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Germanification, Cultural Mission, Holocaust

Theatre in Łódź during World War II

—ANSELM HEINRICH

During World War II, the “war in the East,” or the *Weltanschauungskrieg* (“war of ideologies”), as the Nazis termed it, was intended to go beyond previous military conflicts.¹ Apart from military and economic objectives, this war was about *Lebensraum*, about acquiring new territories for the “Germanic master race,” about the brutal and lasting reshaping of Eastern Europe. As part of this reshaping, “the Nazis conducted a cultural campaign in which theatre...was a major component.” This campaign was intended to illustrate serious commitment to the newly acquired territories and their inhabitants.²

The Warthegau, a *Reichgau* (a subdivision in an area annexed by Nazi Germany) in central Poland was one such region being incorporated into the Reich. The fact that its German minority was relatively small made it even more important in the eyes of Nazi propagandists to subject the region to a sustained program of “Germanification,” in which theatre played a crucial role.³ The region’s industrial powerhouse, Łódź, was Poland’s third largest city with a population of 680,095, and in September 1939 it became the “most Easterly major city in Adolf Hitler’s Reich.” Here, the Nazis intended to “erect a bulwark of German culture in the East based on the unshakeable belief in the victorious and continuing existence of the Third Reich.”⁴ A central part of this “bulwark” was the foundation of a lavishly funded municipal theatre for the rising German-speaking minority, an undertaking high on the agenda of the Nazi propaganda machine. More than other art forms, the theatre was called upon to encourage “German character [to] flourish” in the East. District president Friedrich Uebelhoer

charged artistic director Hans Hesse and his staff with the “consolidation and stabilization” of German traditions and the fostering of German culture. Fittingly for this purpose, the opening production by the *Theater der Stadt Lodsch* (“Lodsch” was the German version of Łódź’s name until the Nazis renamed the city “Litzmannstadt”) was a German classic: Gotthold Ephraim Lessing’s *Minna von Barnhelm*. On occasion of its premiere on January 13, 1940, Mayor Schiffer claimed that the city, which had been founded by the “industriousness and ability” of German merchants over a hundred years ago, was now (rightfully) returning into German hands, after having suffered from an “inorganic and racially inferior” character due to the “influx of a quarter of a million Jews” and “conscious neglect by the Polish state.”⁵ The theatre, therefore, was suddenly expected to shoulder a responsibility beyond the immediate need to entertain audiences; it also played a crucial role in changing the character of city and region to exemplify the success of the occupiers’ wider cultural and political mission. In fact, the success of this mission in the Warthegau was in small measure dependent on the triumph of Łódź’s prestigious new German theatre.

In this article I discuss the short history of the German language theatre in Łódź (Lodsch/Litzmannstadt) during World War II and evaluate to what extent the Nazis were able to turn it into a success. I investigate the Nazis’ undertakings in quantitative and qualitative terms by looking at attendance figures, funding, and infrastructure, as well as the attempt to produce the “right” kind of repertoire—uplifting, serious, and *völkisch*. (The term “völkisch” derives from the German word *Volk* [people]. It has strong nationalistic, racial, romantic, and folkloric undertones, which, in its emphasising of the “Blood and Soil” idea, combine with an antiurban populism. The völkisch movement was also characterized by anticommunist, anti-immigration, anticapitalist, antiparliamentarian and particularly strong antisemitic undercurrents.) The existing research has largely failed to acknowledge the importance of the arts in the Germanification of large parts of Eastern Europe during the war. Łódź as one of its main urban centers was crucial to this undertaking and thus deserves attention.⁶

Occupation

On September 9, 1939, German forces occupied Łódź, eight days after Nazi Germany’s invasion of Poland. Within a few months the whole region was branded *Reichsgau Wartheland* and incorporated into the “Greater German Empire.” The city was renamed Litzmannstadt in honor of a German general Litzmann who fought there during World War I, and it was one of the biggest ghettos (for

Jews) in Eastern Europe. Over the following years the Germans tried to establish Łódź as a predominantly German city,⁷ expelled parts of the Polish and Jewish population (90,000 Jews and Poles by the end of 1939), and attempted to replace them with Germans. By the end of the war some 400,000 Germans from within Germany (*Reichsdeutsche*) and a further 600,000 Germans from across Europe (*Volksdeutsche*) were resettled in the Warthegau. Theatre played a major role in promoting Germanification in the city. Uebelhoer claimed in September 1940: “To foster German culture is one of our chief purposes in the German East. German theatre art in particular as one of its chief expressions (and represented here by the municipal theatre) is called upon to allow German national traditions, which have been suppressed before, to blossom again and to award this region with the cultural character it deserves.”⁸ Money was being poured into Litzmannstadt’s theatrical undertakings, providing substantial prestige for the Germans. Properties, scenery, and costumes were bought, new staff hired, the theatre building upgraded, and an elaborate system of advertising instigated. The theatre had its own operetta and ballet ensembles, the newly founded professional municipal orchestra was at its disposal, and in early 1942 the city opened a second venue for theatrical entertainment, the *Kammerspiele* (studio) in General Litzmann Street (the so-called *Sängerhaus*). Later that year a dance school associated with the playhouse was founded, and during the 1943–1944 season, the theatre introduced grand opera. In a few years’ time the cultural landscape of the city had changed substantially.

Łódź developed into a predominantly Polish city following the departure of sizeable Russian and German minorities by 1918.⁹ After the German occupation during World War II, members of the Polish majority became second-class citizens dominated by their German oppressors.¹⁰ The demands on the theatre were clear in this context. It was expected to provide the rising German population with the relevant cultural and propagandistic “ammunition” to establish and assert itself in the “German East.”

Germanisierung

Even the German occupiers admitted—albeit only in internal papers—that Łódź was not and never had been a German city—neither politically nor culturally.¹¹ Nevertheless, the drive to make Łódź German was immediately obvious and carried through with a conviction, brutality, and speed that stunned the Polish population. Although the files of the civic authorities (which have largely survived the war) were written in a matter-of-fact style and used typical

administrative jargon, they display some of the occupiers' broadly held beliefs. What shines through is a deep feeling of superiority communicated by a chosen elite who feel justified in colonizing the "wild East."¹² These attitudes were played out in the public arena immediately and without any hint of sensitivity—not even against the German minority who had largely lived peacefully alongside the Polish population and whose German name of the city, Lodsch, was entirely disregarded and only used for the first few months of the occupation. Instead, the name Litzmannstadt was conjured up, even though it had no historical roots there and was forced on the city in April 1940 on Hitler's direct order.¹³ The aggressiveness of the occupiers was also illustrated by the name changes for streets. Apart from the new Hermann Göring, Rudolf Hess, General Litzmann, Dietrich Eckart, and Schlageter Streets, even the world famous Łódź thoroughfare Piotrkowska was renamed Adolf Hitler Street.

Turning Łódź into a German city, however, did not stop at name-changes for streets. By early 1940, the Nazis had detailed plans for a massive building program. The city's senior planning officer Wilhelm Hallbauer produced a report on "spatial issues in Lodsch," which he sent to different Reich ministries. One of the driving forces for the building plans was that the Germans considered the quality of housing in Łódź to be unacceptable to them.¹⁴ Their suggestions for changes were radical. The city's main railway station was to be moved from the east to the west of the city, all manufacturing was to be moved to the outskirts (a substantial part of the city's manufacturing base was located in the city center or nearby), and the Polish population was to be moved out of the city center and "crammed into other bits of the former city." The planners intended to build a whole new suburb for the incoming German population toward the west of the new railway station, which was to house "approximately 25,000 people," and for which entire areas needed to be torn down. Plans quickly evolved and *Gauleiter* (Regional Director) Greiser soon suggested that the new suburb should hold up to 100,000 people. A new main road "of two kilometers length" would connect the railway station with the old city center. At the one end of this new axis were the city chambers and a new building for the National Workers' Association (*Arbeitsfront*), and at the other a massive new "People's Hall" (*Volkshalle*) for 12,000 people. Figures and plans seem to have been changed almost at will and without any consideration for the existing infrastructure and the residents involved. Even planning experts in Berlin, not normally known for their modest approach to town planning, were baffled and suggested to Greiser that he might want to consult the German railways first before moving railway stations around.¹⁵ Greiser and his team, however, had already started substantial building, and widespread demolition in inner-city districts

had begun at the end of 1939. New inhabitants from the Reich were tempted into the city, and companies were lured to the East with promises that they would be able to reinvest profits made in the Reich free of taxes in the Warthegau region.¹⁶

The official statistics looked impressive: while the city's overall population decreased, the German minority rose steadily from 80,000 in 1939, to 129,000 in 1942, and to 135,000 in 1943.¹⁷ The percentage of Germans in the wider Warthegau region had increased similarly from 6.6 percent in 1939 to almost 23 percent in 1944.¹⁸ Monthly statistical reports documented Litzmannstadt's radical development in order to illustrate it as a "success" story for local, regional, and national authorities. The reports also reflected tremendous growth—in electricity and gas consumption, in the number of people owning a radio or a car, in the number of people using the trams and saving their money at the Sparkasse bank, and in the number of books in the city library and in their circulation. In April 1942 Litzmannstadt had twelve cinemas with 7,000 seats and monthly audiences of around 335,000.¹⁹ New city guides were needed for this expanding "German" city, and the official *Publikationsstelle Berlin-Dahlem* was quick to commission new publications.²⁰ In 1942 the German UFA film company even produced a feature-length propaganda film entitled *Łódź Turns into Litzmannstadt (Aus Łódź wird Litzmannstadt)* written by Hans F. Wilhelm, to document the radical transformation.²¹ It almost seemed as if the German occupiers wanted to found an entirely new city, a fortress against the "uncivilized hordes in the East," an outpost of German culture.²² The large ghetto toward the north of the city center did not play any part in the planning exercises, although by 1942 it housed almost 250,000 people. Corresponding to the Nazis' fondness for euphemisms, the ghetto was almost exclusively referred to as *Litzmannstadt Nord*, as if it were a suburb like all others.²³

The Arts

From the beginning, the arts played a crucial part in what the Nazis perceived as their cultural "crusade" in the new Litzmannstadt. The exhibition *German Art in the East (Deutsche Kunst im Ostraum)*, which took place from late 1940 to early 1941 in the city's art museum, is just one example of how closely linked art and politics were supposed to be.²⁴ Newly found institutions such as the *Deutsches Volksbildungswerk / Volksbildungsstätte Litzmannstadt* (the Center for Public Education) or the events organized by the *Kreiskulturring*, as well as the municipal office for cultural affairs (*Städtisches Kulturamt*), acted as additional means to create and foster a distinctly German cultural community. Events were

held entirely in German (Polish citizens were not even admitted) and often featured guests from the *Altreich* (Germany's 1939 borders) or international stars. Concerts organized by the *Kreiskulturring* between 1942 and 1944, for example, featured conductors, soloists, and ensembles from Berlin, Hamburg, Vienna, and Rome, and soloists included such internationally renowned stars as the pianist Wilhelm Kempff or the violinist Wolfgang Schneiderhan, and conductors such as Eugen Jochum and Count Hidemaro Konoye from Japan.²⁵ In the summer of 1943, the *Volksbildungsstätte Litzmannstadt* organized approximately ten events per month and offered language classes, lectures, screenings, and concerts. Their work was deemed particularly important, as it promised to bring together Germans who had already lived in Łódź before 1939 and the new arrivals, as Gauleiter Greiser claimed. Mayor Werner Ventzki summed up what German popular education meant during this war. The main goal of the *Volksbildungsarbeit* was "to communicate to all German nationals the knowledge about the national treasures and cultural assets the war was being fought over. The better you know your nation's language, history, and culture, the more you will be steeped in its importance and its historical mission. At the same time you will be able to appreciate that this war is being fought for nothing less than the eternal safeguarding of everything German."²⁶ Also in the summer of 1943, a series of big sporting events raised money for the *Winterhelfswerk* (winter relief organization) with soccer games, children's parties, parachute show jumping, gymnastics, cycling, boxing, and swimming. These events were accompanied by a cultural program as well.²⁷ Overall, the amount of money spent on cultural affairs in general was staggering: Litzmannstadt received its own professional municipal symphony orchestra, as well as a municipal music school and a new dance college attached to the civic theatre. Further plans included a Museum of Natural Science, a Museum of Anthropology, a Museum for Science and the Arts, and a number of art galleries.²⁸

Before the German occupation, however, and contrary to Nazi claims, Łódź had been anything but a cultural desert. It boasted a rich and multilingual performance tradition with subsidized theatres, variety playhouses, and circuses featuring performances in Polish, Russian, German, and Hebrew. The city's three main playhouses, *Teatr Miejski*, *Teatr Polski*, and *Teatr Popularny*, produced popular entertainment as well as more challenging fare. The municipal *Teatr Miejski*, for example, staged elaborate productions with professional actors in a repertoire consisting not only of Polish plays but also plays by Shaw, Scribe, Sardou, Shakespeare, Schiller, Galsworthy, Strindberg, Hauptmann, Ibsen, and Gogol.²⁹ For the years 1934, 1935, and 1936 the theatre produced an average of 400 performances annually with rising attendance figures reaching 152,000 in

1936.³⁰ During the 1938–1939 season the *Teatr Miejski* employed two artistic directors, seven directors and producers, nine administrative staff, one dramaturge (*doradca literacki*), and no fewer than fifty-five actors.³¹ This was a major theatre and, judging from its size alone, one that could have rivaled almost any municipal playhouse in Germany.

Despite later Nazi claims to the contrary, the German-speaking minority largely appreciated the work done by the Polish language theatre. For example, on the occasion of the retirement of Kazimierz Wroczyński (who had been the director of the *Teatr Miejski* between 1923 and 1925 and again between 1933 and 1939), the German newspaper *Neue Lodzer Zeitung* on behalf of the German *Verein der Theaterfreunde in Lodz* extended “cordial words of farewell,” stating that “Wroczyński has made a great contribution to Lodz’s theatrical life... Although he suffered a financial fiasco this is not really his fault but is due to the particular situation in Lodz and a general atmosphere which is not conducive to producing great theatrical art.”³² Only three months later, the city was occupied by German forces amid claims it was in desperate need of artistic renewal after years of cultural neglect.

Foundation of the German-Language Municipal Theatre in Łódź

Łódź was not unlike many other conquered cities across Europe where the German occupiers sought to erect their own theatres as a sign of confidence, commitment, and permanence. After a number of guest performances by the ensemble of the Breslau municipal theatre in autumn 1939, the German language *Theater der Stadt Lodsch* opened its doors in January 1940.³³ It was situated in Moltkestraße, off the main thoroughfare *Piotrkowska* in central Łódź, and seated 747 people. The opening production was performed by the German language theatre company of the Baltic city of Reval on January 13, 1940, and it was this company under the direction of Hans Hesse that became Litzmannstadt’s standing theatre ensemble.

So far this account of events suggests a straightforward and planned development that Nazi propagandists were able to use to their advantage. Looking behind the scenes proves more complex. The files reveal that in the weeks and months preceding the opening performance, chaos reigned. Immediately after the German occupation of Łódź, it seemed as if the existing German amateur dramatic society (*Thalia Theater-Verein*) would continue to offer theatrical entertainment. Then, in mid-October, a newspaper article promised an

“immediate re-opening” of a German theatre, but gave no indication as to when this might happen and whether this would be a receiving or a standing theatre. The Breslau company was then invited to give a number of guest performances, and by the end of October a municipal theatre seemed in the offing—but not growing out of the local *Thalia* ensemble. This group, instead, was given no role in the future developments apart from the thankless task of “supplying the new theatre with a substantial audience.” On December 7 the press suddenly announced that a contract with the Reval company under Hans Hesse had been signed, and that (despite the fact that the beginning of the season was as yet unconfirmed) “the artists will be arriving in Łódź tomorrow morning.”³⁴ This abrupt turn of events surprised not only the city’s population, but the regional authorities as well. On December 8, Hesse asked the regional propaganda office in Poznań (Posen) to book hotel accommodations for the whole troupe and announced that rehearsals would start immediately. Vossler, head of the regional propaganda office, had not previously been informed about the arrival of the company and sent a furious telefax to his superiors in the Berlin Propaganda Ministry the next day asking for clarification. Vossler had no idea where the company would be going to perform; he did not even know where to put them up.³⁵ Łódź’s new cultural dawn could hardly have been more chaotic.

After the theatre opened in January 1940, local, regional, and national authorities closely monitored it and were keen to receive notes of successes; of particular concern were repertoire and attendance figures. Hesse constantly reminded the German-speaking population that going to the theatre was an obligation for every good German—most clearly expressed by buying a season ticket. These “reminders,” however, tended to be far from subtle. In fact, potential patrons were almost bullied into fulfilling their “obligation.” After all, it was supposed to be their duty to play their part in the expansion of German culture in the East.³⁶ At the of the 1941–1942 season, for example, the theatre’s management published a special edition of the program notes, which not only contained a review of the season about to conclude, but also featured a preview of the 1942–1943 season in connection with an “invitation” to take out a season ticket.³⁷ Łódź city archives still hold seven issues of this special program note—indicative of its print run, for the entire city administration seems to have been flooded with these flyers—sometimes even several times. The office for cultural affairs exerted substantial pressure on colleagues in other departments by distributing circulars that staff members had to sign.

What is noteworthy in connection with these program notes is that they looked strikingly similar to those of other German theatres at the time. They featured advertisements by local (German) businesses, photos of members of the

ensembles, theatre anecdotes and biographies, dramaturgical pieces concerning particular productions (and largely written by the theatre's chief dramaturge), articles concerning the theatre's history, inserts with the week's repertoire, and, last but not least, a substantial political section. This section featured statements and sometimes whole speeches by leading politicians, as well as photos both of national, regional, and local party representatives. After the opening of the theatre in early 1940 until the beginning of the 1940–1941 season, program notes appeared quite spartan; from September 1940 onward, however, they were much more elaborate and grand both in quantitative and qualitative terms, which seemed only fitting for an important outpost of Germanic culture in the East.³⁸ The programs increasingly reported on the activities of similar stages in annexed and occupied territories and featured articles concerning the activities of theatre companies operating behind the front lines. Throughout Germany at large, the political tone of the programs diminished over the course of the war.³⁹ What remained was an emphasis on the canonical classical literature with many articles on Goethe, Schiller, and Grabbe, among others.

The image of the German artist who is fighting the same war as the German soldier but with different means—an ideal frequently referred to by Hitler and Goebbels and a popular motif in paintings and sculpture—seemed to ring true in the East. It was a message, too, that was constantly hammered home by cultural politicians, practitioners, and party leaders in occupied Eastern Europe. In a special program note published just before the 1940–1941 season, dramaturge Hanns Merck claimed that even in wartime, theatre performed a special role in Germany.⁴⁰ Actors eagerly followed in the footsteps of the soldiers and moved into the captured emplacements. Their mission was not an entirely artistic one anymore but had become political. These artists were charged to foster the German national spirit in the conquered territories. In Łódź, Merck went on to claim, “in this Polish Manchester, hitherto a dirty city of obtrusive Jewish character, they are faced with particular circumstances.” The theatre, therefore, was not only meant to be an expression of the superior German culture that had rightfully occupied Eastern Europe; it was also charged with uplifting, encouraging, and equipping the German minority population with the necessary ammunition to continue a different struggle once the army had moved on. The German minority was also asked to educate those Germans moving to Łódź, for example from the Baltic, who had not been exposed to German culture before. It was, therefore, not only the theatre, which had a particular political function to fulfil in Łódź, but also its audience.

Repertoire, Audiences, Funding

To successfully play its role in the propaganda war, the choice of a heroic, Germanic, and uplifting repertoire was crucial. Mayor Schiffer demanded that “the German theatre in Lodsch must develop into a fortress of German spirit and German culture here in the east of the Reich.” The press was equally ecstatic—and equally demanding: “It is a matter of course for a German theatre, which has to fulfil such an important cultural mission, that only those dramatic works can be considered which are products of a truly German mind.” Hesse was happy to oblige, and claimed that the theatre had a central role to play in the Germanification of Łódź: “The actors and their artistic director had to defeat the Polish-Jewish heritage first before being able to approach the world of poetry. They carried out pioneering work, like everyone else who arrived at Łódź in 1939, in order to turn a city with a substantial German population in former central Poland into a truly German city.”⁴¹ The missionary function of the theatre seemed best served by focusing on the classical dramatic canon. Not surprisingly, the theatre produced Shakespeare’s dramas (*Measure for Measure*, *As You Like It*, *Hamlet* [as late as November 1943]) as well as works by Friedrich Schiller (*The Robbers*, *Wallenstein’s Camp*, *Don Carlos*), Heinrich von Kleist (*The Broken Jug*), Gotthold Ephraim Lessing (*Emilia Galotti*), and Friedrich Hebbel (*Maria Magdalena*). The theatre performed Johann Wolfgang von Goethe’s epic *Faust I* in a production staged seven times in ten days in late April and early May 1943.⁴² Apart from the classics, the theatre also incorporated nationalistic and *völkisch* plays into its repertoire—plays that were particularly supported by the Propaganda Ministry. In May 1942 the theatre produced Eberhard Wolfgang Möllers’s *Das Opfer* (*The Victim*), a production accompanied by intense media coverage,⁴³ as well as Hermann Burté’s *Katte* and Felix Dhünen’s *Uta von Naumburg*.

In a typical week, April 12–19, 1942, the theatre offered fourteen productions at its two venues, the main house theatre and the studio. Apart from a dance production by its own ballet ensemble (which was performed three times during this week), the theatre offered Shakespeare’s *Measure for Measure* (four performances), three contemporary comedies by Waldemar Frank, Heinz Steguweit, and Felix Lützkendorf (with four performances between them), and two operettas (three performances)⁴⁴—a respectable showing, one might think. The theatre seemed to take its cultural mission seriously. In October 1943, the theatre premiered Emmerich Nuß’s comedy *Dissonances*. Hesse faxed the Leipzig publishers of this play afterward to relay the happy news that it had been a huge success and “received 28 curtain calls at the end.” As late as November 1943 the theatre offered a “week of premieres” with four different plays.⁴⁵

In addition to the “correct” choice of repertoire, audience figures were of vital importance. The popular success of its theatre was crucial for the Nazi regime, and records in attendance figures were constantly used in its propaganda. Failing to attract large audiences would not only have contradicted claims of a true “national theatre” (*Volkstheater*), but would also have compared unfavorably to the years prior to the German occupation when, according to the Nazi propaganda, audiences had been pitiful. To attract the desired record attendances, the theatre offered a mix of individually sold tickets, season tickets, block bookings, and reductions for particular groups (members of the armed forces were admitted at prices reduced by 30 or 40 percent). Block bookings were offered to organizations such as *Kraft durch Freude* (*Strength through Joy*—which offered eight different schemes of block bookings to its members), the police force, the city administration, the postal service, the job center, the state railway, the Hitler Youth and other party organizations, and national offices such as the customs authority, the board of trade, and the revenue office. There were also closed performances for injured soldiers and for schools.⁴⁶ The system of reductions and concessions was so widespread, in fact, that the ordinary full ticket prices, which ranged from Reichsmark (RM) 0.70 to RM 4.50, were hardly ever paid by anyone. But income, even profit, seemed a secondary concern in this system; more important was the fact that the theatre managed to draw in the crowds.

Crucially for the city’s cultural ambitions, theatre audiences did indeed rise. Between 1941 and 1942 the increase was close to 30 percent. Utilization reached 80 percent, and at closed performances even over 90 percent.⁴⁷ In the first half of 1942 the theatre seemed to have turned a corner with monthly audiences averaging 25,000. The newly opened studio (*Kammerspiele*, seating capacity of 479), which unashamedly and almost exclusively concentrated on light-hearted fare, completed an increasingly successful picture for the Nazi propaganda—at least in terms of quantity. During the first half of 1942 the studio presented an average of twelve shows per month, attracting some 5,000 patrons.⁴⁸ In the same season, the theatre management introduced operetta to its portfolio, which further increased its popularity. In early 1942 operetta performances achieved ticket sales of 93 percent,⁴⁹ and in late 1942 the theatre was operating at near capacity. In October, it staged fifty-six performances, in December sixty-four, and it reached monthly audiences of up to 35,000.⁵⁰ Although slightly lower, audience figures in late 1943 generally held up with utilizations of well over 80 percent.⁵¹ Overall, audiences rose from 190,000 in 1940–1941 to almost 300,000 in the last two seasons, and the number of performances went up from 330 to 572 in the same timeframe.⁵²

Without its elaborate system of closed performances and concessions, however, the theatre would never have attracted these record numbers. For example, during February 1941 (a typical month) the theatre offered one classical drama, one contemporary drama, and five comedies. Out of thirty-one performances, twenty were reserved as closed performances (eight of which were for KdF [*Kraft durch Freude*: “Strength through Joy”], but also for the armed forces, SA [*Sturmabteilung*: “Storm Troopers”], Hitler Youth, police, the women’s association [*Frauenschutzbund*], and city administration). Out of overall audiences of 17,500, closed performances accounted for 13,500.⁵³

For the purpose of securing these audiences, the new theatre was generously funded out of municipal, regional, and national funds. The municipal subsidy rose substantially from RM 562,000 in 1941 to RM 831,000 in 1942. Moreover, Litzmannstadt received substantial sums from the central government. This was unusual, as most civic theatres in Germany were almost exclusively subsidized out of municipal pots. In fact, this decentralization was a hallmark of the German arts funding system. The theatres in the “German east” were different, though. Here, it was not only city councils that paid substantial amounts of money but also regional and national authorities. Already in late January 1940, for example, Mayor Schiffer asked the Propaganda Ministry for almost RM 60,000 as a contribution toward the costs of running the theatre. And he did not ask for the money politely—he demanded it (“transfer the money as soon as possible”). It seems that the city’s officials knew full well that they were in a strong position when it came to financial support from Berlin, due in particular to Litzmannstadt’s status as a “beacon” of German culture in the East—a model city. By March 1940 the theatre’s renovation had already cost RM 105,000 (paid for by the city) and another RM 230,000 was needed from elsewhere. Schiffer declared that for 1940/41 the overall theatre budget was going to be RM 600,000, and that he hoped ministry and region (*Gau*) would contribute RM 200,000 each.⁵⁴ In September 1940 Schiffer asked for a subsidy of RM 250,000 from the Propaganda Ministry, a sum of previously unheard of proportions, and less than a month later he received the notification that the ministry was prepared to pay the full amount.⁵⁵ Still, the hole in the theatre’s budget grew. Between September 1940 and late March 1941 the theatre was in the red by a staggering RM 553,000. Undeterred, city officials kept asking for more. For 1942 they wanted an increase in national subsidies of 100 percent, RM 400,000 instead of the already generous RM 200,000 they had received the year previously. Additionally, they asked for RM 300,000 for a new theatre building. The head of the Reich theatre chamber within the Propaganda Ministry, Rainer Schlösser, cautioned Reich Minister of Propaganda Joseph Goebbels against these enormous

sums, and the annual subsidy remained at RM 200,000, but Goebbels agreed to contribute RM 150,000 from a “special fund” to the building costs. This means that the theatre in Litzmannstadt in 1942 received a phenomenal RM 350,000 in Reich subsidies. The other theatres in the region were equally pampered. The main theatre in Poznań (the *Gautheater Posen*) in 1941 received RM 400,000, and the traveling ensemble of the *Landesbühne Gau Wartheland* was in receipt of RM 50,000. It may not be surprising that Litzmannstadt’s administration got carried away. In December 1942 Mayor Ventzki wrote to ask for a Reich subsidy of RM 450,000 for 1943. These sums proved too much for the Propaganda Ministry, who paid RM 170,000 in 1943—still a substantial sum, however.⁵⁶

Parallel to rising subsidies for the current theatre operation, the city planned for a brand new theatre building, particularly as the existing theatre building was inadequate for the staging of grand opera. A site was acquired in 1941, the project reached the planning stage at the end of that year, and construction seems to have started soon after that.⁵⁷ The new theatre apparently made use of an older structure (in the vicinity of the existing playhouse on Moltke street). The new building was never finished, however; only the shell construction was finished in 1943. However, on July 1, 1943, work on the site was halted as the building project was no longer deemed of strategic importance for the duration of the war.⁵⁸

In terms of personnel, the theatre was equally spoiled, and its staffing numbers were quickly brought up to a level comparable to those in theatres in any large German city. At the beginning of the 1940–1941 season, the company consisted of twenty-nine actors, one artistic director, one scene designer, two dramaturges, three directors, one conductor, one costume designer, and two administrative staff members. At the end of the following season, in July 1942, the theatre’s size had increased substantially. At a time when many German theatres had to cut down in size and save resources in view of the war effort, the Litzmannstadt theatre continued to grow. Management and senior artistic staff comprised sixteen people, and in addition there were another thirteen staff members in administration, forty-eight actors, twenty singers in the theatre’s own professional chorus, fourteen dancers plus an associated dance school, and nine technical staff members.⁵⁹ In August 1940 Litzmannstadt received its own fully funded municipal orchestra for the first time in the city’s history—another propaganda coup for the regime, or so it seemed, particularly as the Nazis consistently claimed that the city’s musical life during the 1930s had been characterized by “popular music of Jewish-Polish-American persuasion.”⁶⁰ The new musical director, Adolf Bautze, now headed a professional orchestra of fifty-two (which soon afterward reached its full capacity of eighty-five musicians), playing

a series of symphony concerts alongside the musical provision for the theatre. The orchestra, too, was in receipt of municipal as well as Reich subsidies that rose to RM 100,000 in 1943.⁶¹ In 1944—after opera had been added to the theatre’s repertoire—the theatre still employed twenty-three actors, fifteen opera soloists, thirty chorus members, eleven dancers, plus a municipal orchestra of fifty musicians, three conductors, one pianist, and two chorus coaches.⁶² In fact, the theatre’s size compared favorably to some of the more established municipal theatres, and toward the end of the war it outstripped many of them.⁶³

Salaries, too, compared favorably to other regional German theatres—and they rose exponentially within a very short period of time. When the theatre opened in January 1940, the average monthly salary of the actors was RM 350.⁶⁴ Half a year later the average salary had risen to almost RM 500,⁶⁵ while during the 1941–1942 season the average salary for an actor had risen to RM 600, and some of the soloists in the musical theatre received up to RM 1,400.⁶⁶ On top of this increase, every employee received allowances and extra payments (including a so-called “development bonus”), which could amount to up to RM 100 extra per month.⁶⁷ At the Westphalian theatre of Bielefeld, for example, a typical monthly salary for an actor at the same time was just RM 365, half of what their colleagues in Litzmannstadt earned.⁶⁸ Overall salary costs for actors, singers, and musicians rocketed from RM 200,000 in 1940 to RM 666,000 in 1942—more than some Reich theatres received as their total annual subsidy.⁶⁹

However, rising subsidies did not go unnoticed in the general public, particularly in a city where living conditions were significantly below the national average and money was desperately needed to improve infrastructure, quality of housing, and local amenities. As if to counter the criticism, the theatre’s program notes featured an article by A. E. Frauenfeld, who justified municipal expenditure on theatres.⁷⁰ Frauenfeld claimed that having a publicly funded civic theatre was a major asset for any city and had a substantial economic impact. To illustrate the value he proposed to look at a hypothetical case—a municipal theatre in a city of 100,000, with a capacity of 1,000, 150 staff, and a budget of RM 500,000, of which “between a third and half would be paid by the city as subsidies.” Assuming a realization of 70 percent (which seemed realistic) he arrived at annual audiences of 300,000—a substantial figure apparently intended to convince even the staunchest Philistine of the importance of a publicly funded theatre. Even aside from the fact that this model did not discuss the repertoire (as we have seen, a crucial issue in Litzmannstadt) there are two problems with it: first, the sum of RM 500,000 was quickly outstripped as funding needs rocketed out of control, and second, the theatre was never able to make up 50 percent (or even 30 percent) of its financial needs itself; the income generated by

the box office was significantly lower. Therefore, both civic and national funding was substantially higher.

Despite the changing fortunes for Nazi Germany as the war went on and the front drew nearer, Litzmannstadt's theatre continued to be in receipt of substantial subsidies and performed its propagandistic role. Looking ahead to the 1943–1944 season, Hesse boasted about the successful *Faust* production mentioned above, which would compare favorably to the best the big Reich theatres had to offer.⁷¹ In addition he planned three world premieres for the 1943–1944 season, for which a poster was designed to attract season ticket holders.⁷²

Overall, the statistics are staggering. In spring and early summer 1944 the studio presented an average of twenty shows and attracted monthly attendances of 10,000—double what they were two years prior. In June 1944, the municipal theatre still staged twenty-five performances that attracted some 15,000 people.⁷³ The cultural propaganda seemed to have worked, and the Nazis had made their theatre a success.

Problems and Inconsistencies

Despite the grand proclamations, however, a closer look particularly at the theatre's early period reveals that it only achieved "a fraction of what it had hoped and planned for."⁷⁴ It was clear that despite the bold announcements, the theatre's first few months had not fulfilled the high expectations. As if to buoy himself and his colleagues, dramaturge Hanns Merck announced that at least they had made a start—only a small consolation given the function this playhouse was meant to fulfill both to educate the German population and to stand as a bastion of German culture in the East. At the beginning and well into summer 1940, audiences had been dismal. After a bleak January monthly audiences peaked at 17,000 in February but after that fell consistently to below 9,000 in June.⁷⁵ This was a disaster, both in terms of their own expectations but also, more importantly, in comparison to audiences attracted by the former Polish municipal theatre. The *Teatr Miejski* had achieved almost three times these figures in the preceding year.⁷⁶

Even more problematic in relation to the theatre's grandiose claims was the reality in terms of its repertoire. Contrary to expectations of a high art program dominated by classical drama and serious political plays in order to cultivate the city and educate its population, the fare actually produced at Litzmannstadt was quite pedestrian. As the theatre was under close scrutiny by party officials and cultural politicians, its dramaturge was at pains to justify its mundane

repertoire: “In Litzmannstadt it is important to reach out to audiences, who are partly still negotiating their way in a new environment, which so far has been largely alien to German theatre. [The theatre, therefore,] has to offer a mixed fare, and one which is palatable to people of every age, every class; personnel who are only temporarily stationed here and people who have moved here from all areas of the Greater German Empire.”⁷⁷ Merck’s comments are a desperate attempt to defend a choice of program that increasingly relied on light entertainment and avoided the classical canon as too heavy. In April 1942, for example, the *völkisch* drama *Uta von Naumburg* by Felix Dhünen sold only 362 tickets, and Shakespeare’s *Measure for Measure* attracted only 101 patrons its first night.⁷⁸ The failure of the *völkisch* repertoire in particular hurt cultural politicians. Almost none of the officially celebrated new political drama was produced in Litzmannstadt—no plays by the German playwrights Hanns Johst (the Nazi Poet Laureate), Siegmund Graff, Ernst Bacmeister, Curt Langenbeck, Paul Ernst, or Hans Bethge.⁷⁹ Even worse was the dichotomy between high demands and actual output concerning the studio theatre, which, according to announcements by the theatre management on the occasion of its opening, was envisaged to stage the classics in particular.⁸⁰ This classical canon, however, was nowhere to be found on the studio’s stages.

Local commentators were shocked. The theatre critic of the *Litzmannstädter Zeitung*, Gustav Röttger, did not buy Merck’s desperate attempts to sell the focus on entertainment as part of the “education process” in a largely uncivilized Eastern city. “Endowed with substantial sums out of municipal pockets the theatre has become everyone’s friend due to some good achievements. In future, the goal will be, above all, to look after the dramatic ensemble and repertoire. It has to become a bulwark of the German character, a site of great art, which, far exposed in the East, can never only entertain, but must become presentable and prestigious in a way which it is not quite at the moment.”⁸¹ Not surprisingly, city officials were not amused, either, and in their voluminous 1943 administrative report reminded everyone of the theatre’s function: “Since Schiller and Richard Wagner we appreciate the importance of the theatre as a national place of education and culture. In the *Litzmannstadt* region good theatre more than anything is called upon to fulfil this function and to become the enunciator of German art and spirit.”⁸² The report made it clear that the theatre must not become a “place of sheer amusement or superficial interests.” And then, at the end of this long preamble the report stated that Litzmannstadt’s theatre “on the whole” moved “in the right direction”—hardly a ringing endorsement.⁸³

The reasons for the meager attendance at productions of classical drama were manifold, but their poor quality seems to have been one of the prime

causes. Concerning the production of Goethe's *Urfaust*, for example, the press stated that the actors "tried very hard to give their best," which when it comes to press reviews in Nazi Germany is pretty close to calling it a failure.⁸⁴ And despite Shakespeare plays being regular features in the repertoire, their performances must have been dismal. City officials arrived at the conclusion that "for Shakespeare the time has not yet come in Litzmannstadt"—a damning verdict.⁸⁵ But it was not only the classical canon that proved problematic. Even allegedly less demanding pieces, for example, Max Halbe's *Strom* (*Stream*), failed—and even under the direction of Hesse himself. The actors had performed "as best they could" and excelled in those parts that "did not require too much intellectual depth."⁸⁶ Commentators criticized the theatre for avoiding the serious contemporary repertoire and asserted that—contrary to claims by the theatre management—Litzmannstadt audiences did not "necessarily demand lightweight plays."⁸⁷

Issues of artistic standards and quality also concerned the municipal orchestra. It quickly dawned on local cultural politicians that large subsidies did not necessarily translate into great performances. The official 1943 administrative report, for example, certified the orchestra's "diligent work." Musical director Bautze, too, did not seem to have been a successful choice, and several official reports mention that he had only conducted choirs before.⁸⁸ Not surprisingly, the theatre's first attempts at opera during the 1942–1943 season attracted a lukewarm reception. Puccini's *Tosca* was "noteworthy" and as an experiment "quite successful."⁸⁹

Concerning ticket sales, too, the situation was not as rosy as the propaganda made people believe, particularly in the early years. The weekly balance sheets the theatre had to provide the city administration (and which were not published) are a useful indicator to gauge the popular success of the theatre. The theatre's biggest client in terms of ticket sales was *Kraft durch Freude* (KdF; in English, Strength through Joy), the leisure-time organization that booked whole performances for their members. In a typical week in May 1940, for example, almost half of the weekly takings of RM 1,400 were guaranteed by KdF (RM 600). The theatre, however, faced two problems in connection with this system of block bookings. First, this system put organizations such as KdF in a very strong bargaining position. For example, KdF hardly ever paid their dues on time; in fact they regularly paid only a fraction of what they owed the theatre. Second, the apparent success with large organizations and block bookings disguised that fact that regular box office takings were often abysmal. During the week mentioned above, ticket sales were sometimes as little as RM 150 for an evening performance.⁹⁰

The precarious financial situation did not go unnoticed. As late as February 1944 the National Accounting Office (*Rechnungshof*) carried out an audit to check the proper deployment of national subsidies.⁹¹ The detailed report raised a number of issues and questioned the way the city had recorded income and expenditure in its books; it even considered asking for the repayment of some of these subsidies. The Accounting Office criticized inflated salaries both at the theatre and the orchestra and particularly in view of the immense pressures on the city's finances and the increasing deficits in the theatre's budget. Indeed, some of the honoraria must have raised a few eyebrows among the wider public had they been known. A Berlin guest conductor, for example, who stayed three weeks in Litzmannstadt to conduct *Tosca* and who was asked to write a report to assess whether local audiences were "ready" for grand opera, received the princely sum of RM 4,000, almost three times the monthly salary of Hans Hesse. Although musical director Bautze headed the symphony orchestra, he did not conduct the orchestra when it played in the theatre even though this was common practice at other venues. Instead, the city appointed an additional conductor to conduct musical theatre, although Bautze was "hardly overworked."⁹² The orchestra musicians, too, received extra payments on top of their normal salary—something that according to the Accounting Office was not covered by existing employment law. These extra payments were all the more surprising since the orchestra as a whole was hardly on sound financial footing. In 1940, for example, the orchestra's expenditures of RM 246,100 stood in sharp contrast to its box office gross, which only amounted to a meager RM 18,300—in other words, it only managed to recoup 7 percent of the subsidies it received.⁹³ Interestingly, this discrepancy occurred despite the fact that the orchestra offered a popular program, which avoided too many "difficult" contemporary pieces and should have drawn large crowds. Indeed, the Accounting Office criticized the orchestra's programming, as this did not feature the required number of contemporary orchestral works and largely played it safe. Instead of the required share of 33 percent, *Litzmannstadt's* orchestra only managed 15 percent. In its report, the National Accounting Office concluded that some key conditions for the national subsidy had not been met and that the municipal authorities should be asked to pay back some of the money, or indeed all of it—a devastating blow to the ambitions of Litzmannstadt's cultural politicians.

Conclusion

To establish a German-speaking theatre in Litzmannstadt was a matter of the highest priority for the German authorities in the Warthegau and beyond. In his “model Gau,” Gauleiter Greiser regarded the performing arts as an important “weapon in ethnic struggle,” especially highbrow German culture, which he saw as infinitely superior to “gauche Polish entertainment.”⁹⁴ The sums pumped into Litzmannstadt’s theatre both by the municipal authorities and central government were truly astounding. Until late 1944, the theatre was deemed to be operating at the front line of an aggressive Germanification of the city and the wider region. In this respect the demands put on the theatre were almost impossible to achieve. On the one hand, cultural politicians expected a program of classics as well as *völkisch* and nationalistic drama, for which a mass audience proved difficult to find. Two substantial theatre spaces with 479 and 755 seats, respectively, needed to be filled in a city whose German-speaking population even by 1944 was still relatively small. Spaces, too, were far from ideal, with limited views of the stage from some seats, poor heating and drafts, basic performance conditions, and a simple stage technology. On the other hand, the presentation of comedies and farces, which did attract larger audiences, hardly related to political demands. In any case, the municipal authorities closely monitored audience figures, and the city’s statistical office was keen to receive monthly balance sheets. It complained if these did not arrive on time and made sure the calculations added up. In the end, and despite the vast amounts of money poured into the venture, the playhouse fell into oblivion after the city’s liberation in early 1945. The theatre and its audience had simply gone, and no traces were left. The Polish majority reclaimed and once again dominated the city’s culture.⁹⁵ The Nazis had clearly failed in their cultural and geopolitical ambitions in Litzmannstadt, despite their reporting to the contrary, and the theatre could be seen as exemplifying this fiasco.

However, concluding on this note of failure is insufficient, as it would mask the real horror. The fact that Litzmannstadt’s theatre entertained large audiences with a simple repertoire at bargain prices illustrates the validity of Hannah Arendt’s dictum of the “banality of evil.”⁹⁶ Audiences including SS personnel, *Wehrmacht* servicemen, police and Gestapo staff, members of the ghetto administration, and other people directly involved in the Holocaust enjoyed light entertainment, civilized comedies, and Viennese operetta. They appreciated informative program notes that avoided serious political issues and instead presented theatrical anecdotes, production photos, and inconspicuous adverts for local businesses. The contrast between civilized entertainment and genocide

could hardly be starker, yet in Litzmannstadt culture and Holocaust coexisted in close proximity, geographically and ideologically.⁹⁷ The grand opening of a new dancing school on September 16, 1942, for example, took place only days after the infamous *Gehsperre Aktion*, during which 12,000 Jews (and in particular children, the elderly, and the infirm) were sent to their deaths in the extermination camp at Chelmno. And in February 1943 Litzmannstadt's municipal theatre presented Ino Wimmer's *Litzmannstädter Bilderbogen* (*A Picture Book from Litzmannstadt*) under the title *Bitte, alles einsteigen!* (*All on Board, Please*) with a tram as a prominent feature in the production.⁹⁸ The link to the deportations from Łódź's Radogast (Radogoszcz) train station must have been obvious to the audiences; maybe the intention of this humorous revue was precisely to make light of the connection. The theatre's artistic director proudly announced in summer 1943 that this show, which came across "fresh with local color," had been performed twenty-five times in the studio between February and the close of the season in June.⁹⁹ More research is needed in this area, not least to question a discourse that continues to struggle with Arendt's claim. Suzanne Marchand in a 1998 review article, for example, asked whether arts and culture under the Nazis were "banality or barbarism."¹⁰⁰ Such approaches establish a problematic dichotomy and fail to grasp the situation in places like Litzmannstadt where the banal can hardly be separated from the barbaric.

Notes

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2. William Abbey and Katharina Havekamp, "Nazi Performances in the Occupied Territories: The German Theatre in Lille," in *Theatre under the Nazis*, ed. John London (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), 262–63.
3. *Gauleiter* Arthur Greiser envisaged a total transformation of the Warthegau's "infrastructure, architecture, landscape, and public memory" to make it German (Catherine Epstein, *Model Nazi: Arthur Greiser and the Occupation of Western Poland* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010], 231).
4. Mayor Schiffer on the opening night of the German theatre on January 13, 1940

- (Archiwum Państwowe w Łodzi, Zbiór Teatraliów Łódzkich 21/58, Programy przedstawień teatralnych teatrów łódzkich z okresu okupacji [1940–1943]), 6.
5. Archiwum Państwowe w Łodzi, Zbiór Teatraliów Łódzkich 21/58, Programy przedstawień teatralnych teatrów łódzkich z okresu okupacji [1940–1943], 6, 23.
 6. Małgorzata Leyko's article on Łódź theatre during the Second World War is the only publication on the topic so far, although she does not interpret the theatre in its wider context (Małgorzata Leyko, "Das deutsche Theater in Lodz in den Jahren 1939–1944," in *Polen und Europa. Deutschsprachiges Theater in Polen und deutsches Minderheitentheater in Europa*, ed. Horst Fassel, Małgorzata Leyko, and Paul S. Ulrich [Łódź/Tübingen: University of Lodz Press, 2005], 123–147). Of all the studies of theatre under the Nazis, only Bogusław Drewniak, *Das Theater im NS-Staat. Szenarium deutscher Zeitgeschichte 1933–1945* (Düsseldorf: Droste, 1983) and Hans Daiber, *Schaufenster der Diktatur. Theater im Machtbereich Hitlers* (Stuttgart: Neske, 1995) deal with theatre in occupied territories, but they only mention Łódź in passing—if at all.
 7. Even though the demographic mix of Łódź was constantly shifting, the majority of its citizens during the mid-nineteenth century were Germans or people of German origin. In 1839, for example, 80 percent of the population was German, and by 1897 the figure still stood at 40 percent. After the First World War the German population steadily declined.
 8. Friedrich Uebelhoer, "Zum Geleit," *Theater zu Litzmannstadt. Spielzeit 1940/41, programme note no. 1, 2*.
 9. See Archiwum Państwowe w Łodzi, Akta Miasta Łodzi 28510, 1.
 10. The curfew for Polish citizens began at 9 p.m. and lasted until 5 a.m. A German newspaper article applauded: "From 9 p.m. Litzmannstadt is reserved for the Germans!" and its author promised with similar enthusiasm that the ghetto would soon be history. Instead, "in a little while the same tram will travel through well-presented beautiful squares, and nothing will remain of the Getto apart from the memory, some old photographs" (*Litzmannstädter Zeitung*, February 26, 1941).
 11. See BArch R55/20389, 26 (letter by Stadtkommissar Schiffer to the propaganda ministry dated February 16, 1940). After the First World War only 7 percent of Łódź's population was German (see Karolina Prykowska-Michalak, "Die deutsche Diletantenbühne in Lodz im 20. Jahrhundert," in Fassel, Leyko, and Ulrich, *Polen und Europa*, 114).
 12. A detailed 250-page administrative report published in 1943 stressed the "enormous efforts" of the occupiers to establish the arts in an "uncultured" city. The first task was to "eliminate" all the "alien, in particular all Jewish influences" (*Verwaltungsbericht der Stadt Litzmannstadt 1939–42*, Archiwum Państwowe w Łodzi, Akta Miasta Łodzi 28595, 165).
 13. The German-language newspaper had difficulty keeping up with all the name changes. Originally named *Freie Presse*, it changed its name to *Deutsche Lodzer Zeitung*, then *Lodzer Zeitung*, *Lodscher Zeitung*, and finally *Litzmannstädter Zeitung* from May 1940.
 14. The planners stated that on average 5.8 people lived in a single room, and that most flats only had one bedroom. In large parts of the city there was no running water and no sewage (see BArch, R4606/3366).
 15. See *ibid.*
 16. *Litzmannstädter Zeitung*, February 26, 1941.
 17. The overall population had decreased to 481,000 in 1943, of which an impressive 28

- percent were now German (see *Verwaltungsbericht*, Archiwum Państwowe w Łodzi, Akta Miasta Łodzi 28595, 54).
18. See Epstein, *Model Nazi*, 192.
 19. The number of people owning a radio set rose from 19,300 in January 1941 to 27,500 a year later. Car ownership rose from 764 in January 1941 to 1,161 a year later. The library's stock increased from 18,100 books in May 1941 to 34,100 a year later, and the number of its patrons jumped from 8,000 to 15,600 (see Archiwum Państwowe w Łodzi, Akta Miasta Łodzi 28961, 89, 98, 144, 168).
 20. See BArch, R153/300, BArch, R153/630.
 21. The film, which even contained a few scenes from the Ghetto, was finished in 1944 and was meant to enter cinemas in autumn that year.
 22. The progress of the "Germanification" of city and region was closely monitored by the authorities and summarized in regular reports (*Volkspolitische Lageberichte*) (see Archiwum Państwowe w Łodzi, Akta Miasta Łodzi 31772).
 23. It was not until June 1940 that the *Litzmannstädter Zeitung* published a detailed article about the ghetto. Under the heading "250,000 Jews govern themselves" (June 9, 1940), the newspaper produced a long article which compared the ghetto's inhabitants to the "parasitic plant ivy...which entwines around the oak tree [but] is destined to die." The paper assured its readers that the founding of the ghetto was "only a temporary interim solution on the way to the final settlement of the Jewish question." It concluded, "We are convinced, however, that in contrast to the ivy the fate of the Jew is that he is unable to die in a beautiful and dignified way."
 24. See Archiwum Państwowe w Łodzi, Zbiór Teatraliów Łódzkich, 21/57, Repertuary przedstawień teatralnych teatrów łódzkich z okresu okupacji [1940–1945], 1. See also *Litzmannstädter Zeitung*, January 6, 1941, and several other articles concerning this particular exhibition over the next few days and weeks. There were a number of similar exhibitions over the following years.
 25. See Archiwum Państwowe w Łodzi, Zbiór Teatraliów Łódzkich, 21/55. Afisze programowe koncertów z okresu okupacji niemieckiej/Litzmannstadt 1942–44, 1–2, 12.
 26. Quote from the mayor's preface to the forty-page "summer schedule" of the *Volksbildungsstätte Litzmannstadt* (Archiwum Państwowe w Łodzi, Zbiór Teatraliów Łódzkich, 21/60, Materiały różne—teatry łódzkie z okresu okupacji).
 27. Archiwum Państwowe w Łodzi, Zbiór Teatraliów Łódzkich, 21/55, Afisze programowe koncertów z okresu okupacji niemieckiej/Litzmannstadt 1942–44, 11.
 28. See Archiwum Państwowe w Łodzi, Akta Miasta Łodzi 28595, 166.
 29. See Archiwum Państwowe w Łodzi, Zbiór Teatraliów Łódzkich, 21/46, Recenzje teatralne i wycinki z łódzkiej prasy polskojęzycznej, 71. See pictures of productions, program notes, and press cuttings throughout this file. See also Archiwum Państwowe w Łodzi, Zbiór Teatraliów Łódzkich, 21/20, Teatry miejskie w Łodzi, Repertuary przedstawień teatralnych sezonu 1938/39.
 30. Archiwum Państwowe w Łodzi, Akta Miasta Łodzi 29056, 16a, 16b, 18.
 31. See Archiwum Państwowe w Łodzi, Zbiór Teatraliów Łódzkich, 21/33, Łódzkie Teatry Miejskie, Wydawnictwo Łódzkich Teatrów Miejskich 1937–1939.
 32. Article published on June 2, 1939 (Archiwum Państwowe w Łodzi, Zbiór Teatraliów Łódzkich, 21/46, Recenzje teatralne i wycinki z łódzkiej prasy polskojęzycznej, 125). The mutual respect between the German and the Polish theatre in Łódź went back further.

In autumn 1911 the German-speaking *Thalia-Theater* held a charity performance in aid of Polish actors who had suffered from their theatre's destruction by fire earlier that year. There was also a considerable crossover of audiences, including a significant number of Jewish patrons at the *Thalia-Theater* (see Artur Peřka, "Deutsches Theater in der Dreivölklerstadt Łódź—die Direktion Adolf Kleins am Thalia-Theater [1909–1914]," Fassel/Leyko/Ulrich, *Polen und Europa*, 78).

33. See *Litzmannstädter Zeitung*, October 17, 1939.
34. See *Litzmannstädter Zeitung*, October 14, October 29, and December 7, 1939.
35. BArch, R55/20389, 263–65.
36. See Archiwum Państwowe w Łodzi, Zbiór Teatraliów Łódzkich, 21/57, Repertuary przedstawień teatralnych teatrów łódzkich z okresu okupacji [1940–1945], 29.
37. For this and the following see Archiwum Państwowe w Łodzi, Zbiór Teatraliów Łódzkich 21/58, Programy przedstawień teatralnych teatrów łódzkich z okresu okupacji [1940–1943], 73.
38. The size of the program notes was only reduced during the 1943–1944 season (Archiwum Państwowe w Łodzi, Zbiór Teatraliów Łódzkich 21/58, Programy przedstawień teatralnych teatrów łódzkich z okresu okupacji [1940–1943], 94–99).
39. See Anselm Heinrich, *Entertainment, Education, Propaganda: Regional Theatres in Germany and Britain between 1918 and 1945* (London: University of Hertfordshire Press / Society for Theatre Research, 2007), 193.
40. Archiwum Państwowe w Łodzi, Zbiór Teatraliów Łódzkich, 21/58, Programy przedstawień teatralnych teatrów łódzkich z okresu okupacji [1940–1943], 2. For the following please compare with this program note, too.
41. *Litzmannstädter Zeitung*, January 14, 1940; Walter Jacobs in *Litzmannstädter Zeitung*, January 15, 1940; *Litzmannstädter Zeitung*, July 25, 1943.
42. Archiwum Państwowe w Łodzi, Zbiór Teatraliów Łódzkich, 21/56, Repertuary przedstawień teatralnych teatrów łódzkich z okresu okupacji [1940–1945].
43. See, for example, program note 20, 1941–1942 season (Archiwum Państwowe w Łodzi, Zbiór Teatraliów Łódzkich 21/58, Programy przedstawień teatralnych teatrów łódzkich z okresu okupacji [1940–1943], 68).
44. Archiwum Państwowe w Łodzi, Zbiór Teatraliów Łódzkich, 21/56, Repertuary przedstawień teatralnych teatrów łódzkich z okresu okupacji [1940–1945].
45. See BArch, R55/20389, 345, 358.
46. Archiwum Państwowe w Łodzi, Zbiór Teatraliów Łódzkich, 21/56, Repertuary przedstawień teatralnych teatrów łódzkich z okresu okupacji [1940–1945].
47. These figures are for January 1942 (see Archiwum Państwowe w Łodzi, Akta Miasta Łodzi 28961, 87). Figures for the following months substantiate this trend (see pp. 125, 156, 169, 206, 236).
48. Archiwum Państwowe w Łodzi, Akta Miasta Łodzi 29056, 51–56, 59–64.
49. Archiwum Państwowe w Łodzi, Akta Miasta Łodzi 28595, 179.
50. See Archiwum Państwowe w Łodzi, Akta Miasta Łodzi 28961, 244, 251, 259. See also Archiwum Państwowe w Łodzi, Akta Miasta Łodzi 29056, 82–101.
51. Archiwum Państwowe w Łodzi, Akta Miasta Łodzi 28961, 264.
52. See Leyko, *Das deutsche Theater in Lodz 1939–1944*, 136.
53. Archiwum Państwowe w Łodzi, Akta Miasta Łodzi 29056, 10.
54. See BArch, R55/20389, 220; BArch, R55/20389, 8; BArch, R55/20389, 14–16.

55. BArch, R55/20389, 43. In the *Altreich*, theatres could apply for financial help from the Propaganda Ministry, too, but these extra payments never reached six-figure sums (see Heinrich, *Entertainment, Propaganda, Education*, 102).
56. BArch, R55/20389, 45, 90, 124, 195. For 1944 the mayor asked for RM 250,000 and again received RM 170,000 from the Ministry (see Heinrich, *Entertainment, Propaganda, Education*, 234).
57. For a detailed budget concerning the building cost see BArch, R55/20389, 223–27.
58. The project used the existing building of a former Polish theatre, which was located on Moltkestr. 94/98 (Archiwum Państwowe w Łodzi, Akta Miasta Łodzi 31602, 217).
59. See last program note of the 1941–1942 season published in July 1942 (Archiwum Państwowe w Łodzi, Zbiór Teatraliów Łódzkich 21/58, Programy przedstawień teatralnych teatrów łódzkich z okresu okupacji [1940–1943], 73).
60. Archiwum Państwowe w Łodzi, Akta Miasta Łodzi 28595, 171.
61. See BArch R55/215, 125.
62. See BArch R55/20389, 219–20.
63. The theatre in the Westphalian city of Hagen, for example, during 1942/43 employed little more than half the number of staff (see Hagen City Archives, Ha1/9272).
64. Archiwum Państwowe w Łodzi, Akta Miasta Łodzi 31601, 2–3.
65. Archiwum Państwowe w Łodzi, Akta Miasta Łodzi 31601, 25.
66. Archiwum Państwowe w Łodzi, Akta Miasta Łodzi 28531, 205–6.
67. Archiwum Państwowe w Łodzi, Akta Miasta Łodzi 31601, 144.
68. See Bielefeld City Archives, Städtische Bühnen und Orchester, no. 1678.
69. BArch R55/20389, 219. See also Archiwum Państwowe w Łodzi, Akta Miasta Łodzi 28531, 216.
70. The article was featured in issue no. 9 of the 1940/41 program notes (see Archiwum Państwowe w Łodzi, Zbiór Teatraliów Łódzkich 21/58, Programy przedstawień teatralnych teatrów łódzkich z okresu okupacji [1940–1943], 35).
71. *Litzmannstädter Zeitung*, July 25, 1943.
72. Archiwum Państwowe w Łodzi, Zbiór Teatraliów Łódzkich, 21/58, Programy przedstawień teatralnych teatrów łódzkich z okresu okupacji [1940–1943], 88.
73. Archiwum Państwowe w Łodzi, Akta Miasta Łodzi 29056, 69–71, 76.
74. Archiwum Państwowe w Łodzi, Zbiór Teatraliów Łódzkich, 21/58, Programy przedstawień teatralnych teatrów łódzkich z okresu okupacji [1940–1943], 2.
75. Archiwum Państwowe w Łodzi, Akta Miasta Łodzi 29056, 25–30.
76. Attendance figures were as follows (rounded): 19,000 for January, 29,000 for February, 30,000 for March, 22,000 for April, 17,000 for May, 22,000 for June, and 19,000 for July (see Archiwum Państwowe w Łodzi, Akta Miasta Łodzi 29056, 46).
77. Archiwum Państwowe w Łodzi, Zbiór Teatraliów Łódzkich, 21/58, Programy przedstawień teatralnych teatrów łódzkich z okresu okupacji [1940–1943], 2. Similarly *Litzmannstädter Zeitung*, March 17, 1940.
78. Archiwum Państwowe w Łodzi, Akta Miasta Łodzi 29056, 51–56.
79. See Leyko, *Das deutsche Theater in Lodz 1939–1944*, 143–44.
80. *Litzmannstädter Zeitung*, January 14, 1942.
81. *Litzmannstädter Zeitung*, March 24, 1940.
82. Archiwum Państwowe w Łodzi, Akta Miasta Łodzi 28595, 176.
83. Archiwum Państwowe w Łodzi, Akta Miasta Łodzi 28595, 177.

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84. *Litzmannstädter Zeitung*, March 24, 1940.
85. Archiwum Państwowe w Łodzi, Akta Miasta Łodzi 28595, 181.
86. *Litzmannstädter Zeitung*, October 7, 1940.
87. *Litzmannstädter Zeitung*, August 20, 1942.
88. Archiwum Państwowe w Łodzi, Akta Miasta Łodzi 28595, 172–74.
89. Archiwum Państwowe w Łodzi, Akta Miasta Łodzi 28595, 180.
90. Archiwum Państwowe w Łodzi, Akta Miasta Łodzi 28531, 217–19 (the week in question was May 3–9, 1940).
91. For this and the following see BArch R55/20389, 213–22. For the Accounting Office's report on the orchestra see BArch R55/215, 124–32.
92. BArch R55/215, 124.
93. See BArch R55/215, 124–28 (also for the following).
94. Epstein, *Model Nazi*, 232, 247.
95. See Leyko, *Das deutsche Theater in Lodz 1939–1944*, 146–47.
96. Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem: Ein Bericht von der Banalität des Bösen*, 3rd ed. (Munich: Pieper, 2008), 56.
97. The theatre was only a few hundred meters away from the ghetto.
98. Archiwum Państwowe w Łodzi, Zbiór Teatrliów Łódzkich, 21/56, Repertuary przedstawień teatralnych teatrów łódzkich z okresu okupacji [1940–1945]. Wimmer was one of the directors in the theatre.
99. *Litzmannstädter Zeitung*, July 25, 1943.
100. Suzanne Marchand, "Nazi Culture: Banality or Barbarism?," *Journal of Modern History* 70 (March 1998): 108–18.