

Jewish Fates: Richard Fuchs and Karl Wolfskehl

By Friedrich Voit

After three years of providing a varied programme of theatre, opera, concerts and lectures the *Jüdische Kulturbund in Deutschland* (Jewish cultural League in Germany) invited the leaders of its branches to a national conference in Berlin for stocktaking and planning of the future direction of the League. The *Kulturbund* was founded in 1933, a few months after the Nazi regime had come to power which began to purge the theatres, orchestras and other cultural institution from their ‘non-Arian’ Jewish members. Almost overnight hundreds of Jewish actors, singers, musicians etc. found themselves without employment. Two of them having been dismissed from their positions at the operatic stages in Berlin, the production assistant Kurt Baumann and the conductor Kurt Singer, proposed a new organisation serving the Jewish community in Berlin and other major cities where most of the Jewish minority lived. They realized that the roughly 175.000 Jews, most of them well educated and with an active interest in the arts, would provide a big enough audience to support their own cultural institutions (theatre, opera, and orchestras). More importantly they also gained the support of the Nazi authorities, especially of Hans Hinkel, the newly appointed head of the Prussian Theatre commission. Such an institution suited the Nazis for several reasons:

The regime would be able to exploit the organization in international propaganda by citing it as evidence that Jews were not being mistreated; it could function as a cultural outlet and source of income for Jews, which would help to quell possible social unrest; and, finally, the creation of the League could help the Nazis control and, ultimately, ensure the end of Jewish involvement in German culture.¹

The Nazis allowed the League to operate under the condition “that the League be staffed by Jewish artists only and financed by the all-Jewish audiences through a monthly membership fee of 2.50 RM [Reichsmark] per person.”² This guaranteed a complete segregation from the general German cultural scene. Only Jewish newspapers were allowed to report on League events. Non-Jewish people wouldn’t know anything about this vibrant cultural life which developed amongst their midst and which was untainted by the nationalistic Nazi ideology, but maintained a cosmopolitan cultural openness. Within three years two further main branches of the League were formed in Cologne and Frankfurt, and smaller local groups sprang up in over forty locations all over Germany.

Any performance, any concert or any publication had to be authorized by the Nazi authorities which tightly censored all activities of the League. They encouraged performances of what they perceived as Jewish works, i.e. works by Jewish writers or composers, or with Jewish and Old Testament themes. ‘Truly German’ works like operas by Wagner or Richard

¹ Lily E. Hirsch, „The Berlin *Jüdischer Kulturbund* and the ‚After-Life‘ of Franz Schubert: Musical Appropriation and Identity Politics in Nazi Germany“, in: *The Musical Quarterly*, Vol. 90 (2008), p. 470.

² Ibid. 471.

Strauss were off limits from the start, others like Beethoven, Schumann or Bach were added somewhat later to the list of prohibited composers. The League's first theatre production in autumn 1933 was Lessing's famous drama *Nathan der Weise* with its message of tolerance represented by a wise Jew. The choice was an affront against Nazi-intolerance and an affirmation of the ethos of German Enlightenment and Classicism.

A major concern of the organizers of the *Kulturbund* was to avoid being imprisoned into a cultural ghetto and of being forced to restrict their activities and performances to works by Jewish artist. In all their productions they intended to maintain high artistic standards as represented by the best works of the past and present. And indeed in the first years this could be achieved with the many unemployed Jewish actors, performers, musicians, directors and lecturers available. Only in later years through losses by emigration it became more difficult to adhere to these standards.

At their conference in September 1936 the participants had wide ranging discussions about how to continue their future work under increasingly difficult and suppressive circumstances. Over three days the delegates focussed on the variety and character of plays and musical works one should offer in their programmes – reflecting both the wide range of German and European cultural tradition – as well as the Jewish focus as demanded from the Nazi authorities.³

To support Jewish composers and to add new pieces to the more and more constrained repertoire the commission of music of the *Kulturbund* announced a competition intended to foster contemporary Jewish music and to encourage especially young composers at the end of the conference. As Kurt Singer, the chairperson of the *Kulturbund*, pointed out the competition was to combine a dual purpose, “einen praktischen und einen ideellen Zweck” (a practical and an inspirational objective): “We wanted to motivate Jewish creative musicians to compose works in response to the contemporary social and psychological Jewish situation and which at the same time artistically enrich our programmes in the *Kulturbünde*.”⁴

The competition was open for all Jewish composers in Germany and abroad. There were four main categories for pieces asked for by the commission which also reflect the character of music performed at the concerts of the *Kulturbund*:

1. A festive prelude for orchestra (duration 5-15minutes).
2. A choral work for a mixed choir for four voices with orchestral accompaniment, also arranged for piano or organ, with a biblical or Jewish theme (duration at least 20 minutes).
3. A choral work for a two or more voice choir for schools and youth organisations.
4. A cycle of songs for a single voice with piano accompaniment.
- 4a A cycle of choral songs for a small choir a cappella or accompanied by instruments.⁵

³ For a documentation of the conference cf. *Geschlossene Vorstellung. Der Jüdische Kulturbund in Deutschland 1933-1941*. Hrsg. von der Akademie der Künste. Berlin 1992, pp. 266-297.

⁴ Kurt Singer, „Ein Wort über die Preisträger“, in: *Jüdische Rundschau*, Nr. 35, 4.5.1937, p. 5: „Wir wollten die jüdischen schaffenden Musiker anspornen zu Werken, die aus der jüdischen Gegenwart und ihren seelischen Bedingtheiten heraus geschaffen sind und die gleichzeitig unsere Programme in den Kulturbünden künstlerisch bereichern.“

⁵ Ibid. p. 296f.: „Das Preisausschreiben gliedert sich in vier Abteilungen:

1. Feierliches Vorspiel für Orchester (Höchstbesetzung: vollständiger Streicherapparat und doppelte Bläser). Dauer: 5-15 Minuten.

Prizes of 100 to 250 marks could be won. All entries had to reach the jury (composed of leading Jewish musicians) by January 15, 1937. Multiple entries by a composer were allowed.

The competition had an extraordinary response. The twelve judges had to assess 123 submissions altogether, of which 62 were selected for closer consideration. All scores were assessed without the judges knowing the names of the composer. From the outset one did not expect to discover musical geniuses or unequalled masterpieces. But these nevertheless provided the benchmarks to form the criteria to find the “hochwertige Gebrauchsmusik” (high quality concert music), as Kurt Singer termed it, the judges were looking for. Each category was judged by five critics who could award up to 10 points per piece. The maximum one work could get was 50 points. How rigorously the judges evaluated the entries can be seen by the fact that none of the works achieved maximum points. Only three prizes were awarded.

In category IV, Song Cycles, with the most entries the judges couldn't agree on a price, none of the cycles submitted was given a sufficient number of points. This also happened in category III with choral works for youth choirs. The winners in the categories I and IVa, Werner Seelig-Bass (Berlin) and Hugo Adler (Mannheim), achieved 35 points which translated to a price money of RM 175.-, and the highest numbers of points received the winner in category II (choral work for a mixed choir) and was rewarded with a price money of RM 200.-. This price went to Richard Fuchs' choral work *Vom jüdischen Schicksal*⁶ (On the Jewish Fate).

In contrast to the other two price winners, who were both highly accomplished and well known musicians and choir masters, Richard Fuchs was - outside his hometown Karlsruhe - a little known composer in 1937. Although we know that music was his first love since his youth, it was only in the early 1930s that a few of his compositions, songs and instrumental works, found an audience in local concerts. By then Fuchs was already in his forties. When it became increasingly difficult to continue his work as a successful architect after the Nazis came to power he found more time for composing. As the catalogue of his work shows, that from 1931 onwards music became the focus of his ambition. Fuchs was convinced of the quality of his work and started vigorously to promote his work and to find recognition. In January 1934 the famous conductor Felix Weingartner, then the director of the symphony orchestra in Basle stated in a letter how much he admired a composition Fuchs had submitted for a performance to him. It must have been a major work, may be the *Symphonie in C minor*

2. Ein Chorwerk für vierstimmigen gemischten Chor mit Orchesterbegleitung, auch eingerichtet für Klavier oder Orgel, mit biblischem oder jüdischem Stoff. Dauer mindestens 20 Minuten.

3. Ein Chorwerk für zwei- oder mehrstimmigen Chor für Schulen und Jugendbünde, eventuell mit obligatem Instrument.

4. Zyklus von Liedern für eine Singstimme mit Klavier.

4a. Zyklus von Chorliedern für kleinen Chor a cappella oder mit Einbeziehung von Instrumenten.“

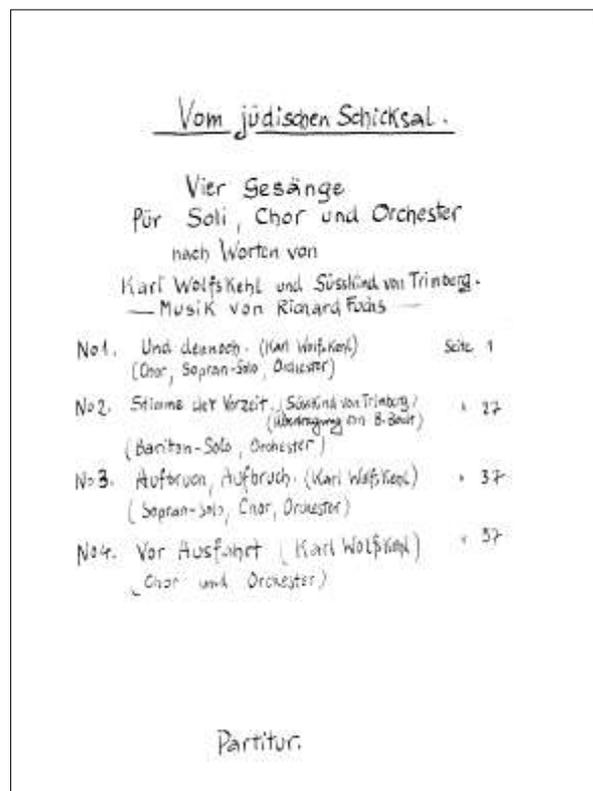
⁶ In category I (festive preludes) there were 15 entries; the winner was Werner Seelig-Bass, Berlin. Category II had 8 entries; winner Richard Fuchs, Karlsruhe. Category III had 9 with no winner. Category IV had 57 entries with no winner, and category IVa (a cappella choirs) had 34 entries; winner Hugo Adler, Mannheim. Several compositions were recommended for a performance (scores printed by the *Kulturbund* or received a “lobende Erwähnung” (meritorious mention). For further details about the outcome of the competition cf. Karl Wiener's report as secretary of the competition in *CV-Zeitung* Nr. 19, 13.5.1937, S. 15 and Kurt Singers article mentioned in footnote 4.

from 1933. However, Weingarten didn't think he could risk a performance by an unknown composer in such difficult times.⁷ Fuchs was a leading member of the local chapter of the *Kulturbund* and several of his smaller pieces were performed between 1932 and 1938 in concerts in his hometown and nearby cities (Mannheim, Stuttgart and Frankfurt).

When the *Kulturbund* announced its competition it was only natural that Fuchs would make a submission. He may have even entered several pieces. Though we know only of the one composition, which won the prize in the second category, and which also achieved the highest number of points in the entire competition. With this success he certainly should have made his name as a new and outstanding composer in Germany. It ought to have opened up a future for him to have his works performed all over Germany and even abroad. However, things turned out quite different.

Vom jüdischen Schicksal is a complex major musical work. The judges characterised it as “a heroic work full of force and power, in parts reaching the monumental grandeur which in form and content amalgamates into a stylistic whole”.⁸ Fuchs completed the score by the end of December 1933. Even before submitting it to the competition, he send a letter to Karl Wolfskehl in which he described his composition which is based on three poems by Wolfskehl and one by the medieval poet Süsskind von Trimberg. Wolfskehl who had left Germany already in 1933 lived at that time in exile in the Italian village of Recco near Genova. In his letter Fuchs gives an outline of the musical character and scope of his work:

The entire composition is a work for choir with orchestra and solo voices. [The first of Wolfskehl's poems] »And Yet« is a chorus with an inserted solo (female voice) for the words ‘And yet we lifted our foreheads again and again’. Süsskind's poem⁹ spiritually bridges several centuries and resonates powerfully with the sound of Your poem; certain quotes in the music reveal an inner meaning which nobody could have perceived. (By the way, the heartfelt-tender sounds accompanying Your words: ‘And yet we lifted our forehead ...’ or ‘Our hour / Once shall bloom from a fertile wound’ echo transformed again with Süsskind's words: ‘the long coat should cover me ... humble be my stride’ etc. – they connect also his melancholic decision and



Richard Fuchs: *Vom jüdischen Schicksal* (1937)
(Manuscript of score; Turnbull Library, Wellington)

⁷ Weingartner to Fuchs, Basle 3.1.34 (Turnbull Library, Wellington)

⁸ Kurt Singer cf. footnote 4: “ein heroisches Werk von Wucht und Kraft, zuweilen ins Monumentale vorstoßend, ein Werk zudem, das Form und Gehalt in eine stilistische Einheit bannt.” – The five judges in category II were: the chairperson of the *Kulturbund*, the conductor Kurt Singer, and the choir masters and conductors Erwin Jospe, Loe Kopf, Berthold Sander and Chemjo Winawer.

⁹ For Süsskind's poem Fuchs used a translation into modern German by the literary critic Bertha Badt-Strauss (1885-1970).

his resignation subconsciously with the idea [from Wolfskehl's poem]: 'When air and light stole through a rift of mouldy dungeon, / They found us bowed over the book'!) Süskind's poem has the effect in its text and in the music to conjure up a spirit from the Middle Ages, and it has for me as the creator, as perhaps for you as well, a melancholic appeal to maybe reach out in spirit to a distant forebear.

The (third) of the poems »Setting Forth« I have given to a female voice (Süskind is of course a solo for a male) and only at the end the choir sings: 'But none of us who wanders east ...'. This by the way has turned out like a folk song, which deeply moves me each time when I play it to friends. – The final chorus »Before Setting Out« by and large became a marching song, this is not meant literally, only indicates the overall character of the music.¹⁰

All four poems reflect a mood of defiance in the face of the militant and officially sanctioned anti-Jewish sentiment in Nazi Germany. The poem »Und dennoch« looks at the long history of Jewish suffering in the Diaspora and gains renewed self-confidence from its strength of survival over the centuries. Süskind's 13th century poem recalls the poet's reaffirmation of his Jewish identity when his art is no longer liked at the courts. The two following poems, »Aufbruch, Aufbruch« and »Vor Ausfahrt«, call for a departure without regrets from the country which doesn't tolerate them any longer and celebrates the decision to move on and start anew "im Osten" (in the East), which probably most read as a barely disguised allusion to the Zionist dream of building a Jewish homeland in Palestine.

Like so many Jews Richard Fuchs too was deeply impressed by Wolfskehl's cycle of poems *Die Stimme spricht* (The Voice speaks) which was first published in 1934.¹¹ They were hailed as an outstanding poetic expression of the feelings amongst the Jews in Germany and their response to Nazi anti-Semitism. The small volume consoled and heartened the

¹⁰ Richard Fuchs to Karl Wolfskehl, Karlsruhe 2.1.1937 (Deutsches Literaturarchiv Marbach; DLA): „Das Ganze ist ein Chorwerk mit Orchester und Solisten. Und zwar »Und dennoch« ein Chor mit zwischengesetztem Solo (Frauenstimme) für die Worte: ‚und dennoch hob die Stirn sich wieder und wieder‘. Die Worte des Süskind überbrücken geistig einige Jahrhunderte und bringen sie mit dem gewaltigen Klang Ihres Gedichts zusammen – wobei gewisse Zitate in der Musik einen innern Sinn aufdecken, den kein Mensch hat ahnen können. (Die übrigens innig-zarten Klänge zu Ihren Worten: ‚und dennoch hob die Stirn sich, ...‘ oder: ‚unsere Stunde blüht einmal aus gebärerischer Wunde‘ tönen verwandelt wieder in Süskinds Worten: ‚der Mantel soll umfahn mich lang ... demütiglich sei nun mein Gang‘ usw. --- sie bringen also seinen wehmütigen Entschluss und seine Resignation im Untersinn zusammen mit der Idee: ‚drang nur ein Spalt Luft – Licht – in stickigen Kerker er fand uns überm Buch‘!)

Süskinds Worte wirken textlich und in der Musik, wie eine Beschwörung eines Geistes aus dem Mittelalter, und es hat auch für mich – vielleicht auch für Sie? – als Schöpfer einen wehmütigen Reiz, einem Ur-vor-Alten geistig gewissermaßen die Hand reichen zu dürfen.-

Das (dritte) der Gedichte »Aufbruch, Aufbruch« habe ich einer Frauenstimme gegeben (Süskind ist natürlich Solo eines Mannes und erst zum Schluss singt der Chor: ‚doch keiner, keiner, von uns allen ...‘. Dies ist übrigens ein Volkslied geworden, das mich selbst immer erschüttert, wenn ich es Freunden vorführe. – Der Schlusschor »Vor Ausfahrt« ist im Großen und Ganzen ein Marsch-Gesang geworden, natürlich ist dies nicht wörtlich gemeint, sondern nur um den Gesamteindruck der Musik zu bezeichnen.“ – For the English translation of the titles and texts of Wolfskehl's poems I quoted: Karl Wolfskehl, 1933. *A Poem Sequence. In German and English. Transl. by Carol North Valhope and Ernst Morwitz*. Schocken: New York 1947.

¹¹ *Die Stimme spricht* was first published in 1934 as volume 17 of the *Schocken Bücherei*. A second edition as well as an enlarged version of the cycle appeared in 1936 underlining the continued popularity of Wolfskehl's poems. A Hebrew translation was published 1943 in Tel Aviv and an English-German edition under the title *1933. A Poem Sequence* appeared in 1947 in New York. - The cycle is included in the edition of Karl Wolfskehl's *Späte Dichtungen* (Göttingen 2009).

readers and accompanied many of them in their emigration or into exile.¹² The choice of Wolfskehl's poems by Richard Fuchs may have been also a strategic one: the popularity of the poems would also contribute to and enhance the interest in the composition. In his letter to Wolfskehl Fuchs even suggested a dedication of his choral work to the poet and expressed his hope that Wolfskehl might assist him to get the composition performed which, as he wrote, might – like already Wolfskehl's poems – in later years give a “testimony of our heroic days”¹³

Wolfskehl answered Fuchs immediately and very enthusiastically. He applauded Fuchs' selection and arrangement of the poems and agreed with his interpretation of the poem »Vor Ausfahrt«: “I too can hear and recite this poem only in marching cadences.”¹⁴ Indicating his comprehensive music related knowledge and interests he asks for a copy of the composition hoping that he would be able to find somebody who could play parts to him. Fuchs sent him both the complete as well as a piano score.

With great pride and expressing again his gratitude again for Wolfskehl's poems Fuchs informs the “venerated poet” in May that he had won the highest prize for his composition in the *Kulturbund*-competition and that it probably will be performed in the near future in Berlin – “provided the censor doesn't thwart it”¹⁵ He had received the news about his success in the competition while in England, where he had just taken his oldest daughter to a boarding school – “with a very sad heart, but nevertheless relieved”¹⁶ –, obviously a first step towards a possible emigration of the family. Wolfskehl congratulated Fuchs wholeheartedly to his award and expressed his growing desire to listen to the music. Despite repeated efforts he wasn't able to find a musician in his remote Italian abode who could have played to him from the score. In answer to Fuchs' censorship fears Wolfskehl recommended to send *Vom jüdischen Schicksal* to Bruno Walter,¹⁷ whom Wolfskehl knew though not in person, but had exchanged letters with, so that he could refer to him and his suggestion assuring Fuchs that he is keen to hear about the future fate of the work “with the greatest interest and sympathy”.¹⁸

Wolfskehl's enthusiasm and support encouraged Fuchs to undertake some more steps to promote himself and his work. Without the consent of Wolfskehl he gave excerpts of their correspondence to a Jewish periodical, the *C.V.-Zeitung*, which published them together with a picture of Fuchs in their edition of May 27. Proudly he sent a copy of this article to

¹² Cf. Friedrich Voit, *Karl Wolfskehl. Leben und Werk im Exil*. Göttingen 2005, pp. 98-130 and Kerstin Schoor: »O dürft ich Stimme sein, das Volk zu rütteln!« Karl Wolfskehls literarische Wirkungen im jüdischen Kulturkreis in Deutschland nach 1933. In: Elke Vera Kotowski/Gert Mattenklott (Eds.): »O dürft ich Stimme sein, das Volk zu rütteln!« *Leben und Werk von Karl Wolfskehl (1869-1948)*. Hildesheim/Zürich/New York 2007, pp. 93-119.

¹³ Fuchs to Wolfskehl, Karlsruhe 2.1.1937 (DLA): “Es ist für mich begreiflicher Weise schwer, über mein Werk mit Ihnen zu sprechen [...], das es verdient bekannt zu werden, und vielleicht noch in sehr späten Tagen Zeugnis geben wird von unseren heroischen Tagen.“

¹⁴ Wolfskehl to Fuchs, Recco 6.1.37: „»Vor Ausfahrt« kann auch ich nur in Marschkadenz hören und vortragen“.

¹⁵ Fuchs to Wolfskehl, Karlsruhe 10.5.37 (DLA): „Falls nicht die Zensur einen Strich dadurch macht“.

¹⁶ Ibid.: „mit blutendem Herzen und doch froh“. – Fuchs, who had been addressed by Wolfskehl in the previous letter as “Sehr verehrter Komponist“ (venerated composer) returns this acknowledgment in kind by addressing Wolfskehl in this letter as “Sehr verehrter Dichter”.

¹⁷ The German/Austrian conductor Bruno Walter (1876-1962) was a favourite target of Nazi anti-Semitism because of his Jewish background. He left Germany in 1933 and worked at the time mostly in Vienna; 1939 he emigrated to the USA.

¹⁸ Wolfskehl to Fuchs, Recco 12.5.37 (DLA): „Ich folge mit größter Spannung und Sympathie.“

Wolfskehl. A hidden reason for this action may have been the intention to exert some public pressure on the *Kulturbund* to submit *Vom jüdischen Schicksal* to the censor. Kurt Singer feared that in particular the first chorus »Und dennoch« might not pass the office of the “Reichskulturwalter” (Guardian of the Culture of the Reich) Hans Hinkel, although this poem had already been published. Any performance or event of the *Kulturbund* had to be approved by this office. Singer wished to have the first chorus left out, which Fuchs, however, rejected: “I have to say”, he wrote to Wolfskehl, “that the poem is to me at least as important as my own music; if I would use emotive language I could say that the words of the poem are so to speak sacred to me. A performance without the first chorus I will never permit, it would be a work without sense and meaning!”¹⁹

Wolfskehl must have been surprised and even somewhat offended when Fuchs began to involve him more and more in his attempts to initiate a performance of *Vom jüdischen Schicksal*. Fuchs asked the poet to try to get as “quickly as possible” the address of Arturo Toscanini whose support he was seeking to push for a concert in Palestine and to overcome the well-known resistance there against any recital using the German language: “I would like to send him the work, one word by him would be sufficient, to overcome any objection against a performance in Palestine which otherwise might fail, because of the fact that the text is written in German.”²⁰ He indicates that he also knows the German conductor Hans Wilhelm Steinberg personally who had emigrated to Palestine and was at this time a conductor with the Palestine Symphony Orchestra.²¹ With a recommendation by Toscanini and his acquaintance with Steinberg Fuchs hoped to shorten the usual “Instanzenweg” (official channels) and to counteract any possible intrigues he feared in advance. Fuchs doubted that Bruno Walter, whom Wolfskehl had suggested, would have a suitable opportunity for a performance of the work in Austria, “because it is aimed especially at a Jewish audience, and where can it be found if not with us in Germany, where it exists by coercion? In Austria?” Yet he thought it might be helpful if Wolfskehl together with him would write a letter to Bruno Walter.²²

Initially Wolfskehl did not respond to these requests. Only when Fuchs continued to ask for further support by sending a photocopy of the score to be forwarded to Toscanini together with a letter, which he asked the poet to translate,²³ Wolfskehl broke his silence.

¹⁹ Fuchs to Wolfskehl, Karlsruhe 28.5.37 (DLA): „Nun muss ich sagen, dass mir die Dichtung mindestens ebenso wichtig ist, als meine Musik – wenn ich pathetische Worte brauchen wollte, könnte ich sagen, dass mir die Worte so zu sagen heilig seien. – Und eine Aufführung ohne den ersten Chor werde ich niemals zugeben; - es wäre ein Werk ohne Kopf und ohne Sinn!“

²⁰ Ibid: „Ich möchte ihm das Werk senden, ein Wort von ihm wird genügen, um eine Aufführung in Palästina durch zu setzen, welche vielleicht sonst an der Tatsache, dass der Text deutsch ist, scheitern könnte.“

²¹ Cf. the English Wikipedia entry on William Steinberg for first information: “Steinberg was born Hans Wilhelm Steinberg in Cologne, Germany. He was an early protégé of Otto Klemperer. Steinberg left Germany in 1936 for the British Mandate in Palestine, which is now Israel, because the Nazis had removed him from the Frankfurt Opera in 1933 and had limited him to conducting all-Jewish orchestras. Eventually, with founder Bronislaw Huberman, Steinberg became the first conductor of the Palestine Symphony orchestra, which would later be known as the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra. Steinberg was conducting the orchestra when Arturo Toscanini visited there in 1936. So delighted was Toscanini with Steinberg's preliminary groundwork for his concerts that he chose him as his assistant in preparing for the NBC broadcasts.”

²² Fuchs to Wolfskehl, Karlsruhe 28.5.37 (DLA): „weil es sich ja ganz speziell an ein jüdisches Publikum wendet und wo gibt es das, außer bei uns in Deutschland, wo es zwangsweise so ist? – Österreich?“

²³ Cf. Fuchs to Wolfskehl, Karlsruhe 14.6.37 (DLA)

This letter clearly expressed Wolfskehl's annoyance about Fuchs actions and demands on him. Pointing out to his deliberately living a secluded life away from any publicity, he objects to Fuchs publishing their correspondence: "It displeased me already considerably to find excerpts of my letters sent to you personally published. My literary work and my private life are two different spheres."²⁴ Politely he rejects Fuchs' wish to translate the letter to Toscanini excusing himself with his insufficient Italian. But still he continues to help in finding ways for a performance in Palestine:

I have recently written in support of a performance of your work to Dr Heinrich Simon²⁵ from Frankfort whom I have known for many years and who presently lives as a musician in Tel Aviv and is closely involved with the organisation of the orchestra there. Despite my continued strong interest in your work I do not believe that I can do anything further.²⁶

He cannot believe, as Fuchs fears, "that poetry by Karl Wolfskehl in the original language" could be an obstacle for a performance in Palestine.

Realising that he had gone too far Fuchs apologized immediately for having used without permission their correspondence and asking for Wolfskehl's assistance in initiating opportunities to have *Vom jüdischen Schicksal* performed in Palestine. The reasons for his actions and his urgency, Fuchs now explains, were not only to find a stage for this work written "mit aller Leidenschaft" (with all his heart), but also, and that is increasingly important for him, to find a "Weg ins 'Freie'"²⁷ (a path to freedom) through a performance, i. e. an exile for his wife, his children and – implicitly – himself:

The thought, to be separated sooner or later from my children, possibly, no in all probability, burdens me the same way or more, as my Jewish fellow sufferers in Germany.

I am not young enough anymore, to be able to easily start a new professional career in a foreign country. Apart from that it would be a true martyrdom for an artistically gifted person like me being forced to struggle for my daily living perhaps as a little employee in a foreign place. That I love to work, you will believe me as you can see it for yourself, but my work has to engage and fulfil me.²⁸

²⁴ Wolfskehl to Fuchs 16.6.37 (DLA): „So hat mich bereits einigermaßen betroffen, Auszüge aus meinen persönlich an Sie gerichteten Briefe gedruckt zu finden. Der Weg, den meine Werke durchlaufen und mein privater Lebensgang sind nicht derselbe.“

²⁵ The influential publisher and journalist Dr Heinrich Simon, a distant relative of Wolfskehl, was forced to give up his position with the *Frankfurter Zeitung*. He emigrated to Palestine in 1934, where he was involved with the founding 'Palestine Philharmonic Orchestra' in Tel Aviv. He emigrated to the USA in 1939, where he fell victim of a (possibly politically motivated) murder in 1941.

²⁶ Wolfskehl to Fuchs 16.6.37 (DLA): „Ich habe dieser Tage zugunsten einer Aufführung Ihres Werkes an den mir seit Jahren bekannten Dr. Heinrich Simon aus Frankfurt geschrieben, der jetzt als Musiker in Tel Aviv lebt und an der Organisation des dortigen Orchesters größten Anteil hat. Trotz meines andauernden ausgesprochenen Interesses an Ihrem Werk glaube ich, nicht weiter eingreifen zu können.“

²⁷ An allusion to the famous novel by the Austrian Jewish writer Arthur Schnitzler *Der Weg ins Freie* (The Way into the Open) from 1908.

²⁸ Fuchs to Wolfskehl, Karlsruhe 17.6.37 (DLA): „Der Gedanke, möglicher Weise, nein wahrscheinlich, früher oder später von meinen Kindern getrennt sein zu müssen, zehrt an mir ebenso oder mehr, wie an allen jüdischen deutschen Leidensgenossen. Ich bin nicht mehr jung genug, um so ganz leicht einen Berufskampf in irgend einem fremden Land von vorn beginnen zu können, - und außerdem wäre es für eine so erfüllte Natur wie meine ein wahres Martyrium, vielleicht als kleiner Angestellter in der Fremde mein tägliches Brot erkämpfen zu

Thanking Wolfskehl for his letter to Heinrich Simon whom he intends to write to himself as well as to Bronislaw Huberman (1882-1947), at the time a co-founder of the Palestine Philharmonic Orchestra, Fuchs still hasn't given up the hope for a premier in Germany. He also harbours the "leise Hoffnung" (cautious hope) for a personal meeting with Wolfskehl in Italy, provided he can get the necessary foreign exchange.

Very grateful for this frank and honest explanation and moved by Fuchs' personal situation Wolfskehl immediately wrote back reassuring his supportive and friendly tone. As Jews and artists, he emphasised, they share the same plight and task:

All these fates point to the continued power of the supreme idea which we have to find back to again and again. Today it reveals itself by rousing and guiding the way for each of us.²⁹

Suggesting to consider also possibilities in the United States with its active Jewish communities he expressed his delight in the possibility of meeting up with Fuchs.

The visit never eventuated and the correspondence ceased. In a last plainly dejected letter Fuchs told Wolfskehl in November 1937 that the already undertaken preparations for the first performance *Vom jüdischen Schicksal* had to be stopped, because the censor had – as he had long feared – forbidden any performance of the work. The request had been "abgelehnt" (turned down), no reasons given. That Wolfskehl's poems had been published before in Germany, didn't matter. It seems that a choral work expressing pride, defiant self-respect and confidence in the survival attesting to the strength of the 'Jewish fate' was unacceptable for the Nazi-censor. But Fuchs' disappointment extended beyond the Nazi-rejection and was caused also by the lack of interest and of any positive response from Palestine:

Dr. Heinrich Simon, whom I have sent as he had asked for a score of my choral work to Austria in August, hasn't responded at all. I have recently written to him again to Tel Aviv and one should expect that at least he would return the score which constitute a material value of about RM 60.- for me.³⁰

Some tentative inquiries in the USA didn't lead to any tangible results either. Fuchs seems to have given up any hope of a performance of *Vom jüdischen Schicksal* in a foreseeable future.

When this letter reached Wolfskehl the poet was already preparing his departure from Europe after fascist Italy – pressured by Nazi-Germany – began to introduce anti-Jewish legislation. In May 1938 he left Italy for New Zealand, the country furthest away from Europe. He settled down in Auckland. At this time Richard Fuchs could not have foreseen that he and his family too would find refuge in this antipodean country about a year later–

müssen – dass ich ein freudiger Arbeiter sein kann, werden Sie glauben, da Sie es ja sehen, nur muss mich meine Arbeit auch ergreifen und erfüllen.“

²⁹ Wolfskehl to Fuchs, Recco 21.6.37 (DLA): „alle diese Schicksale weisen doch auf das Walten jener Idee, in der wir uns immer wieder zusammenfinden müssen. Heute zeigt sie sich aufrüttelnd und auch wegweisend jedem von uns.“ Wolfskehl is referring to the idea expresses in his poem »Und dennoch« which opens *Vom jüdischen Schicksal*.

³⁰ Fuchs to Wolfskehl, Karlsruhe 11.11.37 (DLA): „ Herr Dr. Heinrich Simon, dem ich eine Partitur meines Chorwerkes auf seinen Wunsch im August ins Salzkammergut schickte, hat bisher auch noch kein Sterbenswörtchen von sich hören lassen.

Ich habe ihm nun noch einmal nach Tel Aviv geschrieben, man sollte doch hoffen dürfen, dass er wenigstens die Noten zurückgeben würde, welche immerhin einen materiellen Wert von ungefähr Mk 60.- für mich darstellen.“

after the experience of the nightmare of November Pogrom in 1938 and of Fuchs' days of imprisonment filled with horror in the Dachau concentration camp. He and his family escaped from Germany on December 26 and via England reached New Zealand early 1939 where Richard found work as an architect in Wellington.

This rather sad story didn't end here. It has an equally sad epilogue. Both, Fuchs and Wolfskehl, found in New Zealand a safe haven, they made new acquaintances and friends, but their artistic talents remained by and large unrecognized. They were exiles and yearned for a Europe which had formed them and that they had to leave behind. Fuchs learnt about Wolfskehl's living in Auckland and renewed his contact in 1940 with a letter in writing him about his submission of an architectural plan for a new cathedral to be built in Auckland.³¹ And when Wolfskehl travelled to the South Island in early 1941, it was to be his only longer journey he undertook, he used a short stopover in Wellington on his way back to Auckland to visit Richard Fuchs there in March. This first (and only) meeting did not develop further or rekindle their correspondence.

Richard Fuchs despite many attempts had little success in getting New Zealand musicians and musical groups interested in his compositions before his early death in 1947. For a while he must have hoped to have *Vom jüdischen Schicksal* performed in New Zealand, for the New Zealand poet Alan Mulgan (1881-1962) translated for him the German texts of the choral work into English. But as it happened before, his efforts again failed disappointingly. The work still awaits its premier – and with it the chance to be heard and be recognized as an important and major “testimony for the heroic spirit with which we [Jews] were able to endure our enormous fate.”³²

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³¹ Fuchs to Wolfskehl, Wellington 28.7.40 (DLA).

³² Fuchs to Wolfskehl, Karlsruhe 10.5.37 (DLA): „Zeugnis [...] für den heroischen Geist, mit dem wir unser ungeheures Schicksal zu erleiden befähigt waren.“