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of Jewish Scouts in Colleville-sur-Orne in August 1931**

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JASPER RIEMANN

PERFORMING INTERNATIONAL JEWISH COMMUNITY IN THE INTERWAR YEARS

The World Camp of Jewish Scouts in Colleville-sur-Orne in August 1931

A year and a half before the Nazi regime came to power in Germany, Jewish youths gathered in celebration at a scout camp in French Normandy, for the World Camp of Jewish Scouts (Camp mondial des éclaireurs juifs)¹. They travelled to the small village Colleville-sur-Orne from places such as Germany, Austria, Belgium, Romania, England, Tunisia and Palestine, although some of those travelling from further afield were probably already in Western Europe before the event. The delegations represented a number of well-known Jewish youth and scout movements. They were responding to the call of the French Jewish Éclaireurs israélites de France (EIF), who had organized the event. For two weeks, the youths spent their time singing, cooking, eating, swimming, touring the area, competing in games, attending religious services, dancing, and debating. Not least, they founded the World Union of Jewish Scouts (Union mondiale des éclaireurs juifs). Prestigious figures visited the camp. Jewish newspapers reported on the event. A professional photographer produced postcards. According to the Camp's brochure, it was the »first official world Jewish scouting event«².

There are some traces of the World Union's existence after 1931, but although the organization did not ultimately fulfil its intended purposes, the events of Colleville nevertheless constitute a promising object of historical research. For a short period in history, the village was transformed into a site of international Jewish cooperation. This study adds a microhistorical narrative and analysis to the literature on internationalism in Europe in the interwar period, shedding light on the performative, spatial and media dimensions of a specific case of transnational community building and activism³. Looking at these dimensions allows us to discern how specific practic-

- 1 This article is based upon Jasper RIEMANN, *The World Camp of Jewish Scouts in Colleville-sur-Orne, France, in August 1931. An Example of International Contacts and Networks of Jewish Youth in the Interwar Years*, master's thesis, Humboldt University Berlin (2021), DOI: 10.18452/25768. The author was awarded the 2022 Franco-German History Prize for Master's Theses by the German Historical Institute Paris.
- 2 Programme of the Camp mondial des éclaireurs juifs, in: Archives of the Alliance Israélite Universelle (AIU), France IM 1.30. All translations by the author.
- 3 On internationalism see for example David BRYDAN, Jessica REINISCH (eds.), *Europe's Internationalists. Rethinking the History of Internationalism*, London, New York, NY 2021 (*Histories of Internationalism*); Glenda SLUGA, Patricia CLAVIN (eds.), *Internationalisms. A Twentieth-Century History*, Cambridge 2017.

es and places were imbued with symbolism that produced collective meaning, and how a new international community was created.

If one were to put a label on this initiative, one could perhaps describe it as an instance of a Jewish version of cultural internationalism, which Akira Iriye has defined as the »fostering of international cooperation through cultural activities across national boundaries«⁴. The camp in Colleville resembles other internationalist projects in that it was driven by both universalist beliefs and strategic deliberations, shaped by tensions between nationalism and internationalism, and marked by ambiguities and limitations⁵. It is distinct because of the contexts of Judaism, Zionism, and scouting, and because of the youth of its protagonists. The study underscores the plurality of internationalist experiences during this period.

This research is based on the premise that we cannot fully grasp wide-ranging historical phenomena like internationalism if we do not look at the activities and agendas of historical actors, their social networks, and the spaces in which they operated. I thus stress the agency of the people involved: the organizational capabilities of Jewish teenagers and students who, far from being passive recipients of the zeitgeist, actively sought and experimented with responses to the pressing issues of their time.

My main argument is that the symbolism of the Camp's architecture, with its media representation and performative activities, created a unique event whose central purpose was to display, stage, and create an experience of Jewish international community. The precise boundaries of this community, however, were disputed and fluid. Tension seemed to emerge out of the question of whether the community perceived itself, and by extension the Jewish people, as a nation, and whether the scouts' primary allegiance should be towards that nation or the nation of which they were citizens as members of a diaspora. These observations suggest that international scout camps – the model for Colleville was the so-called jamborees, world scouting events with thousands of participants – reflected and produced diverse and often ambiguous notions of the world as seen by organizers, scouts, visitors, and commentators⁶. In fact, it was because the EIF had been denied participation at the 1929 jamboree in England that it decided to organize its own »Camp mondial«. The genesis of the camp reveals that for the EIF, Colleville was not just about fun and games, it was also about gaining influence and recognition among both Jewish and non-Jewish scout organizations. The Zionist youth movement Hashomer Hatzair (HH), in particular, emerged as a rival to the EIF, turning Colleville into a struggle by and for Jewish youth.

4 Akira IRIYE, *Cultural Internationalism and World Order*, Baltimore, MD 1997, p. 3.

5 See Martin H. GEYER, Johannes PAULMANN, Introduction: The Mechanics of Internationalism, in: ID. (eds.), *The Mechanics of Internationalism. Culture, Society, and Politics from the 1840s to the First World War*, Oxford 2001 (Studies of the German Historical Institute London), p. 1–25.

6 The »imagined community« was an international one. See Benedict ANDERSON, *Imagined Communities. Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, London 1983. See also Tammy M. Proctor's analysis of the jamboree of 1929: Tammy M. PROCTOR, *Scouts, Guides, and the Fashioning of Empire, 1919–39*, in: Wendy PARKINS (ed.), *Fashioning the Body Politic. Dress, Gender, Citizenship*, Oxford, New York, NY 2002, p. 126–144. On the jamborees see Charles-Édouard HARANG, *Les jamborees en Europe 1920–1995*, in: Gérard CHOLVY (ed.), *Le scoutisme. Un mouvement d'éducation au xx^e siècle*, Montpellier 2002, p. 43–55.

The apparently short-lived history of the World Union of Jewish Scouts founded in Colleville may be explained by external circumstances after the Nazi regime took power in 1933. But the camp in Colleville created the conditions for an experience of community at a time when many Jews in Europe found themselves surrounded by increasingly hostile societies. The sources indicate that this experience had a profound impact on at least some of those who attended the Camp. Some of them later became important figures in the Jewish rescue and resistance activities during the Second World War, which points to the potential of the group that was present in Colleville.

Following the method of microhistory, special attention is paid to the details: how the campsite looked, what the scouts wore, how they lived and what they did day to day⁷. Some collective activities are interpreted as »performances«: symbolic practices that helped shape the international Jewish community in Colleville⁸. Also significant in this process are the production of photographs and postcards as well as the publication of articles in various newspapers, hinting at an interplay in the formation of community between performance on-site and media representation. Finally, I suggest viewing the camp as marked by a state of »liminality«, a term from Victor Turner's theory of ritual processes⁹. It refers to the in-between state in which the scouts found themselves, having left their usual social roles to become part of the new camp community in Colleville.

The bulk of the sources comprise articles in mostly Jewish newspapers from various countries, including France, Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt, Germany, Austria, England and others; brochures, photographs, and protocols from the camp in Colleville; and editions of the newsletter of the EIF. Most of the newspapers were accessed through digitized collections, while most other sources were gathered in the archives of the Mémorial de la Shoah and the Alliance israélite universelle in Paris. Some documents, like the minutes of the Comité directeur and the Comité central of the EIF prior to 1932 or editions of the organization's newsletter »L.E.I.F.« from 1931, could not be found. Two telephone interviews with the son of one camp attendant and an email correspondence with Yoël Sher, former Israeli ambassador, provided much background information. Sher's mother was an important member of the EIF at the time.

These sources allow for a detailed reconstruction of the events in Colleville, which are almost non-existent in the literature about the EIF and Jewish youth organizations¹⁰. These movements emerged in increasing numbers throughout Europe in the

7 See Sigurður G. MAGNÚSSON, István M. SZIJÁRTÓ, *What is Microhistory? Theory and Practice*, London, New York, NY 2013.

8 See Erika FISCHER-LICHTE, *Performativität. Eine Einführung*, Bielefeld 2016 (Edition Kulturwissenschaft, 10).

9 Victor TURNER, *Liminal to Liminoid, in Play, Flow, and Ritual: An Essay in Comparative Symbolology*, in: *Rice University Studies* 60/3 (1974), p. 53–92, HDL: 1911/63159.

10 See *Die jüdische Jugendbewegung. Eine Geschichte von Aufbruch und Erneuerung*, Leipzig 2021 (Schriftenreihe der Bildungsabteilung des Zentralrats der Juden in Deutschland); Yotam HOTAM (ed.), *Deutsch-jüdische Jugendliche im »Zeitalter der Jugend«*, Göttingen 2009 (Formen der Erinnerung, 43); Ulrike PILARCZYK, Ulrike MIETZNER, *Gemeinschaft in Bildern. Jüdische Jugendbewegung und zionistische Erziehungspraxis in Deutschland und Palästina/Israel*, Göttingen 2009 (Hamburger Beiträge zur Geschichte der deutschen Juden, 35); Danielle DELMAIRE, *Les mouvements de jeunesse juifs en France, 1919–1939*, in: Gérard CHOLVY (ed.), *Mouvements*

interwar period. But comparative perspectives or systematic analyses of transnational connections still seem to be rare in the scholarly literature¹¹.

The initiative in Colleville is a reminder of the long history of Jewish actors who crossed borders to cooperate and cultivate shared bonds. This article aims to contribute to the growing body of literature about Jewish internationalism by shedding light on the »mechanics«¹² of Jewish international cooperation in a specific case, and by highlighting a category of actors seemingly underrepresented in the field: Jewish youth and their organizations¹³.

In a first step, I outline the origins of the camp, which reveal the multitude of motivations behind the initiative. In the second part, I discuss the camp's complex reality – the assortment of participants, the photographs, the performances, and the foundation of the World Union of Jewish Scouts. This makes visible the mechanics and ambiguities of the project. In a third step, I ask what impact the camp had, tracing its aftermath.

I. The Genesis of the Camp

During the 1920s, thousands of immigrants, mostly from Eastern Europe, reshuffled the social, linguistic, and political composition of French Jewish communities, while the rise of Zionism and a religious revival gave impetus to increasingly visible discussions about the meaning of Jewish identity in the public sphere. These years also saw an unprecedented growth of youth movements: opportunities for young Jews to educate themselves about Jewish history and culture, debate and socialize with one

de jeunesse. *Chrétiens et juifs: sociabilité juvénile dans un cadre européen 1799–1968*, Paris 1985 (Histoire), p. 313–330; Elkana MARGALIT, Social and Intellectual Origins of the Hashomer Hatzair Youth Movement, 1913–1920, in: Jehuda REINHARZ, Anita SHAPIRA (eds.), *Essential Papers on Zionism*, London 1996 (Essential Papers on Jewish Studies), p. 454–472; Gertjan DESMET, Janiv STAMBERGER, Joodse Jeugdorganisaties in België, in: *Archief- en Bibliotheekwezen in België* 87 (2016), p. 281–311; Magdalena KOZŁOWSKA, How to Become a Young Jewish Socialist Martyr in Interwar Poland: The Tsukunft Youth Movement and Its Politics of Memory, in: *European Journal of Jewish Studies* 15 (2020), p. 104–122, DOI: 10.1163/1872471X-11411100.

11 For a study of the movement Hashomer Hatzair in a European context see Zvi LAMM, *Youth Takes the Lead. The Inception of Jewish Youth Movements in Europe*, transl. by Sionah KRONFELD-HONIG, Givat Haviva 2004.

12 See GEYER, PAULMANN, Introduction (as in n. 5), p. 1–25.

13 On Jewish internationalism, see Abigail GREEN, *Old Networks, New Connections. The Emergence of the Jewish International*, in: EAD., Vincent VIAENE (eds.), *Religious Internationals in the Modern World. Globalization and Faith Communities since 1750*, Basingstoke 2012 (The Palgrave Macmillan Transnational History Series), p. 53–81; Jonathan DEKEL-CHEN, *Activism as Engine. Jewish Internationalism, 1880s–1980s*, in: *ibid.*, p. 269–291; Lisa Moses LEFF, *Sacred Bonds of Solidarity. The Rise of Jewish Internationalism in Nineteenth-Century France*, Stanford, CA 2006 (Stanford Studies in Jewish History and Culture); Nathan A. KURZ, *Jewish Internationalism and Human Rights After the Holocaust*, Cambridge, New York, NY 2020 (Human Rights in History).



Fig. 1. A gathering at the camp in Colleville-sur-Orne in August 1931. The mast with a plaque in the form of a wolf head on top functioned as a marker of the camp. In scouting culture, junior sections were generally called Wolf Cubs (*louveteaux*, in French, as in the EIF). Photograph, postcard produced by R. Delassalle, in: Mémorial de la Shoah, MId_75.



Fig. 2. A view from the campsite towards the Maison de la Mer in Colleville-sur-Orne, August 1931. Photograph, postcard produced by R. Delassalle, in: *Mémorial de la Shoah*, MId_66.



Fig. 3. A view from the campsite towards the beach in Colleville-sur-Orne, August 1931. The tent decorations as seen in this and other photographs feature a mixture of scout, Jewish and Zionist imagery. Photograph, in: *Mémorial de la Shoah*, MI_539.



Fig. 4. A view of the tents on the campsite in Colleville-sur-Orne, August 1931. On the tent roof on the right, »Maccabi« is written in both the Latin and Hebrew alphabets. It was, and continues to be, the name of many Jewish sports and scouting associations, in reference to the ancient Maccabees. Photograph, postcard produced by R. Delassalle, in: Mémorial de la Shoah, MId_76.

another¹⁴. The *Éclaireurs israélites de France*, founded in 1923, stood out because of its nature as a scout organization¹⁵.

Many scout organizations had and still have a few core features: outdoor games and activities, a hierarchical organization with a patrol system wherein older children and adolescents lead younger children, a system of badges earned by undertaking various challenges, the wearing of uniforms, adherence to Scout Law, and rituals like the Scout Promise. Its educational method is meant to develop the physical and mental capacities of the scout's character, and typical values include self-reliance, good citizenship, respect for authority and helping others¹⁶. The educational model was first developed by the British general Robert Baden-Powell. In the 1920s and 30s, scouting spread from Britain to countries all over the globe.

Robert Gamzon (Castor)¹⁷, grandson of a Chief Rabbi of France, Alfred Lévy, is considered the founder of the EIF. In the beginning, EIF leaders adhered to French patriotism and a purely religiously defined Judaism, which was in line with the traditional ideology of Franco-Judaism of the *Consistoire*. However, as the EIF grew from 150 members in 1927 to 1200 in 1930¹⁸, different groups joined the movement – French, immigrant, orthodox, liberal, Zionist. Originally a Parisian affair, the EIF not only incorporated Jewish scouts from Alsace-Lorraine, the other centre of Jewish life in the country alongside the capital. The EIF also opened sections in Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia, and Egypt. Moreover, articles in the EIF's newsletter reflect an increasing interest in, and at times direct contact with, Jewish youth movements in other countries¹⁹.

The camp in Colleville might seem like a natural continuation of the EIF's opening up to the world in the late 1920s. But without a crucial development, it seems unlikely that it would have happened: non-recognition by the French national scout office, and the consequent denial of the right to participate in a world scout camp.

In 1928, EIF president Gédéon Geismar, a former brigadier general in the French artillery, submitted an application to the *Bureau interfédéral du scoutisme français* (BIF) for recognition as an official scout association²⁰. The BIF was comprised of leaders from the Catholic Scouts de France (SdF), the Protestant *Éclaireurs unionistes*

14 See Nadia MALINOVICH, *French and Jewish. Culture and the Politics of Identity in Early Twentieth-Century France*, Oxford, Portland, OR 2008 (The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization), p. 116–138; Paula HYMAN, *From Dreyfus to Vichy. The Remaking of French Jewry, 1906–1939*, New York, NY 1979.

15 For a history of the EIF, see Alain MICHEL, *Scouts, Juifs et Français. L'histoire des E.I. de 1923 aux années 1990*, Jerusalem 2003 (Histoire).

16 PROCTOR, Introduction (as in n. 6), p. xxvii.

17 One of the traditions of the EIF was to give every member an animal nickname that reflected their personal qualities, a so-called »totem«. Often, the sources only mention these names.

18 MICHEL, *Scouts* (as in n. 15), p. 47.

19 See the sections »Éclaireurs Juifs dans le monde«, for example in: *L'E.I.F. 2* (April 1929) 27, p. 14, in: AIU, P231B.

20 Letter from Général Geismar, president of the EIF, to the *Bureau interfédéral du scoutisme français*, 2 October 1928, in: *Mémorial de la Shoah* (Mémorial), CMXLIII/7/1/4. An unknown person compiled transcripts of the EIF correspondence concerning the application in a book. Alain Michel corroborated the information and deems the letters trustworthy. See MICHEL, *Scouts* (as in n. 15), p. 52, note 118.

(EU) and the inter-confessional *Éclaireurs de France* (EdF)²¹. The official reason for the rejection given by the BIF was that the scouting movement had to be prevented from dispersing into too many small organizations. The EIF scouts could join the EdF, the BIF argued – there was no need for a separate association.²² From looking at the sources, I do not know whether antisemitism played a role in the decision of the BIF. Because of this non-recognition, the EIF was not permitted to send its own contingent to the World Jamboree near Liverpool in 1929²³.

In July 1929, the first meeting of the Conseil national of the EIF in Heiligenberg in Eastern France, a new forum which united the movement's scout leaders, condemned the decision as an »injustice« committed against French Jews, while criticizing the attitude of the EIF negotiators towards the BIF as »a bit too conciliatory«²⁴. At the second Conseil national in Paris in November 1930, the organization instructed a set of its members to study the possibility of a world camp²⁵. It was argued that such a camp could be a replacement for the jamboree that the Jewish scouts could not attend²⁶.

In an undated typescript apparently produced by the EIF, it is stated that a World Union was needed because the »absence of unity« had prevented Jewish scouts from taking up their rightful place among the youth of the different nations, »even in countries as hospitable as ours«. The situation will be completely different, the document claims, »when we are recognized and approved by a powerful Union which will help us and answer vouch for us«²⁷. The author apparently hoped that other French scout organizations would take the EIF more seriously if they were represented by an international union. Perhaps the author was thinking of the example of the International Office of Catholic Scouts (IOCS), founded in 1920, which linked together Catholic scout organizations in different countries²⁸. Creating a similar structure could have strengthened the EIF's argument that Jewish scouting was just as legitimate as Catholic scouting, and should be treated equally. Also, the argument that a stronger Jewish representative body could help the EIF recalls an argument made by Edmond Fleg, a French Jewish writer and early EIF supporter, in the newspaper »L'Univers Israélite« in 1930. He claimed that the Jewish scouts' main achievement was to have revived and created experiences of Jewish identity, furthering the »Jewish renaissance« that had previously been a largely intellectual undertaking.

21 Ibid., p. 52.

22 Letter from Henri Guerreau, general secretary of the Bureau interfédéral du scoutisme français, to Général Geismar, 14 December 1928, in: *Mémorial*, CMXLIII/7/1/4.

23 Letter from S. Hubert Martin, director of the Boy Scouts International Bureau, to Robert Gamzon, 23 May 1929, in: *Mémorial*, CMXLIII/7/1/4.

24 *Compte-rendu du Conseil national des chefs E.I.F.*, Farkental 14–15 Juillet 1929, in: *Lumière* 4 (December 1929), p. 1–11 (note the irregular counting of edition numbers), in: *Mémorial*, CMXLIII/7/1/4.

25 *Résolutions prises au Conseil national de chefs réunis à Paris – Heschan 5691 – 9–11 novembre 1930*, in: *Lumière* 6 (December 1930), n.p., in: *Mémorial*, CMXLIII/7/1/4.

26 See MICHEL, Scouts (as in n. 15), p. 56.

27 *Assemblée préparatoire de l'Union mondiale. Avantages et nécessité d'une Union mondiale*, in: *Mémorial*, CMXLIII/7/1/4.

28 See Domenico SORRENTINO, *A History of the International Catholic Conference of Scouting. 1920–2002*, Rome 2004.

Strengthening Jewish identity would not hinder assimilation in France, according to Fleg. In fact, he argued, the return to Judaism would only raise the esteem of Jews in the eyes of non-Jews.

Fleg also claimed that the »great family« of Judaism was spread among the nations, forming a »League of Nations« within them. According to him, it was Judaism's ancient mission to unite all the »human families« in order to help realize the unity and peace of humankind as a whole²⁹. The clearest incarnation of Fleg's ideas, then, was the Camp mondial in Colleville, which Fleg's friend and EIF leader Robert Gamzon would later interpret along the same lines as Fleg: in the unity of the people of Israel, Gamzon wrote some time after the Camp, the unity of humankind was inscribed.³⁰

The initiative to organize the World Camp thus reflected a belief in the internationalist and pacifist mission of the Jewish scouts, and was also intended to lead to acknowledgement from non-Jewish scout organizations through institutionalized international representation in the form of a World Union. Jewish newspapers reported that the goal of the camp was »to combat the Jewish plight [*le malheur juif*]: division and weakness; and to prepare for the future with unity and strength«³¹.

However, the rivalry with another organization suggests that the leaders of the EIF were also concerned about their status *within* the scene of Jewish youth movements. Hashomer Hatzair (HH), a Zionist and, increasingly, socialist movement, was one of the largest Jewish youth organizations of the time³². The leitmotif of their education was the rejection of the figure of the supposedly weak diaspora Jew and the formation of a new human being. HH adopted features from the Wandervögel, the classic German youth movement, and British scouting to create a new model of a youth movement³³. In the 1920s, a central goal became preparing its members, the *Shomrim*, for emigration to Palestine. Before its leadership shifted to Palestine, Hashomer Hatzair's base was in Warsaw. Its origins in France seem to be intertwined with the history of the EIF. In Tunisia, a faction of the EIF seceded to form a section of HH in 1929. According to Alain Michel, a few new Tunisian HH members then came to Paris for their studies. He explains that debates they then had with EIF scouts resulted in a second secession, as some youths from a Zionist group within the EIF joined the newly formed local HH chapter³⁴. It was only a few months later that the EIF's Conseil national developed its plans for a Camp mondial.

There are indications that this timing was not purely coincidental. According to Michel, the EIF group that some scouts left to join HH was led by the medical student and Romanian immigrant Sigismund Hirsch, who was to become one of the main organizers of the camp in Colleville. The circle around Hirsch in the EIF was

29 Edmond FLEG, Judaïsme et scoutisme, in: L'Univers Israélite 86 (26 December 1930), p. 453–455.

30 Robert GAMZON, Instantanés, in: Chalom 10 (October 1931), p. 19.

31 See, for example, Camp mondial des éclaireurs Juifs en Normandie, in: Israël 12 (6 February 1931) 6, p. 2.

32 See MARGALIT, Social and Intellectual Origins (as in n. 10), p. 454–472.

33 LAMM, Youth (as in n. 11), p. 109–110.

34 MICHEL, Scouts (as in n. 15), p. 57. See also Henry BULAWKO, Les chemins de la fidélité. Contribution à l'histoire du mouvement Hachomer Hatzair en France, Paris 1980, p. 1–3.

known as a Zionist faction, with contacts in Jewish youth movements in Eastern Europe³⁵. Even as Hirsch seemingly struggled to keep his scouts in the EIF, more Zionist groups created sections in France – like Betar, a revisionist Zionist and militaristic youth organization founded by Vladimir Ze'ev Jabotinsky. In these times of increased plurality and competition, the EIF apparently saw the Camp mondial as a chance to demonstrate their position as the leading Jewish scout movement. The undated typescript mentioned above claims that a World Union could serve the important purpose of guiding its member organizations in the right direction, as scouting »is an extremely delicate weapon – a precision instrument that can easily be warped«. Scouting's flexibility made it prone to being put to inappropriate uses, the document suggests³⁶. This vague statement fits with an argument made by EIF scout leaders arguing before the older patrons of the organization's Comité central in June 1931. They claimed that the Camp could be a means of propaganda even vis-à-vis French Jewry. Many small movements were in a desperate struggle and felt isolated, they said, adding that, in their view, a general camp was needed. It was up to the EIF to either take the lead or stand by as it happened without the EIF's participation. The EIF scout leaders found the first option to be the best³⁷. Apparently, they felt compelled to assert the EIF's place as a dominant organization, gathering and guiding others. This is underscored by the fact that in Colleville, the EIF managed to gain control of almost all leadership positions in the new World Union of Jewish Scouts.

In contrast to the EIF, Hashomer Hatzair rejected any cooperation of Jewish youth not based on Zionism. In May 1931, HH's world leadership in Warsaw sent instructions to an office in Brussels, writing that the task of the organization's representative in Colleville was to ensure that the World Union of Jewish Scouts would not be anti-Zionist. No decision should be made without consulting world leadership, they warned, adding that they would treat the Union carefully since the EIF was not Zionist³⁸. This foreshadowed a major fault line in community-building in Colleville: attitude towards Zionism. Interestingly, the Paris-based Alliance israélite universelle (AIU) declined to help the EIF financially, apparently on the grounds that for the AIU, some of the activities at the Camp were *too* Zionist – such as a ceremony in honour of the founder of modern political Zionism, Theodor Herzl³⁹.

II. Colleville-sur-Orne, August 1931: Representing – Performing – Organizing

The following paragraphs begin by giving an overview of the Camp mondial, before focusing in especially on three of its aspects: visual representations, performative activities, and the formation of an international organization. In the Camp's programme,

35 See Jean-Raphaël HIRSCH, *Réveille-toi, papa, c'est fini!* Paris 2014.

36 *Assemblée préparatoire* (as in n. 27).

37 Minutes of a session of the Comité Central in June 1931, quoted in MICHEL, *Scouts* (as in n. 15), p. 56.

38 Letter from the global headquarters of Hashomer Hazair, signed by Yaakov Chazan and Mosche Zilbental, to the Liaison Bureau of the West in Brussels (in Hebrew), Warsaw, 3 May 1931, in: *Yad Ya'ari Research and Documentation Center (YY)*, (1) 1. 1-34, 34 מיקום.

39 See the letter exchange between the EIF and the AIU, in: *AIU, France I M 1.30*.

the EIF informed the organizations that the central idea should be »shalom« (Hebrew for »peace«) and the »mots d'ordre« (watchwords) were »unité et fraternité«. ⁴⁰ Here, the scouts of the EIF followed the tradition of scout jamborees: the main themes of these mass spectacles in the interwar years were fraternity and peace ⁴¹.

With its 320 inhabitants – 326 with Colleville-Plage, the area next to the beach – »the village of Colleville-sur-Orne is certainly not a very large *commune* [municipality]«, the Parisian daily »La Liberté« observed matter-of-factly on 3 August 1931, »but it is about to become a cosmopolitan city« ⁴².

The EIF asked participating organizations to send a delegation of six to eight scouts who should be between 12 and 16 years old, along with two older leaders. Jewish non-scout youth movements could send one representative each. The EIF promised to host the guests for free, offering them tents and other equipment ⁴³.

In one newspaper article, EIF leader Robert Gamzon wrote that 200 Jewish scouts from 15 different countries came to Colleville, representing movements with a combined membership of between 70 and 80 000 ⁴⁴. Not every participant travelled to Colleville from the country they stood for. For example, the delegate for Palestine, a »M. Gamzou« ⁴⁵, was likely Chaim Gamzou, whose Russian family had immigrated to Palestine in 1923 but who later came to Paris to study. He was affiliated with the French branch of the Jewish National Fund (JNF), the Zionist fundraising organization headed by Joseph Fisher, who also came to Colleville to participate in discussions about the World Union of Jewish Scouts ⁴⁶. Secondly, photographs evidence that some of the participants in Colleville were girls and young women. This might be explained by the fact that girls and boys were not as strictly separated in French Jewish scouting as they were in Catholic or Protestant groups ⁴⁷. Still, the Camp was a mostly male event. Finally, about a hundred of the participants in Colleville, and thus the largest contingent, were members of the EIF, according to Michel ⁴⁸. The »Camp mondial« was thus in fact a European affair, given that scouts were either Europeans or from regions under European rule: Palestine was a British Mandate, Tunisia was a French protectorate, and Algeria was considered an integral part of France. This strained relationship between historical reality and its representation in different media was a key feature of the whole camp.

40 Programme of the Camp mondial (as in n. 2), p. 6.

41 HARANG, Les jamborees (as in n. 6), p. 46.

42 Un Jamborée israélite en Normandie, in: La Liberté, 3 August 1931, p. 3.

43 Programme of the Camp mondial (as in n. 2), p. 3.

44 Robert GAMZON, Le camp mondial de Colleville, in: L'Univers Israélite, 14 August 1931, p. 621. For a list of organizations whose participation can be verified, see RIEMANN, The World Camp (as in n. 1), p. 40.

45 Gamzou is mentioned in: Weltkongreß jüdischer Pfadfinder, in: Jüdische Rundschau, 18 August 1931, p. 394. He later became a celebrated Israeli art and theatre critic.

46 Première séance, 4 August 1931, in: Mémorial, CMXLIII/5/1/1. For Gamzou's affiliation with the JNF, see an email from Yoël Sher to Jasper Riemann, 6 November 2020. For the role of adults in the EIF and in Colleville see RIEMANN, The World Camp (as in n. 1), p. 21, 67, 83.

47 See MICHEL, Scouts (as in n. 15), p. 41. On girls in French scouting, see Takako TOBITA, La Fédération Française des Éclaireuses (FFE). Une histoire de jeunes filles et de femmes dans un mouvement scout féminin en France (1911–1970). PhD thesis, Université de recherche Paris Sciences et Lettres 2018.

48 MICHEL, Scouts (as in n. 15), p. 56.

Naturally, many of the participants were strangers to each other. The EIF responded to this difficulty by taking an inclusive approach on the practical level. The kitchen was kosher to make communal meals possible⁴⁹. Colleville was a multilingual event, although French was probably the most spoken language. In a certain way, the conventions of the scouting movement and of sports culture served as a common vocabulary for the young participants. The scout camp, its typical layout, activities such as woodcraft, sports and games, the wearing of uniforms, the tent inspections in the morning – these common elements of scouting gave orientation and a sense of familiarity to the scouts in Colleville.

The EIF tried to make the stay at the camp as comfortable as possible – or at least that is what Gamzon declared in his articles. Not only did the EIF obtain a loud-speaker for announcements in different languages, but it also provided electric light in every tent, and a telephone for the camp⁵⁰. Technical features like these also showcased the EIF's capabilities and resourcefulness as an organization, showing that practicality and propaganda overlapped in Colleville.

Photographs from the event give some insight into what the camp looked like. They also allow for an analysis of the Jewish scouts' representations. Four photographs will be analysed in more detail (fig. 1–4). According to the Mémorial de la Shoah, they originated in the collection of Edmond Blum, an EIF member from Strasbourg. It is unclear how Blum received them, and whether he was in Colleville himself. The photographs are in black and white, and were taken during the camp in Colleville. The exact date is unclear. »Carte postale« is printed on the back of figures 1, 2 and 4, next to the address of a photographer named R. Delassalle from Caen, a nearby city. Maybe Delassalle took the photos himself, or perhaps he only printed them in his studio. The fact that the images were supposed to be postcards suggests that there existed multiple prints of each image, which, one imagines, might have been distributed to the camp's participants. Figure 3 could also have been a postcard. The image in the archive is only a copy of the original.

The creators of the postcards presumably wanted to portray the Camp mondial as a successful event and show some of its significant features, with a certain stylistic quality and formality. There is no evidence in these photographs, for example, that it was raining during much of the event⁵¹. Hence, the images evidence a practice of producing visual representations that served diverse functions: as proofs of the Camp mondial's existence, and as a way of presenting it to a semi-private audience. They could also be seen as both individual and collective artefacts of memory. Finally, the scouts had possibly commissioned or invited the photographer themselves, for documentary purposes, or were at least aware of the photographer's presence and probably knew that postcards would be printed, which might have reinforced the participants' perception of being part of something official and significant. Thus, the

49 Programme of the Camp mondial (as in n. 2), p. 7.

50 GAMZON, Le camp mondial (as in n. 44), p. 620.

51 Le camp mondial de Colleville, in: Archives Israélites, 20 August 1931, p. 134.

production, content and likely usage of the images may all have contributed to the forging of community⁵².

Limitations of space do not permit a comprehensive analysis, but here I will present a few observations⁵³. First, the location was marked by its proximity to the sea. Figure 2 shows the campsite in front of the *Maison de la Mer*, a villa owned by the Jewish philanthropist Alice Halphen. Most of the tents were plain, but some were decorated with flags, pennants, and inscriptions which combined scouting and Jewish symbolism. Although it is not shown in any of the photographs, one of the banners at a gate said *מחנה עולמיים* (*machane oulmim*, Hebrew for »world camp«), if Gamzon's description is correct. According to Gamzon, the portico was painted in white and blue and had an »emblem of the camp« attached to it, showing three golden ears of corn⁵⁴. This was presumably a biblical reference symbolizing abundance, fertility, and the labouring of the land.

The *Maison de la Mer* and the gate with the Stars of David produce the impression of a distinct, proud, and visibly Jewish space anchored in the landscape. But out of all of these photographs, it is perhaps the one in figure 1 that most clearly signified the temporary transformation of a local space into a site of an international Jewish scout community. It shows a gathering of a diverse group in the middle of the campsite: some scouts wear a full uniform with hat, others only undershirts. There are some young women in the background. Intentionally, it seems, the photographer avoided entering into a dialogue with the scouts: most did not have the chance to pose for the picture. That the photographer acted intentionally is suggested by the fact that he took the photograph from an elevated position. The wide angle suggests that the photographer was aiming at completeness and representativeness, seeking to show as many of the camp's participants as possible in a situation which could stand for the camp as a whole.

It seems as if the photographer wanted to convey the impression of a group of young people who came together despite their differences. The impression of community is reinforced by the fence physically separating the campsite from the village, dividing those who belong from those who do not. The Stars of David on the berets of two scouts and on the gate are visible markers of Judaism. Moreover, the picture presents typical features of scout camps: the mast, the uniforms, an entrance gate, the tents. The photograph proves that this was a proper scout camp. The atmosphere seems casual and relaxed, which is maybe best expressed by one scout on the bottom right side who reclines on the ground with his legs crossed, his arm resting on the leg of a fellow scout. It was surely only possible for the photographer to capture this atmosphere by taking the picture without notifying the scouts. The photograph thus seems to display what the organizers wanted Colleville to stand for: a Jewish community of good understanding and discipline created through the specific regularized forms and conventions of scouting.

52 See Annette VOWINCKEL, *Agenten der Bilder. Fotografisches Handeln im 20. Jahrhundert*, Göttingen 2016, p. 18–27 and Horst BREDEKAMP, *Image Acts. A Systematic Approach to Visual Agency*, transl. by Elizabeth CLEGG, Berlin, Boston, MA 2018.

53 For a more comprehensive interpretation see RIEMANN, *The World Camp* (as in n. 1), p. 46–54.

54 GAMZON, *Instantané* (as in n. 30), p. 19.

The archives also include a few other, more personal pictures from the camp in Colleville that were not produced as postcards⁵⁵. The variety of photographic representations of the event points to the »multiple and multi-layered experiences of adults and children as worked out in the environment of the camp«, which according to Allen Warren are central to scouting culture in general⁵⁶. And one photograph was quickly and haphazardly produced: the performance of community at the World Jewish Scout Camp may not always have unfolded smoothly and perfectly.

Turning to the unfolding of the camp as it happened in August 1931, I focus on practices and processes and follow a central premise of what has been termed the »performative turn«: that culture is not a holistic and static system of symbols but a process in which symbolic practices, as »performances«⁵⁷, can produce meanings and experiences. Erika Fischer-Lichte has defined performative acts as self-referential symbolic practices which do not simply express or represent a pre-existing social reality, but constitute it. These acts are *physical* acts: a central dimension is the staging, perception, and experience of the human body⁵⁸. In her view, performances also often require an audience to work.

As we will see, the camp in Colleville was full of activities that were performative in this sense. In addition to this aspect, the whole camp might be viewed as characterized by a state of »liminality«. For the cultural anthropologist Victor Turner, liminality designates a fragile and ambiguous phase of transition. Liminality produces a heightened experience of possibilities in the field of social relations, what Turner refers to as »communitas«. This is a situation where the protagonists are temporarily liberated from the strictures of their various roles in society, entering a state that allows them to intuitively and directly relate to the others present, a sort of »homogeneous, unstructured« experience of immediate connectedness between individuals⁵⁹.

When the scouts came to Colleville, they entered a state of liminality: they left their usual lives behind them and found themselves with a lot of strangers in an unfamiliar situation, separated from society. In my view, this atmosphere created a basis or framework, facilitating the creation of something new. One central function of the performative practices in Colleville, then, was to constitute something that previously did not exist: an international community of Jewish scouts. At the same time, these performances gave the scouts orientation by structuring the time and space of the encounter. In a sense, they could be seen as providing form and content to the intuitive, spontaneous experiences of connectedness made possible by the liminal nature of the camp.

The camp's programme and various newspaper articles provide the basis for a detailed summary of what happened. According to one report, the scouts entered the

55 See especially *Mémorial*, MIId_67 and MIId_69.

56 Allen WARREN, Foreword. *Understanding Scouting and Guiding after a Hundred Years*, in: Tammy M. PROCTOR, Nelson R. BLOCK (eds.), *Scouting Frontiers. Youth and the Scout Movement's First Century*, Newcastle upon Tyre 2009, p. XXII.

57 Doris BACHMANN-MEDICK, *Cultural Turns. Neuorientierungen in den Kulturwissenschaften*, Reinbek 2018, p. 104.

58 FISCHER-LICHTE, *Performativität* (as in n. 8), p. 44.

59 TURNER, *The Liminal* (as in n. 9), p. 75–78.

»tent city« in full uniform through the gates, decorated with emblems of their countries, on 3 August⁶⁰. Then, Robert Gamzon and Sigismond Hirsch, the two »leaders of the camp«, explained its purpose. A scout from Leipzig reported the raising of »the blue and white flag with the sign of the sheaf of corn amid the flags of all nations«. The scouts saluted the flag⁶¹.

In the first week, the camp community engaged in competitions during the day. There were sprints and swim races over various distances, high and long jump, gymnastic formations like pyramids and athletic performances. The scouts also competed in Hebrew songs, folk dances and the decoration of tents. Finally, scouting activities included rescue and first aid, Morse code and signalling systems, fire and cooking, games, and an exhibition⁶².

In the evenings of the first week, leaders of the delegations met at the Preparatory Assembly to discuss and found the World Union. On Friday evening, the scouts celebrated the beginning of Shabbat with a religious service. On Saturday afternoon, the Preparatory Assembly came to an end, with a ceremony in honour of Theodor Herzl. According to the German paper »Jüdische Rundschau«, the camp's participants assembled in a large square, in front of which was displayed an image of Herzl. Robert Gamzon, the delegate for Palestine, Gamzou, and the leader of the delegation of Zirenu – an Austrian Zionist scout association – gave speeches. According to a newspaper article, the Zirenu leader commemorated the »victims who fell exactly two years ago in Palestine for Herzl's work«, referring to the riots of 1929. There were two minutes of silent mourning for the dead. The scouts walked in a long procession past the image of Herzl, laying down flowers and pennants [*Wimpel*] as they passed. In a final act, they sang the »Hatikvah«, the Zionist anthem⁶³.

On Sunday, invited guests visited the camp. Among them, reports mention the presence of a rabbi from Brussels, the secretary general of the organization Voix des Jeunes, and Alice Halphen, the owner of the grounds in Colleville. Two Catholic priests and delegates from other French scouting associations also reportedly attended. The guests visited the Maison de la Mer, where the scouts had constructed an exhibition, presenting books, brochures, prints, insignias, photographs, statistics, and handicrafts⁶⁴.

Sunday afternoon, the camp community came together for a »scout party«⁶⁵. According to Gamzon's description, the Greek delegation from Salonica impressed the gathering with dances, the Hungarian and English scouts with »profound and sad« Hebrew songs, the Austrians with parody operas, the Parisians with sketches and the German scouts with athletic performances⁶⁶. Next, the results of the competitions were announced. The Romanian group Hashomer B'Transylvania was the overall

60 Josef HAUSER, Weltkongreß und Lager jüdischer Pfadfinder. Bericht eines Münchener Teilnehmers, in: Bayerische Israelitische Gemeindezeitung, 15 September 1931, p. 284.

61 Unsere Jugend. Weltunion der jüdischen Pfadfinder, in: Gemeindeblatt der Israelitischen Religionsgemeinde zu Leipzig, 2 October 1931, p. 3.

62 Programme of the Camp mondial (as in n. 2), p. 4.

63 Weltkongreß (as in n. 45), p. 394.

64 GAMZON, Le camp mondial (as in n. 44), p. 621.

65 Ibid.

66 Ibid.

winner, reported the participant from Leipzig. The German Jüdischer Pfadfinderbund in Deutschland (JPD) took second place, followed by a Parisian group and the Austrian Zirenu group. The winners were awarded a silver cup donated by the Rothschild family, which they were to keep until the next international camp. The first four winners also received a tent and a pennant, according to the same report⁶⁷.

The second week of the camp was devoted to excursions and leisure activities⁶⁸. The scouts went on a boat trip to Le Havre and visited the surrounding area. Several articles highlight that during these trips, Christian scouts welcomed the Jewish scouts. Back at the campsite, the Chief Rabbi of Marseille, Israël Salzer, led a religious service on Friday to celebrate the beginning of Shabbat. Reportedly, several important figures arrived from Paris, including Alice Halphen and her son, a Rothschild baroness, and a family with connections to the Consistoire. On the evening of the next day, a delegation of Catholic scouts helped with a final large campfire. The Camp officially ended on Tuesday, 18 August. The community dissolved. The Greek delegation added a trip to Paris, where they were invited by the Greek embassy, to their holidays⁶⁹. And with that, the Camp mondial was over.

As indicated above, I understand the collective activities in the specific liminal context of the camp as crucial in the formation of community. Consider this report by a scout from Leipzig⁷⁰:

They differed by their languages and their customs, but nevertheless, in just a few hours, on the basis of their common peoplehood [*Volkstum*], their common scouthood [*Pfadfindertum*], they became a single, great camp family. And borne by this spirit of Jewish peoplehood and of the brotherhood of scouts, the camp began. Surely only very rarely in the history of the Jewish youth movement have so many young Jews from all over the world spent 14 days together, sleeping together, eating together, living together, and working together.

For this scout, the participants' identities both as Jews and as scouts were the basis of the community formed in Colleville. The community was not created out of nothing, but the performative practices, the camp's architecture, the uniforms, all were filled with signs and symbols that the scouts understood because they were familiar. These symbolisms gave the community its semantic content, even as they were the source of the tension over its boundaries.

The solemn entry and the saluting of the flag at the beginning could be interpreted as the first constitutive expressive acts of the Jewish international scout community. The scout uniforms disguised the individual history of each participant, creating the impression of a community of equals. At the same time, boundaries were apparent. As Tammy M. Proctor has noted, if everyone wears similar uniforms, the small dif-

67 *Unsere Jugend* (as in n. 61), p. 4.

68 R. D., *Le Camp de Colleville*, in: *L'Univers Israélite*, 28 August 1931, p. 693; *Unsere Jugend* (as in n. 61), p. 3; GAMZON, *Le camp mondial* (as in n. 44), p. 621–622; HAUSER, *Weltkongreß* (as in n. 60), p. 284.

69 R. D., *Le Camp de Colleville* (as in n. 68), p. 693.

70 *Unsere Jugend* (as in n. 61), p. 3.

ferences between them are accentuated⁷¹. The national emblems at the gates and the national flags are visible expressions of differences among the participants. The flag salute, a common practice in scouting culture to this day, signifies allegiance, loyalty, and dedication. It is closely related to the scout ideals of good citizenship and patriotism. The salute in Colleville shows that the idea was not to *overcome* national differences, but to *celebrate* national diversity while nevertheless seeking common denominators drawn from the participants' shared worlds of scouting and Judaism. One example is the blue and white flag featuring the sheaf of corn symbol raised in the middle of the national flags. This was probably the same symbol as the three golden ears of corn that Gamzon described as the »emblem of the camp« attached to the camp's gate⁷². The Hebrew inscription »world camp« on one of the banners was another of these unifying symbols, suggesting the participants' common allegiance to the traditions of Judaism. The Jewish services offered the scouts an experience of the religious bonds that held the community together. Taken together, these performances reflect a view of the world according to which the Jewish international community consisted of national elements that were diverse, but connected through spirituality and tradition.

However, the Herzl ceremony and especially the speech by the Zirenu delegate seemed to transcend the national boundaries between the delegations altogether. The event transformed the participants into a community of mourners commemorating the Jewish victims of the Palestinian riots of 1929. They celebrated Theodor Herzl, considered the founder of the Zionist movement. As the delegates sang the Hatikvah together, they seem to have been performing not an international, but a national community. *Prima facie*, it seems as if the Herzl ceremony had the potential to call into question the whole internationalist model of the camp in Colleville.

But reading an antagonism between nationalism and internationalism into the ceremony would be too simple. In fact, many Zionists in the interwar period were committed internationalists, especially in France⁷³. Instead of challenging internationalism as such, I would argue, the Herzl ceremony signified a negotiation of the boundaries of the community in Colleville. In this particular performance, the bond that held the Jews together seemed to be less religious than ethnic or even national.

Less controversial were the sports and scout competitions, whose high points came in the final demonstrations at the festivities in front of an audience of distinguished guests. These activities, I would propose, can be understood as performances of a community framed as basically athletic, healthy, masculine, and young. The scouting exhibition in the Maison de la Mer also gave a sense of material reality to the concept of a single community. The display of the various books, pennants and other objects together in a single space invited those present to conceive these artefacts as belonging together and forming a whole as they walked through the exhibition.

71 PROCTOR, *Scouts, Guides* (as in n. 6), p. 126–144.

72 GAMZON, *Instantanés* (as in n. 30), p. 19.

73 MALINOVICH, *French and Jewish* (as in n. 14), p. 202–207. See also KURZ, *Jewish Internationalism* (as in n. 13), p. 10–11.

The conveners of the Camp hoped for this new whole to find its institutional representation in the World Union of Jewish Scouts, the subject of the following paragraphs. On 4, 5, 6, and 8 August, delegates from the various organizations voted on the statutes of the Union and elected candidates to leadership positions. In principle, each scout organization was allowed to send a delegation whose leader would participate in the Preparatory Assembly, although according to the minutes of the sessions, the EIF apparently had several⁷⁴. The sources are silent about the location of the so-called Preparatory Assembly. But the minutes, along with the draft and final versions of the statutes, offer an overview of the proceedings. The minutes were attached to a letter sent to member organizations after the camp. The letterhead included the name of the World Union in Hebrew, French, German, and English, and an address in Paris. We may thus assume that the Union was indeed founded in Colleville, although the minutes do not mention the act of founding. The statutes indicate that the Union was founded by their signees, but the sources do not contain these signatures.

Among the more significant points the delegates agreed upon after sometimes intense discussions were the following: the seat of the Central Office was to be initially located in Paris, and then be shifted to Palestine after two years. Gamzon was elected as central commissioner, and EIF members also took up other important posts. Furthermore, the Union would unite all Jewish youth movements based upon the educational principles of scouting as developed by Baden-Powell; it would represent Jewish youth vis-à-vis international scouting; it would be ideologically neutral and guarantee the autonomy of its members; member organizations should strive to develop good relations with non-Jewish scouts and fulfil their civic duties towards their nation of citizenship while contributing to the »renaissance of Judaism«. In addition, the delegates founded an international Jewish scouting day. They also opted for an ambitious programme of activities, which included the establishment of a permanent scouting exhibition, letter exchanges, competitions in the study of Hebrew and other Judaism-related themes, and the publishing of a book of Hebrew songs and a »world periodical«⁷⁵. In the following year, the Union was to prepare a first Assembly during the first Maccabiah Games in Tel Aviv, and develop plans for a Jewish jamboree with thousands of scouts in 1933⁷⁶.

The minutes reveal some heated discussions which mainly centred around the Union's stance on Zionism. The EIF's Sigismund Hirsch and the representative of Hashomer Hatzair in particular exchanged opposing views. The HH delegate was Max Butkowski, most certainly a 23-year-old man who grew up in Warsaw and studied in Brussels, and who was, according to the Belgian police, a socialist Zionist⁷⁷.

74 Programme of the Camp mondial (as in n. 2), p. 4.

75 Statuts de l'Union mondiale des Éclaireurs Juifs, in: Mémorial, CMXLIII/5/1/1.

76 Unsere Jugend (as in n. 61), p. 4.

77 File about Max Butkowski, in: State Archives of Belgium (SAB), files of the Foreign Police, Nr. 1419465; interview with Dan Bitan, son of Max Butkowski, 27 October 2020. Max Butkowski had been an emissary in the Netherlands on behalf of the HH leadership. It seems highly unlikely that HH would have sent someone else to Colleville whose name was accidentally also Butkowski. See the letter from the headquarters of Hashomer Hazair, signed by Zvi Lurie and Yaakov Chazan, to the liaison bureau for the French-speaking countries in Brussels (in Hebrew), Warsaw, 2 November 1930, in: YY, (1) 1. 1-34, 34 מיקום.

In the first session, Butkowski proposed to add a phrase to the first paragraph of the statutes, concerning the Union's basic commitments: »with as their basis: a) the national idea of the Jewish people, b) concrete participation in the creation of the Jewish homeland«⁷⁸. The session ended without agreement on this point. The next day, Robert Gamzon suggested a compromise by adding »active work for Palestine« to the first paragraph⁷⁹. Everyone agreed except Butkowski, who announced later in the session that while HH would collaborate with the Union in the future, it would not join.

Other groups, like the Zionist youth organizations Hanoar Haivri from Belgium and Zirenu from Austria, joined the Union after they had pushed it into a more Zionist direction. Almost every alteration to the drafts reflects these efforts: the addition of the goal of the Union of »active work for Palestine«, the commitment of each member movement to »do their duty for Palestine« as a basic principle, and the donation of the funds to the Jewish National Fund (JNF) and the Hebrew University in the case of the dissolution of the Union⁸⁰. Even the date chosen for the international Jewish scouting day was one that was meaningful in Zionist culture specifically: the fifteenth day of the Hebrew month of Shevat, the »New Year of the Trees«, a holiday when children planted trees in the forests of the JNF in Palestine⁸¹.

A picture of Gamzon emerges from the sources as someone who always tried to find a compromise that everyone could live with. His approach, however, led to certain ambiguities. For example, the final version of the statutes contained the guideline for the organizations to fulfil their civic duties in their own country and at the same time to do their duty for Palestine. It was unclear, probably intentionally, what exactly these duties consisted of, and which were more important. Here again, the crucial question concerned the primary community of belonging. The delegates' agreement to add the principle of »active work for Palestine« to the opening paragraph of the Union's statutes evidences another instance of the boundary negotiations that ultimately defined the Colleville camp as a whole.

The final session concluded the Assembly with an election of the members of the Union's Central Office. Almost all positions went to EIF members. The only position occupied by a non-EIF delegate was a permanent advisor on »questions of Jewish education«⁸². This post was reserved for a representative of Hanoar Hatzioni, an internationally organized youth movement that originated in Poland, which belonged to the General Zionist faction within the Zionist movement. In terms of location and personnel, then, the World Union was mostly in the hands of the EIF. This appears to reflect the EIF's intentions as organizers to strengthen their position on both the French Jewish and international scouting scenes. Through the Paris Central Office, the EIF could, for example, confirm or veto the admission of new member organizations.

78 Première séance (as in n. 46).

79 2^e séance, 5 August 1931, in: *Mémorial*, CMXLIII/5/1/1.

80 For the drafts see *Assemblée préparatoire de l'Union mondiale. Règlement des séances*, in: *Mémorial*, CMXLIII/7/1/4, p. 1–13. Compare with the final version: *Statuts de l'Union mondiale*, in: *Mémorial*, CMXLIII/5/1/1.

81 Email from Yoël Sher to Jasper Riemann, 24 October 2020.

82 4^e Séance, 8 August 1931, in: *Mémorial*, CMXLIII/5/1/1.

III. The Aftermath of the Camp

Despite the high ambitions for the Union, there is little evidence that the organization achieved its goals. At best, the sources uncovered to date attest some sporadic activity in the following year. It is unclear whether further research would uncover traces of more substantial impacts, or simply confirm the judgment of Alain Michel that the Union was a »stillborn organization«⁸³.

In 1939, the BIF finally recognized the EIF as an official scout association in France. I have found no evidence that the World Union played any role in the negotiations that led to this recognition. According to the plans made in Colleville, at that point the seat of the Union would have been transferred to Palestine, but I do not know if that transfer ever happened. Still, the Union's existence served as a precedent for a much later initiative. In November 2006, the International Forum of Jewish Scouts (IFJS) was inaugurated in Jerusalem. The IFJS claims the heritage of the World Union. Its website states that the Union »was unable to develop due to the tragic events that unfolded in Europe, beginning in 1933 and culminating in the Shoah«⁸⁴.

Given the apparently short history of the Union, it seems that Colleville's most enduring legacy consisted in the experiences and memories of those who were there. The scout from Leipzig mentioned above wrote of letter exchanges after the camp. He also wrote that the camp's great impact on those present could be seen in the warmth with which the scouts said goodbye to the German delegation⁸⁵. Another participant from France remembered almost thirty years later: »We were moved to meet in Colleville scouts from Germany and Austria, whose communities seemed to us so threatened«⁸⁶. It can also be imagined that Colleville was a memorable experience for the Greek scouts, given that just weeks prior, an office of the Greek Jewish scout association Hacoah in Salonica (Thessaloniki) had been destroyed during an antisemitic pogrom⁸⁷.

The EIF were proud of having organized the camp. An EIF calendar produced years later lists Colleville as the most recent major event in a chronology of the movement⁸⁸. And in an internal EIF document entitled »Les grandes dates E.I.F.«, Colleville is mentioned as one of the major dates in the organization's history⁸⁹.

EIF leader Robert Gamzon tried to capture the »wonderful spirit« of the camp in a poetically written article published in the Jewish intellectual magazine »Chalom«. In addition to the sports competitions, ceremonies and services, songs, and the campfire at the end, he highlighted the international nature of the community. He used

83 MICHEL, Scouts (as in n. 15), p. 56. On my findings concerning the Union's activities, see RIEMANN, The World Camp (as in n. 1), p. 75.

84 About Us, International Forum of Jewish Scouts, <https://www.jewishscoutsforum.org/about-us/>, accessed 20 January 2023.

85 Unsere Jugend (as in n. 61), p. 4.

86 Pascal THEMANLYS, Pionniers de l'Ouest. Les prémices du haloutzisme en France, in: La Gazette d'Israël, 14 December 1950, p. 3.

87 Jews Evacuate Camp Campbell after the Pogrom of June 29, 1931, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, <https://collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/pa3535>, accessed 26 January 2021; Les désordres antijuifs à Salonique, in: Béné-Mizrachi 2 (July 1931), p. 2, in: Mémorial, MD-19.

88 Calendar of the EIF, 1934/35, p. 122, in: Mémorial, CMXLIII/10/2/11.

89 Les grandes dates E.I.F., ca. 1948, in: Mémorial, CMXLIII/1/1/3.

national stereotypes («phlegmatic English, agile Greeks, athletic Germans, mischievous French») to make the claim that the participants in Colleville were assimilated to their countries of origin but felt proud as Jews and as scouts at the same time. His text ends with the exclamation, »Oh! Israel, my people, you who have felt the joy and the pain of every people, do you not already realize in your unity the unity of humanity, having taught the world the unity of God?«⁹⁰

In addition to this universalist reading there were other descriptions, mainly in Jewish newspapers, adding a textual layer to the media representation of Colleville. Many of these accounts were written by participants; I do not know if there were any reporters in Colleville. Like the postcards, these texts fixed a certain image of the Camp and presented it to an audience – and were thus part of the process of community building. The differences between them again reflect the negotiations of boundaries of the community. For example, one scout wrote years later in the EIF newsletter that Colleville was a global camp where »one is both the most universal and the most national«, and that the EIF's mission was to build the France of tomorrow⁹¹. In contrast, an author in the Austrian Zionist newspaper »Die Stimme« depicted the Jewish scouts in Colleville as *chalutzim* («pioneers») who would build the land of Israel⁹².

The biographies of the scouts who attended the Camp branched out in different directions. An unknown number were murdered in the Holocaust. The rabbis Elie Bloch and André Baur, later vice president of the Union générale israélite de France (UGIF), an institution set up to monitor and represent the Jewish community under the Vichy Regime, were murdered in Auschwitz with their families⁹³. Sigismond Hirsch survived Auschwitz, but his wife was killed there. Hirsch and Bloch were involved in underground rescue and resistance activities during the war, as were a significant number of EIF members. Among the individuals I know to have been in Colleville, Robert Gamzon, Marc Haguenau (Colombe, i.e. Dove)⁹⁴ and rabbi Henri Schilli in particular saved many Jewish adults and children and/or fought directly against the Nazis. Haguenau was shot by the Gestapo in February 1944. Edmond Blum, Édouard (Bouli) Simon and Charlotte (Shatta) Hirsch could also very well have been in Colleville. Simon and Hirsch directed the now-famous Maison de Moissac in southern France, a clandestine centre of the EIF and a refuge for hundreds of Jewish children. Together with Gamzon they also created the Sixième, a network for the rescue of EIF members⁹⁵.

90 GAMZON, Instantanés (as in n. 30), p. 20.

91 J. M. MUSLAK (Faucon), Introduction. But et méthode, in: Lumière 1 (new series), December 1936, p. 10–11, in: Mémorial/Bibliothèque.

92 Der internationale jüdische Pfadfindertag. Chamischa Assar Beschwat, in: Die Stimme, 4 February 1932, p. 9.

93 On Baur, see Catherine POUJOL, The Daily Life of a Propagandist at the Paris Bureau of the Jewish National Fund (K. K. L.) (1929–1936), in: Bulletin du Centre de recherche français à Jérusalem (2001), p. 173–187, 174, note 6. On Bloch see Paul LÉVY, Élie Bloch. Être juif sous l'occupation, La Crèche 1999.

94 Haguenau's presence in Colleville is confirmed by his brother Daniel, who spotted him in a photograph. See the handwritten notes by Daniel Haguenau, 22 April 1980, in: Mémorial, CMXLIII/10/1/40.

95 See Catherine RICHET (ed.), Organisation juive de combat. Résistance/sauvetage. France 1940–1945, Paris 2006 (Mémoires/Histoire).

Gamzon emigrated to the newly founded state of Israel in 1949. Others had previously »made aliyah« – like François Stein, elected general secretary of the World Union, who emigrated in the mid-1930s and worked for the water department of the municipality of Jerusalem⁹⁶. Pascal Themanlys, a French and later Israeli author, emigrated in 1949⁹⁷. Lastly, Max Butkowski from Hashomer Hatzair emigrated to Palestine in 1932. He later took up leading positions in the administration of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem⁹⁸.

Without going into detail on any more of the participants in the Camp, the biographies of this admittedly small pool of researched individuals, and the fact that the delegations in Colleville were carefully selected, suggests that the Camp's community stood out. Rather than being passive objects of history, in Colleville these young people demonstrated their ability to organize, mobilize and create. And in later years they would be ready to take responsibility, with some taking up leading positions as adults⁹⁹.

Conclusion

One legacy of the First World War was the emergence of internationalist institutions, movements, and ideologies, which aimed at increasing cooperation among nations. In this study, I have presented a Jewish scout organization in France which took up the pacifist and universalist outlook of the world scout movement's jamborees, but combined it with values of Jewish solidarity, when it invited Jewish youth to a Camp Mondial des éclaireurs juifs in French Normandy.

As an examination of the project's genesis has shown, for the Éclaireurs israélites de France this was as much a strategy to gain acknowledgement from non-Jewish and probably also Jewish youth and scout movements as it was a summer camp with sports and games. Because the EIF had been denied recognition as a national scout association in France, it was also denied a contingent at the World Jamboree in England in 1929. This sparked the EIF's decision to organize its own Camp mondial. At the same time, increased competition, especially from the Zionist movement Hashomer Hatzair, likely reinforced the EIF's wish to initiate this project, and to seek leadership positions in the new World Union of Jewish Scouts that would emerge from it.

In August 1931, Jewish teenagers and students travelled from countries in Europe, North Africa and, more or less indirectly, the Middle East, crossing borders and developing a sense of belonging to an international community for a small moment in history. They presented themselves to each other and to others in sport and scouting competitions, discussed questions of Zionism and Jewish education, founded a World Union to strengthen Jewish scouting internationally, mourned the Jewish dead from the riots in Palestine in 1929, held religious services, sang, danced and ate

96 Email from Yoël Sher to Jasper Riemann, 28 October 2020.

97 THEMANYLS, *Pionniers* (as in n. 86), p. 3.

98 SAB File Nr. 1419465; interview with Dan Bitan, 27 October 2020 (both as in n. 77).

99 For more on the later lives of camp participants, see RIEMANN, *The World Camp* (as in n. 1), p. 78–81.

together – in short, they engaged actively with the world and sought their place in it, together.

I view the camp as marked by liminality: the scouts left their usual social roles behind, finding themselves in an experiment designed to transform this group of strangers into a new community. The collective practices in Colleville were crucial factors in the constitution of this community. When the scouts wore their uniforms and solemnly marched into the campsite, they became part of it. They created and shaped the community by performing it. The scouts saw and presented themselves as athletic, young, pacifist, disciplined, patriotic, international – and Jewish. An exhibition gave a sense of material reality to this image of international Jewish youth. The camp's architecture added to the impression. A fence surrounded the campsite and marked the boundary, physically and symbolically, between those who belonged and those who did not. The *Maison de la Mer* produced the impression of a proud and visible Jewish space rooted in the landscape. Different media, textual and photographic, fixed the memory of the camp. It appears that the practice of taking photographs and using them as postcards reinforced the building of community by showing a diverse Jewish scout community, possibly while serving as common reference points of memory for the camp's participants.

The imagined and practiced community in Colleville was not a universal one. Despite the »Camp mondial« label, the scouts seem to have come exclusively from Europe or from countries under the domination of European powers. The presence of Zionist movements, imagery, and performances also spurred controversy. Already prior to the camp, the *Alliance israélite universelle* seems to have refused to financially support the EIF because of these Zionist elements. At the camp itself, the national question was openly debated during the Preparatory Assembly, while differences in opinion around it also marked the textual interpretations of Colleville in its aftermath. Nevertheless, the sources indicate that the camp experience had a profound impact on at least some of the participants. It could even be speculated that this experience of international solidarity motivated some scouts in their later rescue efforts during the Second World War.

Taken together, a close look at the actors, their activities, the spatial configuration of the camp, and its media representation has shed light on the functioning of internationalism at a basic level. The microhistorical method allowed me to describe an instance of cross-national cooperation, activism, and community building which defies easy categorization. Colleville was neither a political or philanthropic campaign to provide financial aid or secure Jewish rights nor simply a copy of other scout jamborees. The camp seems to constitute a unique case of Jewish internationalism, whose most remarkable feature was its main protagonists: Jewish teenagers and students.

