosé and Harald V. Hanstein's musical comedy *¡Vamps!* in 1946, and both Jacob and Hedwig Schlichter-Crilla received laudatory reviews for their roles in Mario Soffici's feature film *Land of Fire* (1948).¹²⁶ Schlichter-Crilla also starred in the film *Paradise* (1951), directed by Carlos Ritter.¹²⁷ Jacques Arndt, too, played a leading role in the Chilean-Argentine production of *Hope* (1949), codirected by Francisco

126. "Se presentan con un espectáculo musical," *El Mundo*, March 15, 1946; "Tierra del Fuego," *Teatros y Cines*, October 1, 1948; "Lo que vi anoche," *El Laborista*, December 1, 1948; "Tierra del Fuego," *El Mundo*, December 1, 1948.

127. "El Paraiso," *FP*, March 18, 1951.

Mugica and Eduardo Boneo. Shortly thereafter, Renato Salvati of the Municipal Theater in Santiago, Chile, contracted Arndt to form an operetta ensemble for the stage.¹²⁸ Arndt went on to enjoy a prolific career in Argentine film and radio, acting in thirty-nine locally and internationally produced films, perhaps most notably as the Chilean dictator Augusto Pinochet in *Of Love and Shadows* (1994), based on the novel of the same title by Isabel Allende. From 1993 until shortly before his death in 2009 he also had his own radio program, *Jacques's Agenda*, which aired twice weekly on the Radio Culture station. In 2006 the Argentine Film Critics Association awarded him a Silver Condor, Argentina's equivalent of an Oscar, for lifetime achievement.

Several members of the Free German Stage had success in the local entertainment industry, but Hedwig Schlichter-Crilla left the deepest imprint. Before founding her own drama school in 1947, the School of Performance Arts of the Argentine Hebrew Society, she worked with pupils at the Pestalozzi School, most of whom were refugees from Nazism. In October 1945, Schlichter-Crilla directed a group of pupils, together with actors from the FGS, the Yiddish People's Theater, and the French Comedy, in a performance of Hans Christian Andersen's *The Princess and the Swineherd*. Schlichter-Crilla adapted the tale to fit the lives of local refugee children, setting the action in contemporary Buenos Aires instead of medieval Europe.¹²⁹ Geographically, the play followed a course of emigration parallel to the that of theatergoers and actors themselves. The Spanish-language plot featured a framing device in which the main characters were two emigrant children: a newspaper boy, Juancito, and his friend, a chocolate vendor named Cachito. Onstage and in real life, the boys had humble lives like the youthful spectators, who also grappled with poverty, a new language, and adaptation to Argentine society.

One afternoon Juancito notices an old, tattered book in a pile of rubbish. Intrigued, he leafs through it, eventually realizing it is a collection of marvelous stories from a place and time far away

128. "Jacques Arndt wieder in Buenos Aires," *FP*, March 11, 1949.

129. "Kindertheater," *AT*, October 23, 1945.

from twentieth-century Buenos Aires. Later that afternoon, Juancito and Cachito come across a title that sparks their imaginations, *The Princess and the Swineherd*. They cannot satisfy their interest because the rest of the tale is badly damaged and illegible, and so, perplexed by this unlikely relationship, they concoct plots, characters, and settings to contrive encounters between the princess and the swineherd. Their self-invented worlds of fiction are an escape from the struggles of emigration, and their tale eventually follows the boys into their dreams, where they take part in the action personally. At the end of the prologue Juancito drew a spoon from under his shirt and opened a gate to “the land of dreams,” initiating the three-act drama. After each act, the protagonists met in front of the curtain and conversed with the spectators, leading them into their colorful fantasy world. Through friendship and imagination, Juancito and Cachito affirmed each individual’s incorruptible spiritual and creative freedom, even those as vulnerable as child refugees.

The *Argentinisches Tageblatt* described *The Princess and the Swineherd* as the most inspiring fairy-tale performance in years.¹³⁰ The work behind the curtain was also inspirational. Under Schlichter-Crilla’s direction, young emigrants collaborated with professional actors from Argentine, French, Yiddish, and German theaters. They learned diverse acting styles and interacted with artists from a variety of cultural backgrounds, which helped them to heal the wounds of racial persecution that many had suffered in Germany. Furthermore, Schlichter-Crilla encouraged the youthful actors to individualize the characters assigned to them. Nourished by the close working relationships they developed with professional adult actors, this creative freedom enabled them to reach higher levels of self-respect and artistic accomplishment.¹³¹

Hedwig Schlichter-Crilla exerted an enormous influence on Argentine theater. When her school put on another performance of *The Princess and the Swineherd* in 1954, the participants included some of the most brightest young talents in Argentine

130. “Die Prinzessin und der Schweinehirt,” *AT*, October 25, 1945.

131. Roca, *Días de Teatro*, 189.

theater, including Osvaldo Riofrancos, who later became dean of the School of Drama at the North Carolina School of the Arts, and director of the New York Shakespeare Festival in Central Park.¹³² Schlichter-Crilla introduced Stanislavsky's system to local thespians, which critic and professor Osvaldo Berenguer credits with transforming acting in Argentina in the same way that Astor Piazzolla transformed the tango.¹³³ Now famous as Hedy Crilla, an Argentine version of her name, she taught many celebrities in the nation's cinema and theater, including Norma Aleandro, Zulema Katz, Agustín Alezzo, Cecilio Madanes, Augusto Fernandes, and more.¹³⁴ One of her students, Frank Nelson, recalled that Schlichter-Crilla encouraged students to lose their inhibitions and experiment with their own abilities to metamorphose. For Schlichter-Crilla and her students as well, acting enhanced expressive and receptive faculties on- and offstage, honed a range of versatile communicative skills, and cultivated the capacity to empathize.¹³⁵ As a theater pedagogue, Schlichter-Crilla trained her students and herself in the critical skills that empower emigrants to transition into immigrants.

As a performance artist, Schlichter-Crilla briefly led the German Stage in 1963, but she is better known for her work in Argentine theaters. In 1953, she founded the influential ensemble The Mask, which the West German embassy criticized for its leftist political tilt.¹³⁶ The Mask's production of Shaw's *Candida* (1898), which Schlichter-Crilla codirected with Carlos Gandolfo, won the Argentine Theater Critics' Prize for best performance in 1959. Other notable productions included Frank Wedekind's *Spring Awakening* in 1976 and David Edgar's *Mary Barnes* in 1982. Her performance in the leading role of Colin Higgins's *Only 80*, which was written especially for her and ran for three years, represented a final ovation for her career.

132. "La Princesa y el Pastor im Teatro Nacional," *AT*, May 23, 1954.

133. Roca, *Días de Teatro*, 195.

134. "Todo comenzó con Hedy Crilla," *LN*, September 2, 1998.

135. Roca, *Días de Teatro*, 189.

136. WGE to FFO, January 6, 1956, Bestand B33, Band 010, PAAA.

Himself a victim of Nazi persecution who found refuge in South America, Egon Schwarz has described the slow changes that convert an emigrant into an immigrant, including the search for a stable economic position; the struggle, frequently, with a new language; the process of adjusting to a new, often exotic and unwelcoming environment; and ultimately the need to integrate into a new population, with new customs and moral norms. In brief, it is a matter of acclimating to a new culture.¹³⁷ As an actress and a pedagogue Schlichter-Crilla facilitated this transition for scores of refugees, including herself. However, Schwarz noted that this process is essential to any emigrant who wants to become an immigrant—that is, to become a productive member of a new nation and participate in its society at all levels. In this sense, Schwarz’s vision of integration applied to both German populations in Argentina.

Throughout the Ney Stage’s first decade of existence its director and reviewers paid scant attention to the Argentine host society. During World War II, assisted by the German government, the German Theater had been solvent on its own. After the war, with no government funding and the nationalist colony financially strained, Ludwig Ney found himself in a situation similar to the early years of the FGS, which depended on intercultural relationships to subsist. In the postwar period, Ney’s troupe struggled to remain financially viable by playing only for the German public in Buenos Aires. Shifting away from wartime ethnocentric survival tactics, the *Freie Presse* touted new nationwide tours and collaborative projects with Argentine artists as the path to sustainability for German theater in Argentina.¹³⁸ The Talmudic scholars Daniel and Jonathan Boyarin have postulated that immigrant groups should recognize the strength derived from a diversity of communal arrangements and concentrations, both among themselves and with other cultural groups. To assure their own survival, these communities should understand that the copresence of others is not a threat, but rather the condition of their existence as residents in

137. Egon Schwarz, “La emigración de la Alemania nazi,” in Rohland de Langbehn, *Paul Zech y las condiciones del exilio en la Argentina*, 18.

138. “Spanische Fassung Molières *Der Geizige*,” *FP*, February 4, 1953.

foreign countries. Furthermore, diasporic cultural identity teaches that cultures are not preserved by being protected from mixing but probably can continue to exist only as a product of such mixing.¹³⁹ From the early 1950s, Ludwig Ney was emblematic of this position.

Initially, Ney extended his activities beyond the capital by organizing guest performances in rural German communities. His group's first trip was to Eldorado, a German settlement in the Argentine rain forest wedged between Paraguay and Brazil, where they performed Molière's *The Miser* (1668) and Franz and Paul von Schönthan's *The Robbery of the Sabines* (1883). By circulating European theater to this isolated area, over 700 miles from Buenos Aires, Ludwig Ney both brought Germans in Argentina together and broadened his professional profile. He earned the esteem of Germans throughout the country, beginning with the mayor of Eldorado, who published a letter of gratitude in the *Freie Presse* thanking the cast for its visit.¹⁴⁰ Partnering with director Steven Wiel, a postwar emigrant, during the next years Ney and his company toured throughout Argentina. He became a cultural ambassador who, together with the conservative *Freie Presse*, coordinated journalism and drama in the spirit of integration. In 1951, as the troupe visited the cities of Rosario, Córdoba, and Mendoza,¹⁴¹ the *Freie Presse* paired its coverage with reports on each region's geography, industry, and local customs.¹⁴²

Unlike during the Nazi period, these productions were not confined to the German population. The tours caught the attention of Córdoba province's minister of education, Dr. Enrico Bonetto, who contracted Ney to put on Spanish-language performances of Shakespeare, Molière, and Schiller in Córdoba, Argentina's second most

139. Boyarin and Boyarin, "Diaspora," 721.

140. "Abschluss des Misiones-Gastspiels des Deutschen Theaters Ludwig Ney," *FP*, December 13, 1950.

141. "Ney in Rosario," *FP*, November 2, 1951; "Ney-Bühne in Córdoba," *FP*, November 3, 1951.

142. "Llanura Chaqueña," *FP*, October 10, 1951; "Sierra Córdoba," *FP*, October 20, 1951; "Süd Anden/Tierra del Fuego," *FP*, November 1, 1951.

populous city, from 1952 to 1954.¹⁴³ Ney and Wiel's intercultural ensemble, the Renewal Theater Corporation, produced Moliere's *The Miser* at the amphitheater Leopoldo Lugones in Sarmiento Park, with a capacity of 3,780 spectators. The *Diario Córdoba* promoted the performance as a transatlantic spectacle, integrating European dramatic theory with local visual artists and actors.¹⁴⁴ Ney and Wiel created a new script for the play, based on the French original, as well as Spanish, German, and English translations. Emphasizing that these cross-cultural influences would tailor the play to the current context of Argentina, Ney explained that each language corresponded to a specific national environment. Convinced that performance art resists abstract universalism, Ney and Wiel strove for differentiation, believing that every production must adopt a specific jargon to suit the national spirit of its audience.¹⁴⁵

Ney was staking out a new hybrid position here, at once confirming and resisting the nationalist theories of language that previously had guided his ensemble. By tying the individual characteristics of the Argentine, French, English, and German people to language, Ney echoed Nazi sociolinguist Hans Naumann, who argued that the mother tongue is foundational to ethnic identity. Other linguists, including Heinz Kloss and Georg Schmidt-Rohr, theorized that race determines potential members of a nation, but language establishes who is an "ethnic comrade."¹⁴⁶ These theories cut two ways across Ney's new program. On the one hand, they underscored his view that language and cultural identity were inextricably linked. On the other hand, by translating and performing in Spanish, Ney approximated the calamitous vision that Nazi linguists had articulated around the power of language. The vitality of language could unify Germans abroad, while simultaneously functioning as a protective shield against assimilation.¹⁴⁷ Nationalist

143. Director General of Secondary Education to Ney, March 11, 1953, CNC.

144. "Spanische Fassung von Moliere," *FP*, February 26, 1953.

145. "En la representación de *El Avaro* actuarán elementos de Córdoba," *Diario Córdoba*, February 5, 1953.

146. Schmidt-Rohr, *Die Sprache als Bildnerin der Völker*, 130.

147. Hutton, *Linguistics and the Third Reich*, 292.

German linguists tended to see German history as a stateless confusion in which only language had held the German people together and marked boundaries between themselves and others. Both historically in Europe and currently in the Americas, the cultivation of their mother tongue was elemental to Germans' racial or ethnic cohesion.¹⁴⁸ Transcending religious, regional, political, and class divisions, language could unite an otherwise divided national consciousness. However, the infiltration of a foreign language threatened to annihilate emigrants' Germanness first by eroding the preservation of their native tongue and then by corrupting their racial identity.¹⁴⁹ Under the rubric of mother-tongue fascism, dramatic productions in Spanish transgressed against the linguistic buffer of the German idiom. They were an initial alienation that ultimately risked assimilation and the loss of ethnic identity. The Argentine press, by contrast, praised this adaptation as a great success, lauding the localized vernacular and noting that the revisions augmented suspense and humor in *The Miser*. The presentation marked a turning point in Ney's career, in which he rejected ethnocentric theater and recognized instead that intercultural partnerships were fundamental to his livelihood and creativity.

Ney's commitment to intercultural theater did not, however, signify his disavowal of all fascist cultural politics or the Nazi theatrical repertoire. Reich dramatist Rainer Schlösser, an influential voice in decisions to ban or approve foreign playwrights, had pointed to Molière as worthy of stages under the swastika in 1934. According to Schlösser, Molière (1622–73) belonged to a France that had not yet lost its most commendable cultural and political virtues to the Revolution and the Napoleonic wars. Analyzing *The Miser* specifically, Schlösser concluded that “even if it is not our blood,” such creativity is welcomed for the sake of its morality and linguistic skill.¹⁵⁰ The case for Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice* (1600) is even stronger. Before discussing the Nazi politics surrounding this

148. Hutton, *Linguistics and the Third Reich*, 5.

149. Schmidt-Rohr, “Die zweite Ebene der Volkserhaltung.”

150. John London, *Theatre under the Nazis* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), 235.

drama, let me offer a brief analysis of perhaps the most legendary villain of Shakespeare's oeuvre, the Jewish Shylock.

Although *The Merchant of Venice* has received innumerable contrasting representations over the centuries, there can be no doubt that Shakespeare intended Shylock to be the antagonist of the drama. Shylock's motives are debatable, but the text precludes any real dispute about his actions. Given the opportunity, which is of his own creation, he tries to commit legalized murder. Additionally, his religion seems to reflect a deliberate choice of the playwright. There were Christian moneylenders in Venice, and the plot would function with a Gentile villain. The antagonist himself emphasizes his religion, and all other characters claim that his faith is the core of his identity. His character matches anti-Semitic stereotypes. Shylock is a usurer, he is devious and cruel, and he pursues revenge against Antonio, whose altruism establishes him as a noble Gentile foil to his Jewish nemesis. The central conflicts of the drama position Christian virtue against Jewish depravity, and Shylock's murderous fantasies insinuate Jews' role in the crucifixion. Possibly the most famous Jewish character in all of world literature, Shylock is integral to the history of anti-Semitism.¹⁵¹

The Merchant of Venice was not among the most frequently performed plays in Nazi Germany, but it was a repertory staple, and performances upheld racial policy in the so-called Third Reich. Beyond the Jewish Cultural League, of course, under Nazism it was impossible to present an interpretation of Shylock that protested the persecution of Jews through history. Instead, *The Merchant of Venice* was produced in a comic style, exploiting anti-Semitic stereotypes. A production in 1936 in Erfurt presented a ruthless usurer, defined by his blind hatred toward all the Gentiles. This Shylock did not even exhibit remorse for the loss of his daughter, who turned out to be adopted, allowing the union of Jessica and Lorenzo to comply with the racial laws of Nuremberg. Even worse was a less documented production of the German Theater in Minsk in 1943 for the benefit of the German army, which coincided with

151. John Gross, "Shylock and Nazi Propaganda," *New York Times*, April 4, 1993.

the liquidation of the last Jewish ghettos in Belarus.¹⁵² Of course, such anti-Semitic interpretations of *The Merchant of Venice* were not confined to Hitler's Germany. Years later in Argentina the neo-Nazi magazine *Der Weg* would praise Shakespeare for presaging National Socialist models of eugenics, noting the contrasting figures of Shylock and Portia as evidence.¹⁵³

On July 9, 1953, Ludwig Ney's Renewal Theater Corporation presented Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice* in Córdoba. Reviews, especially with reference to thematic purport and anti-Semitism, largely tallied with Nazi interpretations of the drama. First, critics agreed that the drama was a cheerful, uplifting comedy.¹⁵⁴ *Los Principios* emphasized the "atmosphere of youth and optimism; everything turns out well."¹⁵⁵ Furthermore, the paper condemned Shylock for "loving his religion; being a miserly usurer; having an astonishing capacity for speculative investments; hating and despising Christians; and especially detesting the merchant Antonio because he lends without charging interest."¹⁵⁶ Even the so-called virtues of Shylock confirmed anti-Semitic stereotypes: the villain was "endowed with penetrating insight, calculating, incomparable cunning, and a manner of speech characterized by irony and sarcasm."¹⁵⁷ The newspaper praised the heroine Portia in terms antithetical to Shylock, underlining her "joyful spirit, pure, tender, noble, generous and charming eloquence."¹⁵⁸ The Christian Portia

152. Andrew Bonnell, "Shylock and Othello and the Nazis," *German Life and Letters* 63 (2010): 166–178, 173.

153. "Menschenwürde und Gattenwahl," *Der Weg*, January 1957.

154. "Otro ponderable esfuerzo: *El Mercader de Venecia*," *Los Principios*, July 11, 1953; "*El Mercader de Venecia*: La más bella de las comedias de William Shakespeare," *Los Principios*, July 4, 1953; "*El Mercader de Venecia* se ofrece hoy en el San Martin," *Los Principios*, July 9, 1953; "*El Mercader de Venecia* obtiene éxito sostenible," *Diario Córdoba*, February 24, 1954.

155. "*El Mercader de Venecia* se ofrece hoy en el San Martin," *Los Principios*, July 9, 1953.

156. "*El Mercader de Venecia* se ofrece hoy en el San Martin," *Los Principios*, July 9, 1953.

157. "*El Mercader de Venecia*: La más bella de las comedias de Shakespeare," *Los Principios*, July 4, 1953.

158. "*El Mercader de Venecia*: La más bella de las comedias de Shakespeare," *Los Principios*, July 4, 1953.

earned praise for exhibiting the opposite qualities of her nemesis, the Jewish Shylock.

Like his collaboration during World War II with the Nazi organization Strength through Joy, the Renewal Theater Corporation's productions of *The Merchant of Venice* were heavily subsidized by the Córdoba government.¹⁵⁹ The purpose, according to the press, was to edify and unify members of the working class by bringing them together to witness live theater. The newspaper *Meridiano* emphasized the formative influence that Shakespearean drama could exert on the moral sensibilities of an uneducated audience.¹⁶⁰ Christian figures such as Portia, Bassanio, and Antonio were models for Argentine spectators, but Ney's depiction also relied on Nazi German tactics of community building, particularly the exclusion of "Others." Like nationalist representations of the Frenchman Riccaut in Lessing's *Minna of Barnhelm* in 1934 and 1943, the Jewish Shylock was a pariah, but he too remained symbolically central. Newspapers confirmed the primacy of Shakespeare's Jewish villain by devoting far more text to him than other more "noble and generous" characters.¹⁶¹ To promulgate, protect, and promote the morality of their community, the Córdoba government, press, and artists pointed out transgressors and attacked their depraved and potentially corrosive behavior. Evoking propagandistic performances at the Nazified German Theater, the Renewal Theater Corporation's presentation of *The Merchant of Venice* imagined a population of moral virtue through the dramatic depiction of what its members should never do.

Despite Ney's lingering fascist tendencies, however, it is indisputable that the intercultural, Spanish-language presentations of his Renewal Theater Corporation contradicted German nationalists' ethnocentric approach to community building. Capitalizing

159. "Será ofrecido un espectáculo original: En el lago paseo sobremonte se representará *El Mercader de Venecia*," *Meridiano*, February 13, 1954.

160. "Extraordinaria expectativa ha despertado la representación de *El Mercader de Venecia*," *Meridiano*, February 2, 1954.

161. "*El Mercader de Venecia*: La más bella de las comedias de Shakespeare," *Los Principios*, July 4, 1953.

on its success the previous year, in 1954 the Córdoban government contracted the Renewal Theater Corporation to put on a series of grand open-air productions of *The Merchant of Venice* in a municipal park. Engineers from the Argentine military helped build a series of stages in the park's lake to recreate the atmosphere of Venice,¹⁶² and the general manager of Córdoba's Saint Martin Theater, Manuel Martín Frederico, the theater professor Pascual Salvatore, and local ballet and choral groups also collaborated in the presentation.¹⁶³ With ticket prices subsidized by the Perónist government, the performances attracted over 10,000 spectators. Finally, during the next holiday season the Renewal Theater Corporation twice staged Ney's self-authored drama, *Glory to God and Peace to Men* (1953), in the main city square in front of Córdoba's sixteenth-century cathedral. *Los Principios* praised Ney for bringing high art to the working class, a pillar of Perónism, and educating them in religion, morality, and aesthetic sensibilities.¹⁶⁴ The *Diario Córdoba* lauded his incorporation of the natural environment as a landmark event in Argentine theater history, likening Ney to Copeau in France or, ironically, Reinhardt in Germany.¹⁶⁵ Performances of the play were the centerpiece of celebrations for Christmas and the New Year in Córdoba, with police reports estimating total attendance for the two performances at 50,000, including the city mayor and archbishop, as well as the provincial governor.¹⁶⁶ The Córdoban government also filmed the production to promote tourism in the city. Through his new intercultural agenda, Ludwig Ney had morphed from Nazi propagandist to a marketing man for Argentina.

Over time Ney strengthened his commitment to interculturalism and integration. Inspired by student-centered theater projects

162. "El Mercader de Venecia," *Los Principios*, February 28, 1954.

163. "En el lago paseo sobremonte se representará *El Mercader de Venecia*," *Meridiano*, February 13, 1954.

164. "Pueblo e iglesia en la navidad," *Córdoba*, January 11, 1954.

165. "Será representada hoy en el lago del paseo sobremonte la obra 'El Mercader de Venecia,'" *Córdoba*, February 22, 1954.

166. "La escenificación de navidad," *Los Principios*, December 27, 1953; "Pueblo e iglesia en la navidad," *Córdoba*, January 11, 1954.

in Germany, in 1957 he began a new ensemble composed of professional thespians and students from the North School, successor to the former, Nazified Goethe School. The group, called the Chamber Theater, followed the model of small, postwar stages in Germany and existed until 1972. Such intimate, often improvised venues were popular in Germany because many theaters had been destroyed in the war; however, the format also suited Ney's new focus on touring and pedagogy. The intimate setting fused onstage fantasy with offstage reality while also opening more direct avenues of emotion and creativity between audience and actors.¹⁶⁷ Another consideration was the changing composition of the cast. Many in Ney's cast now belonged to a new generation born in Argentina, and the preservation of the German language among the youth was acutely important to older immigrants. Lacking dramatic aids, such as an elaborate stage setting, footlights, and prompters, the small auditorium demanded the sovereignty of the spoken word.¹⁶⁸ The actors replaced other props with the art of language, thus buoying the maintenance and cultivation of the German idiom.

In 1959, as part of an embassy-sponsored project to celebrate the 200th anniversary of Friedrich Schiller's birth, Ney's ensemble put on German and Spanish performances of *Love and Intrigue* (1784) throughout Argentina. Such linguistic hybridity directly contradicted the tenets of mother-tongue fascism, because the act of translation often represents a pivotal step in emigrants' integration with the host society.¹⁶⁹ Furthermore, by facilitating contact among Germans and their Argentine hosts, as well as circulating German culture throughout Argentina, Ludwig Ney put the literary scholar Ottmar Ette's concept of literature as knowledge for living together into action.¹⁷⁰ Both Regine Enzweiler and Ursula Siegerist, young student-actresses with Ney, stressed that the tours brought them to

167. Thiess, *Theater ohne Rampe*, 8.

168. Thiess, *Theater ohne Rampe*, 14.

169. Alfrun Kliems, "Transkulturalität des Exils und Translation im Exil: Versuch einer Zusammenbindung," in Krohn et al., *Übersetzung als transkultureller Prozess. Exilforschung*, 31.

170. Ette, "Literature as Knowledge for Living, Literary Studies as Science for Living," 989.

areas they otherwise never would have visited, catalyzing connections that increased their fondness for Argentina and boosted their cultural fluency. Siegerist noted that before these journeys she had tended to subordinate Argentina to Germany. During her journeys with Ludwig Ney, and especially when performing in Spanish, she learned “to also love my Argentine homeland.”¹⁷¹ In the words of the French-Lebanese author Amin Maalouf, the tours exploited literature’s capability to create passageways between vastly different cultures.¹⁷²

The presentations of Schiller’s *Love and Intrigue* introduced the canonical dramatist to many Argentine audiences. In Rosario, La



Figure 9. Ludwig Ney and his ensemble on tour in rural Argentina.

Source: Author’s collection, with thanks to Ursula Siegerist.

171. Siegerist, interview by author, November 15, 2012.

172. Maalouf, “Je parle du voyage comme d’autres parlent du leur maison,” 101.

Falda, and Córdoba, university professors held lectures presenting the play and author in Spanish before the curtain rose. The West German consul attended the play in Rosario, and National Radio Córdoba broadcasted the performance there live.¹⁷³ *La Voz del Interior*, Argentina's most widely circulating newspaper outside of Buenos Aires, emphasized the intellectual interchange between Germans and Argentines. Ney himself added that he was excited to see how his cast of "Argentine-Germans" would contribute to theater in Argentina, a country whose vibrant spirit and art they fervently admired.¹⁷⁴ With these words Ludwig Ney revealed himself to be a hybrid. Argentina had become his adopted homeland, a sentiment demonstrated by his description of his cast's binational identity. Having thrived on stages in Nazi Germany and in Argentina during World War II as well as the Perónist and Frondizi regimes, Ney proved himself an opportunist adaptable to volatile political climates in Europe and South America.

The performance in Alta Gracia, a town near Córdoba, encapsulated this inexorable hybridity and adroit flexibility. The Spanish-language presentation stood out because all proceeds went to support the local Anglo-American School. This caught the attention of the *Buenos Aires Herald*, which had been vehemently antifascist during the war and still regarded nationalist German institutions with suspicion. Yet the *Herald* had warm words for Ney's group, highlighting the fruitful cultural approximation between local inhabitants and the traveling thespians.¹⁷⁵ As Ney put it himself, through the shared event of live theater representatives of disparate cultures could "counter the atrophy of artistic sensibility" among young people. In canonical dramas such as *Love and Intrigue*, spectators observed the embodiment of timeless dilemmas by actors onstage, and then after the presentation the two groups exchanged perspectives and discussed alternative actions that

173. Program, *Intriga y Amor*, Rosario, July 1, 1959; program, *Intriga y Amor*, Córdoba, July 4, 1959.

174. "Expresión de gran jerarquía artística del conjunto alemán," *La Voz del Interior*, July 21, 1959.

175. "Culture on Tour," *BAH*, July 20, 1959.

might have prevented the tragedy.¹⁷⁶ The *Herald* was so taken with the endeavor that its headline declared the tours as “something to be emulated.”¹⁷⁷ In 1959 alone, the troupe covered over 5,000 kilometers and played for over 4,000 people.¹⁷⁸ The translingual productions undercut Ney’s earlier project of ethnocentric drama, and they fomented closer relations with the Argentine host society and other, previously adversarial emigrant populations.

Ney’s program appears to have resonated with Argentine artists and academics. There were commemorations of Schiller’s poetry in Rosario and La Plata that October, and the Argentine-German Cultural Institute partnered with the Argentine Association of Literature and Art and the University of Buenos Aires to put on an intercultural homage to the author in November.¹⁷⁹ Hedwig Schlichter-Crilla led a group in a Spanish-language dramatic recitation of Schiller’s unfinished drama, *Demetrius* (1857), before another canonical author, Jorge Luis Borges, lectured on the Goethe-Schiller monument in Weimar.¹⁸⁰ The Argentine National Radio station broadcasted a three-part series on the author, including live performances of scenes from *Mary Stuart* and *The Maid of Orleans*. Finally, in January 1960, directors Fernando Llabat and Ernesto Bianco put on an open-air presentation of *The Robbers*.¹⁸¹ Schiller created connections within German Buenos Aires and externally to Argentine performers and audiences.

Meanwhile, Ludwig Ney embarked on new intercultural endeavors with Argentine artists in the nation’s capital. Grand open-air presentations of canonical European playwrights became annual events for the German colonies. From 1956 to 1966 Ney put on

176. Program, *Intriga y Amor*, Alta Gracia, July 11, 1959.

177. “Culture on Tour,” *BAH*, July 20, 1959.

178. Carl Hillekamps, “Kulturelle Jugendpflege durch Laienspiel und Diskussion,” *Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen* 11 (1961): 2–3.

179. “Schiller Ehrung in Rosario,” *FP*, October 27, 1959; “Schiller Ehrung in La Plata,” *FP*, October 28, 1959; “Schillerfeier in der UBA,” *AT*, November 11, 1959.

180. “Schiller Vortrag von Borges,” *FP*, November 12, 1959.

181. “Schillerjahr,” *AT*, December 9, 1959; “Freilichtaufführung von den *Räubern*,” *AT*, January 13, 1960.



Figure 10. Scene from performance of William Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at the Summer Festival in December 1962.

Source: Regine Lamm Collection.

Shakespeare's *Midsummer Night's Dream* in 1956 and 1962, *Merry Wives of Windsor* in 1957, and *Othello* in 1966, Hofmannsthal's *Everyman* in 1963, Molière's *Miser* in 1964, Schiller's *Robbers* in 1965, and his own *Glory to God and Peace to Men* in 1961. Held outdoors at the New German Gymnastics Club, the productions included ensembles of over ninety people, plus technical staff and stage crew.¹⁸² The facilities featured seating for 2,000 spectators, who watched the action unfold on a series of three stages each 240 square meters in size.¹⁸³ Reports on the event, which was called the Summer Festival and attracted 4,000–6,000 spectators for two to three presentations, repeatedly emphasized its importance for the cohesion of the German population.¹⁸⁴ With the explicit purpose

182. "Freilichtvorstellung von *Jedermann*," *FP*, December 8, 1962.

183. "Freilichtvorstellung von *Jedermann*," *FP*, December 8, 1962.

184. "Mitwirkende im weihnachtlichen Festspiel," *FP*, December 10, 1961; program, *Othello*, December 17, 1966.

of cultivating immigrants' ties to their European heritage, the West German, Swiss, and Austrian ambassadors attended the festival: "Think of the forests in our homeland, which the legends of our people also have inhabited with magical beings. The beauty of our language will also find a happy echo in your heart."¹⁸⁵ The festival reinforced immigrants' linguistic and cultural affinity to Germany, which newspapers and promotional materials continued to call their homeland.

During World War II the German Theater's open-air performances at the Strength through Joy park were exclusionary events that reinforced Germans' ties to Europe, purposefully estranged them from the host society, and subordinated Argentina to Germany. The Summer Festival, by contrast, was an intercultural production. The cast for the 1961 production of *Glory to God* featured the Italian immigrant Angel Mattiello, one of the most-renowned opera singers of his generation and first baritone at the Colón Theater for over thirty years. *Glory to God* also included the entire ballet group of the Colón Theater under the choreography of José María Antelo and featured the percussion soloist Desiderio Barilli of the Buenos Aires Philharmonic Orchestra.¹⁸⁶ The festival cultivated immigrants' nostalgic bonds to Germany while evincing their steady integration into Argentine society.

Eventually, Ludwig Ney dissociated himself from the ethnocentric survival tactics that characterized his troupe during the World War II period. Ney and many of his colleagues, such as Steven Wiel, continued to espouse fascist dramatic theory, took a hypernationalistic view of German history, and never publicly disavowed Nazism. Nonetheless, through a blend of opportunism and gradual hybridity, Ney came to recognize the stability, endurance, and vitality created by cross-cultural partnerships and collaborative ventures with Argentine and other immigrant artists. Furthermore, Ney grasped that the viability of German theater in Argentina was contingent upon the participation and enthusiasm of first-generation Argentine-Germans. By mentoring younger thespians, Ney bridged

185. WGE to FFO, December 19, 1962, Bestand B95, Band 733, PAAA; program, *Ein Sommernachtstraum*, December 15, 1962.

186. Program, *Weib—Nacht: Ein Mysterienspiel*, December 23, 1961.

German and Argentine cultures. In 1961 *La Nación*, an august journalistic institution and the Argentina's second most-widely circulating newspaper, highlighted Ney's group as an example of successful integration.¹⁸⁷ The tellingly entitled article, "When They Begin to Be Argentines," declared that through theater he and his cast had put down deep roots in a new world: "What do the Neys think of Argentina? We don't need them to answer. We can see it in their eyes and smiling faces. They are no longer itinerant artists. They have found a new home, full of happiness."¹⁸⁸ The "border skills" of flexibility, adaptation, and reinvention that Sandra McGee Deutsch stresses in her book *Crossing Borders, Claiming a Nation: A History of Argentine Jewish Women* apply without political distinction to immigrants.¹⁸⁹ Thanks to his cultivation of these skills, *La Nación* was provoked to acclaim the Nazi collaborator Ludwig Ney as a model immigrant.

A Scripted Silence: Confronting the Past on the River Plate

Ney's evolving strategy showed confidence in the efficacy of integration and interculturalism to achieve professional success in postwar Argentina, but did not reflect a rejection of his earlier propagandistic activities. By continuing to advertise and write in *Der Weg*, Ney courted the neofascist right. In 1949, he compared audiences at the two German stages in Buenos Aires. Each public's choice of theater revealed its essence. In the jargon of Nazi anti-Semitism, Ney inveighed against theatergoers enticed by star guest performances at the predominantly Jewish Free German Stage as "rootless, coincidental, and superficial," because they lacked lasting cultural values. These spectators differed from a theater community, such as the spiritual kinship that existed between audience and ensemble at the New Stage. Quoting the playwright Hermann

187. A few illustrious contributors to *La Nación* include José Martí, Miguel de Unamuno, José Ortega y Gasset, Jorge Luis Borges, and Mario Vargas Llosa.

188. "Cuando Empiezan a Ser Argentinos," *LN*, April 2, 1961.

189. McGee Deutsch, *Crossing Borders, Claiming a Nation*, 3.

Bahr's assertion that true dramatic art exists as a buoyant, mutually edifying expression of togetherness between thespians and nation, Ney clarified that the "nation" was not determined by national borders, but by a shared ethnic identity founded on cultural values. The older immigrants and recent arrivals in Ney's public thus formed a genuine German theater community; however, Jews, thinly disguised in Ney's insidious euphemism "rootless," would never have a fixed, grounded identity. Jews opted for the emotional poverty of sensationalist spectacle, unlike culturally and ethnically anchored theatergoers, who preferred the richness of a permanent theater community.¹⁹⁰

Ney's partner, Steven Wiel, also contributed to *Der Weg*. In one essay, Wiel excoriated Allied forces for their actions in the aftermath of World War II. He declared that Roosevelt, Churchill, and Truman had expelled 14 million Germans from their homes, and 40,000 German parents were still searching for their children. Meanwhile, Wiel's teenage nephew had been hanged for war crimes committed at a place he had never been. Furthermore, thousands of German girls served their "liberators" as prostitutes. Accusing Czech, Russian, and US-American troops of war crimes, murder, torture, gang rape, and sex-trafficking, Wiel implored all Germans to never forget these crimes because forgetting is treason. Laden with lingering loyalty to Nazism, Wiel's piece concluded that remembrance was the first step toward vengeance.¹⁹¹

Anti-Semitism was a marketing tool as well. Founded in 1952, the German Chamber Players featured actors associated with Ludwig Ney's New Stage, including Egon Straube, Zita Szelezcky, and Eduard Radlegger. Although it was never his focus, Ney himself collaborated with the company, and in 1953 it fused with his own group. A brief phenomenon in a cluttered theater landscape, the Players launched a polemical advertising campaign emphasizing their "Jew-free" ensemble. Outraged, the *Argentinisches Tageblatt* suggested that the group rename itself the Julius Streicher Stage or

190. "Zufällige Zuschauermenge oder Theatergemeinschaft?" *Der Weg*, April 1949.

191. "Flucht ins Vergessen," *Der Weg*, March 1951.

the S.S. Players. It exhorted all Germans to protest this so-called German theater, whose members clearly had nothing to do with Germany.¹⁹² The rebellion never occurred. Instead, the Players garnered positive reviews in the *Freie Presse*, their performances often sold out, and FGS manager Sigmund Breslauer worried about competition from a new “Nazi Stage.”¹⁹³ Far from blacklisted, Straube, Szelezcky, and Radlegger continued performing in Buenos Aires, including with Ludwig Ney.¹⁹⁴

Weeks after Ney’s cast had presented *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* at the inaugural Summer Festival, the neo-Nazi magazine *Der Weg* celebrated Shakespeare’s clairvoyant vision of fascist ideology. Drawing heavily from Hitler’s *My Struggle*, Hans F. K. Günther theorized that the improvement of a race is only possible by promoting procreation between genetically worthy persons. For this reason marriages must never occur among people of higher and lower races—for example, between Germans and Jews. One’s choice of spouse decides whether the quality of a nation will be improved or worsened, and young Germans would do well to seek guidance in the works of Shakespeare. After listing various examples, Günther stated that beyond their Germanic virtues, Shakespeare’s feminine characters should be understood both rationally and emotionally, especially with youthful emotions. The “Nordic poet” depicted the essence of love in the Teutonic Middle Ages, in which there was still no separation of body, heart, and mind. As with all forms of great “Germanic art,” Shakespeare represented an eternal model for spiritual health and the improvement of German youth.¹⁹⁵

Der Weg saw Shakespeare as a vehicle for recovering the spirit of World War II in Germany.¹⁹⁶ Foreign powers tried to confine the

192. “Verwirrung der Begriffe,” *AT*, March 16, 1952.

193. “Deutsche Kammerspiele,” *FP*, March 23, 1952; “Deutsche Kammerspiele: *Der Strom*,” *FP*, June 10, 1952; “Deutsche Kammerspiele: *Didi*,” *FP*, August 26, 1952; Breslauer to Jacob, April 14, 1952, PWJAK.

194. Despite antifascist protests, in 2015 Hungary issued a stamp celebrating Szelezcky as a cultural treasure.

195. “Menschenwürde und Gattenwahl,” *Der Weg*, January 1957.

196. “William Shakespeare,” *Der Weg*, January 1957.

triumphs, convictions, and sufferings of German soldiers to history books with the intention of nullifying their influence in postwar Germany, but Shakespeare's eternal art was the antidote to this oppression. The Bard's forests, seas, and battlefields eclipsed all boundaries of time and space, and in his immortal example veterans could find inspiration to uphold Nazi ideals and define the future of European culture. In William Shakespeare, *Der Weg* envisioned a Germanic prophet who would legitimize and resurrect the Teutonic visions of national "greatness."¹⁹⁷ With dozens of Nazi war criminals currently residing in Argentina, this appeal did not have to travel far to reach its target readership.

There is no demonstrable link between *Der Weg* and the Summer Festival, but the timing of the magazine's unabashed arrogation of Shakespeare to the neo-Nazi cause does not seem coincidental. Indeed, Günther's piece about love and "youthful emotions" appeared to target Ney's youthful ensemble of student-actors directly. Its message can be construed as a warning against integration, lest Argentine spouses and parents diminish the German race. While Ney had little influence over *Der Weg*, he publicly repudiated the messages in none of its articles, nor did he criticize the publication in general. Ney now pursued a program of intercultural outreach to Argentine artists and theatergoers, and his projects could well lead to the full integration that the magazine so vehemently opposed. Nevertheless, he continued to support Nazi ideology and fascist drama theory, as well as ally himself with like-minded emigrants. Furthermore, neither Ney nor his colleagues publicly renounced their words and deeds. In the postwar period both anti-fascist and nationalist thespians made significant progress toward integration with the Argentine host society, and the West German embassy rallied all actors and audiences against the common foe of communism. Yet dramatic presentations revealed that internally German Buenos Aires continued to be suffused with a scripted silence that propelled ongoing malice.

Just as the *La Plata Zeitung* shunned the Free German Stage, for eighteen years the *Argentinisches Tageblatt* never once reported

197. "William Shakespeare," *Der Weg*, January 1957.

on Ludwig Ney. He did not appear in its pages until 1956, and even then the paper was loath to acknowledge him, mentioning his name only once at the end of its review, even though he had led the ensemble and directed the production.¹⁹⁸ Slowly, however, its disdain gave way to recognition of Ney's evolving posture and pedagogical work, which also received approbation from the West German embassy.¹⁹⁹ Not only did West German ambassadors attend the Summer Festival and Ney's Chamber Theater, but the embassy supported his tours in 1959 and repeatedly solicited funding for his troupe from the Foreign Office in Bonn.²⁰⁰ The embassy regarded his work as urgent and irreplaceable for the preservation of German identity among immigrants and especially their children. Diplomats also agreed that the theater's traveling presentations were an effective tool for projecting West German soft power in the nation's interior, and they regarded Ney as a crucial, unifying figure in their endeavor to forge a united front against communism among Germans throughout the country.²⁰¹

Citing budgetary restrictions, the Foreign Office denied the theater funding. Ney's work during the Nazi period did not figure prominently in diplomatic correspondence, which referred only briefly to his collaboration with Strength through Joy and tensions between Ney and the FGS.²⁰² By contrast, the correspondence of Paul Walter Jacob, who in 1962 was considering a return to Argentina, overflowed with bitterness. Sigmund Breslauer was concerned that Ambassador Werner Junker, a former NSDAP member with extensive experience in the Nazi German foreign service,²⁰³ was

198. "Axel an der Himmelstür," *AT*, July 8, 1956.

199. WGE to FFO, March 5, 1958, Bestand B33, Band 248, PAAA.

200. Werner Brückmann to Literary Artistic Society, October 24, 1960, CNC.

201. WGE, Yearly Report 1961, Bestand B33, Band 248, PAAA; WGE to FFO, January 11, 1962, Bestand B95, Band 765, PAAA; WGE, Yearly Report 1963; WGE to FFO, December 19, 1962, Bestand B95, Band 733, PAAA; Frank to Ney, November 13, 1963, CNC.

202. FFO to WGE, January 22, 1962, Bestand B95, Band 765, PAAA; WGE to FFO, October 11, 1962, Bestand B95, Band 733, PAAA.

203. Ambassador from 1956 to 1963, Werner Junker appears in studies on Nazi criminals escaping to Argentina, especially Adolf Eichmann: Stangneth, *Eichmann before Jerusalem*; Gaby Weber, *Los expedientes Eichmann* (Buenos Aires: Penguin, 2013).

courting Ludwig Ney.²⁰⁴ In a vitriolic exchange, the FGS ensemble, the *Jüdische Wochenschau*, the *Argentinisches Tageblatt*, the Guild of the German Stage, and the German Stage Association referred to Ney as “a star of the Third Reich,”²⁰⁵ “Nazi criminal in Buenos Aires,”²⁰⁶ “clearly hired and maintained as theater director by Nazi authorities,”²⁰⁷ “leader of the Strength Through Joy Stage,”²⁰⁸ “baleful,”²⁰⁹ and “highly questionable.”²¹⁰ Others speculated that cooperation with Ney would cause a boycott of the FGS by actors and spectators alike, because the hostilities were the same as decades ago.²¹¹ Underscoring the multilayered discord pervading the German-speaking populations, Bernhardi Swarsensky of the *Jüdische Wochenschau* also warned Jacob that he would not intervene in the matter, because he refused to support German culture in any way.²¹² The German-born diplomats at the embassy were not attuned to immigrants, for whom past conflicts continued to weld current relationships and goad ongoing rancor.

Two years later Carl Hillekamps, a correspondent for the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* whose daughter performed with the Chamber Theater, intervened with the Foreign Office on Ney’s behalf. Having lived in Buenos Aires during the Nazi period, Hillekamps claimed he had witnessed firsthand how Ney resisted pressure from the German embassy, never promoted National Socialism, and refused to put on propagandistic dramas. This of course was utterly false. An outspoken and unapologetic Nazi propagandist, Ney had written for the *La Plata Zeitung*, *Der Deutsche in Argentinien*, and, later, *Der Weg*. He had presented blatantly propagandistic

204. Breslauer to Jacob, January 12, 1962, PWJAK.

205. Erich Raeder (German Stage Association) to Jacob and Breslauer, January 22, 1962, PWJAK.

206. Breslauer to Jacob, January 12, 1962, PWJAK.

207. Jacob to Heinrich Wüllner (Guild of the German Stage), January 22, 1962, PWJAK.

208. Breslauer to Raeder, February 20, 1962, PWJAK.

209. Lilly Wichert (FGS ensemble) to Jacob, March 17, 1962, PWJAK.

210. Bernhardi Swarsensky (*JW*) to Jacob, January 8, 1962, PWJAK.

211. Jacob to Heriberto Dresel, January 22, 1962, PWJAK; Alemann to Jacob, April 30, 1962, PWJAK; Wichert to Jacob, March 17, 1962, PWJAK.

212. Swarsensky to Jacob, January 8, 1962, PWJAK.

works, including Hanns Johst's *Schlageter*, Eberhard Wolfgang Möller's *Frankenburg Dice Game*, and numerous plays by NSDAP members, such as August Hinrichs, Rudolf Presber, and Maximilian Böttcher. Despite his program of intercultural outreach and his rapprochement with the *Argentinisches Tageblatt*, Ney's past stirred unresolved tensions in German Buenos Aires. The actor's efforts at vindication were steeped in duplicity. All discourse remained in the private sphere of self-interested personal correspondence, often conducted via surrogates such as Hillekamps who were willing to collaborate in a ruse of anti-Nazi resistance that precluded admitting the truth, let alone repenting for it. In a public environment still polarized by bitterness and denial, Ney never confronted or acknowledged his misdeeds.

In 1947, the *Freie Presse* printed an article entitled "Lessing, the Truth Seeker." Although just four years had passed since the *La Plata Zeitung's* polemical reviews of *Minna of Barnhelm*, the *Freie Presse* mentioned neither Lessing's crusade against French corruption of German drama nor his glorification of Prussian military values, lauding instead his unwavering commitment to uncovering and promoting the truth throughout a life marred by setbacks and personal tragedy. Lessing's most enduring achievement in pursuit of the ideal of truth was *Nathan the Wise*. Its moral, which the paper declared to have universal validity, was that one's actions must be guided by tolerance and love because "truth ultimately means nothing less than striving for true humanity."²¹³ The *Freie Presse* was politically ambivalent, and its motivations were inscrutable, even dubious, yet the article intimated that Lessing could inspire Argentina's German populations to improve relations after decades of strife.

In the ensuing years both colonies repeatedly invoked Lessing as a catalyst for rapprochement, and the compatibility of their views on the author reflected recognition that a measure of common ground existed between them. In 1951, the *Argentinisches Tageblatt* published an article written in the form of a letter from Lessing himself to the newspaper. Lessing states that he has heard of a

213. "Lessing, der Wahrheitssucher," *FP*, December 21, 1947.

theater in Argentina, the Free German Stage, for which he feels his *Nathan* is eminently well suited. Arguing that the play's wisdom is eternal, and asserting, "I believe that Nathan is as relevant today as he was back then," the dramatist concludes that the FGS has an unfulfilled obligation to present this work.²¹⁴

It was not until 1956, by which time the renamed German Stage relied heavily on subventions from Bonn, that *Nathan the Wise* finally had its German-language premiere in South America. The commemorative presentation on the 175th anniversary of Lessing's death received positive reviews in the *Freie Presse* and the *Argentinisches Tageblatt*. Both reviews lauded the performance as a highlight in the sixteen-year existence of the stage, and they praised *Nathan* in nearly the same language, calling the work "canticles of humanity" and the "canticles of true humanity," respectively.²¹⁵ Both papers admitted that the play's impact would be limited to those who were already receptive to its purport, but the *Freie Presse* hoped that the rousing applause and numerous curtain calls reflected genuine enthusiasm among theatergoers for Lessing's compassion.

Language was another intersection. Though it lacked the bellicose overtones of the *La Plata Zeitung's* 1943 review of *Minna*, in its discussion of *Nathan* the *Freie Presse* continued to focus on the spoken word. It praised Wolfgang Schwarz's *Templar* as "masterful in its modern diction," and Joseph Halpern's *Patriarch* was a "linguistic masterclass" and a model for younger actors.²¹⁶ The *Tageblatt* also devoted considerable space to language, although it was more critical and complained that the script was at times "disimproved" by excessive editing, cutting off syllables from Lessing's iambic verse.²¹⁷ Their mutual emphasis on language in the *Tageblatt* and the *Freie Presse* demonstrated a bond between both German colonies.

214. "Leserbrief bittet um Aufführung von Nathan," *AT*, October 14, 1951.

215. "Nathan der Weise," *FP*, June 27, 1956; "Lessings Nathan," *AT*, June 24, 1956.

216. "Nathan der Weise," *FP*, June 27, 1956.

217. "Nathan der Weise," *AT*, June 27, 1956.

The *Tageblatt*'s review of *Nathan* exposed the limits of dialogue by addressing the politically charged issue of struggling to overcome the past or, in German, *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*. The *Tageblatt* made explicit references to the biographical parallels between Lessing's protagonist and the leading actor in the presentation, Jacques Arndt. It noted that a scene in which the Jewish Nathan told the Friar the story of his own suffering and persecution was excruciatingly personal on- and offstage.²¹⁸ The *Freie Presse*, perhaps remembering its own role during Nazism, did not comment on this striking aspect of the performance. Even worse was a scene in which the Patriarch of Jerusalem repeated: "Do nothing. The Jew will burn." At this moment, a section of the audience began to laugh. A shudder, the *Tageblatt* opined, would have been more appropriate. The *Freie Presse*, again, was silent. Although it commended the production, the *Tageblatt* criticized the closing that Arndt had grafted onto Lessing's work, in which the cast joined hands and formed a circle as the sultan exclaimed: "Let's be friends!"²¹⁹ Arndt later explained that he had believed theater could bring the antagonistic populations together, and felt that *Nathan* was singularly suited to this aim. Thus, he had added the rather heavy-handed ending to be sure not to miss the unique opportunity that the performance presented.²²⁰ Indeed, both the *Tageblatt* and the *Freie Presse* urged their readers to attend the presentation and learn from its message of tolerance and empathy. Reviews of Lessing's *Nathan the Wise* revealed common ground and acute discord between the German blocs. The newspapers voiced a will to heal, and they found bonds of language and cultural heritage in Lessing's drama that helped them make a start. On the other hand, their reviews also made clear that fallout from the recent past continued to preclude truly open dialogue and full reconciliation.

On July 1, 1962, Ney and his ensemble chose Lessing's *Minna of Barnhelm* to open a permanent facility for his Chamber Theater

218. "Nathan der Weise," AT, June 27, 1956.

219. "Nathan der Weise," AT, June 27, 1956.

220. Arndt, interview by author, December 25, 2008.

at the Goethe School in Buenos Aires. Lessing's comedy drew thousands of spectators during a nine-week run, proving to be an apt choice to inaugurate the theater, which hosted the stage until Ney's retirement in 1974. The *Tageblatt* warmly welcomed the venue, noting that Ney's Chamber Theater provided public and ensemble alike a wholesome connection to German cultural and intellectual values.²²¹ The *Freie Presse* remarked that a German-Argentine who has acted under Ney "embraces his cultural heritage in the most beautiful sense" and contributes to the joy of the local community.²²² Attended by Ambassador Werner Junker and Rudolf Junges, counselor to the West German diplomatic mission in Uruguay, the presentation of *Minna* became a celebration of German cultural identity shared by both German colonies. However, these optimistic festivities were contingent on a selective view of German history and current politics. Two years after Adolf Eichmann's capture in Buenos Aires and just a month after his execution in Israel, the presentation and reviews conspicuously avoided any mention of Nazism, World War II, or the Shoah.

This scripted silence had reverberated with undeniable and perhaps insurmountable enmity a few years earlier. No play unmasked the intransigent discord between Argentina's German populations as forcefully as *The Diary of Anne Frank* (1955). When it premiered in multiple German cities in 1956, the *Tageblatt* applauded the drama and noted the reflective, solemn atmosphere at the performances, but the *Freie Presse* made no mention of the event.²²³ Instead it published an account by Wilfred von Oven, formerly Goebbels's press secretary, of his trip to Germany.²²⁴ When the *Tageblatt* reviewed the play at the Yiddish People's Theater it speculated that although Yiddish-, Italian-, and Spanish-language theaters had already put on *Anne Frank* in Argentina, a German-language presentation was unlikely. The next week a reader

221. "Eröffnung des neuen Zimmertheaters," *AT*, July 1, 1962.

222. "Deutsches Zimmertheater," *FP*, July 1, 1962.

223. "Das Tagebuch der Anne Frank erschüttert das deutsche Publikum," *AT*, October 9, 1956.

224. "Ausklang im Schwabenland," *FP*, October 6, 1956.

rebuked the German Stage for eschewing the play because it was afraid to reopen old wounds. She reminded the theater's management that it had its "old," Jewish public to thank for its success and not the "other" audience whose sensibilities it was shielding.²²⁵ When the stage finally scheduled *Anne Frank* for the 1958 season it encountered resistance from the West German embassy, which protested to Bonn that this unfortunate selection would be a "terrible burden" for the German-speaking public, including Jews who all surely wished "to forget the past."²²⁶ Since renewed polarization of German-speaking theatergoers into "Jewish and Gentile" camps was not in the interests of West German diplomacy, the embassy urged the Foreign Office to intervene against the production.²²⁷ The embassy failed to differentiate between Gentile antifascists and supporters of Nazism and, worse, preferred to repress confrontation with the past in the interest of political expediency.

Against the embassy's objections, the German Stage performed *Anne Frank* on June 2, 1958. Already the prelude to the presentation portended conflict. While several previews accompanied regular advertisements in the *Tageblatt*, the *Freie Presse* printed nothing on the upcoming performance. The reviews then laid bare the colonies' starkly divergent perspectives. The *Tageblatt's* review began with innuendo, noting that Anne Frank would be twenty-nine years old, had it not been for people who now say, "I only followed orders" and "I only did my duty" and "I didn't know." Exuding aspersion, the paper explicitly denounced the many German emigrants who avoided the presentation, because they had already excused the six million dead Jews for being naive enough to allow themselves to be tortured, raped, and murdered. The drama's greatest deed was to tell Anne Frank's story for "our children—so they know." In its review, the *Tageblatt* launched a withering diatribe against the nationalist colony, including Ambassador Junker, and then castigated the lot of them for failing to uphold the memory of the Shoah for the sake of future generations. That same day the *Freie Presse* printed a review that read as if its theater

225. "Leserbrief: *Das Tagebuch der Anne Frank*," AT, September 1, 1957.

226. WGE to FFO, March 25, 1958, Bestand B95, Band 558, PAAA.

227. WGE to FFO, March 25, 1958, Bestand B95, Band 558, PAAA.

critic had deliberately coordinated with the *Tageblatt* to validate its admonishments and incriminations. It noted only once that the Franks were Jews, also mentioned the word “Jewish” only once, and devoted not a single word to Nazis, the Holocaust, concentration camps, deportation, or the SS. The critic saw neither relevance to contemporary West Germany nor warnings for future generations. Anne Frank’s diary was not a historical artifact documenting Nazi genocide, but functioned dramatically as the protagonist’s companion and friend. Moreover, viewers should interpret the play simply as the story of a young girl entering adulthood and “certainly not as an attack on the prevailing conditions at that time.” For the *Freie Presse*, this was the last word.

Despite a subsequent performance in Montevideo and the widely publicized release of the film *The Diary of Anne Frank* (1959), the *Freie Presse* had no further comment. The *Tageblatt*, by contrast, ran a lengthy piece on the presentation at the Uruguayan national theater. Many theatergoers, Uruguayan ambassador Rosen stressed in an emotional letter to Bonn, had suffered in concentration camps or lost loved ones to the Shoah. Rosen lamented the absence of others, who remained reluctant to confront the recent past.²²⁸ When the film premiered in Buenos Aires on April 20, 1959, the *Tageblatt* reiterated that its salient contribution was to promote awareness of the Shoah among future generations.²²⁹ While the *Tageblatt* emphasized remembrance, the *Freie Presse* celebrated the birthday of Johannes Franze, who had been a Nazi propagandist in Argentina during the 1940s.²³⁰ The date of the premiere, Hitler’s birthday, discreetly underscored the unrelenting schism.

Curtain Call: Death in Buenos Aires

By the late 1950s, as deficits mounted and its cast aged, the German Stage was encountering adversity on multiple fronts.²³¹ For

228. WGE (Uruguay) to FFO, July 8, 1958, Bestand B95, Band 558, PAAA.

229. “Das Tagebuch der Anne Frank,” *AT*, April 20, 1959.

230. “Johannes Franze wird 70,” *FP*, June 15, 1959.

231. See also Lemmer, *Die “Freie Deutsche Bühne,”* 95–104.

political reasons both Bonn and the embassy had been reluctant to stop funding the only regularly performing antifascist theater since 1940; however, they were unsatisfied with its presentations, and solutions were elusive. Under pressure from the German Stage's cast, the *Tageblatt*, the German Theater Guild, and prominent German-speaking Jews, the Foreign Office had rebuffed Ney's suggestions to fuse his Chamber Theater with the exilic ensemble. Ney's more accomplished students such as Regine Enzweiler, who later went on to a successful acting career in Argentina, might have provided the youthful energy that the ensemble lacked.²³² Yet, despite improved relations in some areas, the unyielding malice between Jews and antifascists, on the one hand, and nationalist Gentile Germans, on the other, precluded a partnership. This exacerbated the problems of aging thespians and financial struggles at the German Stage. Hiring actors from Germany was expensive and risked shutting out the refugees who had been members of the stage for decades.²³³ As its artistic level declined, continual economic crises in Argentina caused the troupe to run ever increasing deficits, reaching 60,000 German marks for the 1962 season.²³⁴ This was untenable, and as early as 1960 Bonn had already begun considering whether to deny the German Stage further funding and look instead for a fresh start with an alternative enterprise.²³⁵

Founded in 1949, Reinhold Olszewski's German Chamber Theater in Santiago, Chile, had staged guest performances in Buenos Aires since 1961, consistently receiving positive media coverage.²³⁶ The Foreign Office invested heavily in the company—170,000

232. Known today as Regine Lamm, the actress had a leading role in Leonel Giacometto's prize-winning play, *All Jews out of Europe!* (2009), the first in a trilogy about the Shoah.

233. WGE to FFO, March 2, 1961; WGE to FFO, July 20, 1961; WGE to FFO, November 22, 1961, Bestand B95, Band 765, PAAA.

234. FFO to WGE, November 8, 1961, Bestand B95, Band 765, PAAA.

235. Internal memorandum, FFO, March 24, 1960; WGE to FFO, December 15, 1962, Bestand B95, Band 765; WGE to FFO, January 1, 1964, Bestand B95, Band 1066, PAAA.

236. "Die Kinder Eduards," *AT*, September 15, 1961; "Saison der Deutschen Kammerspiele," *FP*, April 29, 1962; "Deutsche Kammerspiele: *Prätorius*," *AT*, September 10, 1962; "Deutsche Kammerspiele: *Scherz, Satire, tiefere Bedeutung*," *FP*, September 1, 1963.

German marks for the 1962 season—which gave Olszewski artistic capabilities that the German Stage could not match.²³⁷ Furthermore, the Foreign Office reasoned, it could fund even higher-quality performances and cut costs by supporting Olszewski alone.²³⁸ Since Buenos Aires had a much larger German population than Santiago, in 1965 Bonn decided to relocate Olszewski's entire group to Argentina. From 1965 to 1971 his outfit was centered in Buenos Aires and traveled throughout South America. Although Olszewski promised to employ members of the German Stage, only Jacques Arndt and Lilly Wichert found work with him.²³⁹ The Foreign Office never did fund Ludwig Ney; however, Olszewski supported the Chamber Theater with props, costumes, and technical assistance.²⁴⁰

The Germany-based magazine *Vorwärts* reacted with a darkly titled article, "Death in Buenos Aires," which lambasted Bonn for belligerence against German culture.²⁴¹ The Foreign Office defended itself by citing the unsustainable costs of maintaining two theaters in South America, as well as the older cast's deficient artistic vitality.²⁴² Perhaps the most insightful indictment came from Paul Walter Jacob. In an op-ed for the *Israel Forum*, Jacob bitterly lamented the demise of a theater that offered the world a better image of Germany during its most shameful and tragic hour.²⁴³ In defining the German Stage by its role during the Nazi period, Jacob pinpointed the need to install a new troupe with an unburdened past. The final theater program of the German Stage itself had highlighted the obdurate divisions in the Argentine capital: "It is wholly indifferent to us who you are, what school you attended, what newspaper you read, or to which 'group' you belong."²⁴⁴ In the act of declaring reconciliation, or at least indifference, the program corroborated

237. FFO to WGE, November 8, 1961, Bestand B95, Band 765, PAAA.

238. Stuhlmann, *Vater Courage*, 144.

239. Stuhlmann, *Vater Courage*, 155.

240. WGE to FFO, November 24, 1964, Bestand B95, Band 1066, PAAA.

241. "Sterben in Buenos Aires: Deutsches Theater zum Tode verurteilt," *Vorwärts*, August 1965.

242. Internal memorandum, FFO, August 23, 1965, Bestand B95, Band 1495, PAAA.

243. "Tragisches Ende einer Emigrantenbühne," *Israel Forum*, June 1965.

244. Program, Deutsches Schauspielhaus Buenos Aires, Heft 2, Spielzeit 1964.

partisanship, including sectarian schools, such as the North School vs. Pestalozzi School; newspapers, the *Argentinisches Tageblatt* vs. the *Freie Presse*; and factions, the so-called new and old colonies, names that persisted even though the “new” colony was now over twenty-five years old. Two decades after the Second World War, even an institution whose survival depended on overcoming these blocs was compelled to acknowledge their existence.

In 1951 West Germany’s first ambassador to Argentina, Hermann Terdenge, asserted that Argentina’s conflicting German populations should work together for the future and not lose themselves in the past. Mutual love for the fatherland, Terdenge concluded, was the bridge to understanding.²⁴⁵ During the postwar period theatrical performances were a crucial vehicle for initiating a dialogue and rediscovering the common cultural heritage that Terdenge hoped could bring the antagonists closer together. Not long beforehand, however, the same media, thespians, and theatergoers had deployed theater to drive German Buenos Aires asunder. Postwar rapprochement required a willful and ultimately impossible avoidance of this recent history. It was a history that would splinter Argentina’s German communities for years to come.

245. “Terdenge tritt ins Amt,” *FP*, December 2, 1951.