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**On the Anti-Jewish Rhetoric in Władysław Bocquet's  
*Przez Morze Czerwone ku gettom Europy.*  
*Powstanie i dzieje narodu żydowskiego*  
(Through the Red Sea Toward the Ghettos of Europe.  
The Rise and History of the Jewish Nation)**

ABSTRACT

In Bocquet's book, thanks to his skilful structuring of arguments, it was possible to include a plethora of rhetorical and argumentative tricks. I would like to stress the expression "skilful structuring of arguments" – it is exactly that clear and simple structure, rather than the legitimacy of the argumentation, that gives the impression of correctness and, in consequence, of truthfulness. The arguments most often used by Bocquet are those associated with populist statements and demagoguery – arguments appealing to universal agreement, passion and prejudice, and to financial profits. We more rarely see arguments appealing to authority or sympathy. As for sympathy, it matches neither the strong, rational posture that Bocquet wants to build in the reader, nor the intentional objectifying of Jews which he consistently hammers home.

In *From the Red Sea Toward the Ghettos of Europe*, the 20th century situation is explained through the contents of the Old Testament, political connections and revolutionary coups through "conspiracy theories", and art – through a theory of race, among other things. Bocquet's writing exemplifies typical 20th century Nazi propaganda, and his book reveals the dark and unwillingly discussed anti-Semitic motifs of Polish and European tradition. The book is directed at readers who – contrary to ideas promoted today – did not have an unambiguous and open attitude towards the Jews. The pre-war Polish culture adopted a lot of beliefs about the Jews which in our times can seem surprising, but which were simply a part of the world and everyday life in the 20th century. Ignorance and fear of the unknown constituted a fertile ground for Bocquet's claims, on which more fruits of Nazi propaganda could ripen.

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And according to the words of the prophet, the Jewish people were  
dispersed all over the entire world,  
sowing the evil from their own homeland everywhere.  
Jews carried the power of vices, mistakes,  
superstitions, and addictions into other nations,  
injecting them with the poison of disintegration

W. Boucquet, *Przez Morze Czerwone ku gettom Europy...*<sup>1</sup>

*A Manual on the Cultural Politics of the Department of Propaganda at the Office of General Governor Hans Frank* was published in the General Government in 1940<sup>2</sup>. It covers useful hints concerning cultural life in the General Government. Apart from restrictions concerning Poles and Ukrainians, there is also some rather unambiguous information: Jews are forbidden from attending or taking part in all kinds of cultural activities and events. After the founding of the General Government, all editorial offices were closed and their property confiscated<sup>3</sup>. Only translated German newspapers were published for Poles and Ukrainians, as well as a few for the Jews (around fifty titles in total). These magazines became the basis of a widespread, General-Government-led propaganda campaign which was directed mainly against the Jews. The aim was to justify the confiscation of private and national possessions, the liquidation of ghettos, and other acts aimed at the extermination of the Jewish nation. The anti-Semitic propaganda pushed lines such as the Jewish epidemic – as the inscription on a propaganda poster from 1942 stated – “Jews, lice, typhus fever”.

<sup>1</sup> W. Boucquet, *Przez Morze Czerwone ku gettom Europy. Powstanie i dzieje narodu żydowskiego*, Warszawa 1942, p. 325.

<sup>2</sup> *Instrukcja wydziału propagandy przy Urzędzie Generalnego Gubernatora Hansa Franka, w sprawie polityki kulturalnej (1940)*, [online] [http://pl.wikisource.org/wiki/Instrukcja\\_wydzialu%C5%82u\\_propagandy\\_przy\\_Urz%C4%99dzie\\_Generalnego\\_Gubernatora\\_Hansa\\_Franka\\_w\\_sprawie\\_polityki\\_kulturalnej\\_\(1940\)](http://pl.wikisource.org/wiki/Instrukcja_wydzialu%C5%82u_propagandy_przy_Urz%C4%99dzie_Generalnego_Gubernatora_Hansa_Franka_w_sprawie_polityki_kulturalnej_(1940)); see also: S. Piotrowski, *Dziennik Hansa Franka i dowody polskie przeciwko SS. Sprawy Polskie Przed Międzynarodowym Trybunałem Wojennym w Norymberdze*, t. 2, Warszawa 1970, p. 322–323.

<sup>3</sup> See T. Głowiński, *O nowy porządek europejski. Ewolucja hitlerowskiej propagandy politycznej wobec Polaków w Generalnym Gubernatorstwie 1939–1945*, Wrocław 2000, p. 13.

The following reflection is based on an analysis of the anti-Jewish and propaganda book entitled *Through the Red Sea Toward the Ghettos of Europe. The Rise and History of the Jewish Nation* by Władysław Bocquet. Excerpts will be analysed in terms of their linguistics and content – it will be an analysis of the language of propaganda. I will not get involved in a discussion on the value of the book, nor will I engage in polemics with the author. I do not think that such a reaction to this problem is necessary in contemporary times. Political comments would cause this article to lose its philosophical advantage in favour of a futile debate on matters which do not really require discussion. Thus, the structure of my article is connected with the main concerns of the three parts of Bocquet's book. The article starts with a short presentation of Bocquet's general comments about the personality and character of the Jews. Then I will describe his interpretation of the introduction of obligatory emblems and the creation of ghettos. The article will finish with my laying out the author's position on the matter of art and music created by the Jews.

In the article I will cover the problem of genocide in its theoretical and opinion-forming aspect, which shaped the everyday life of thousands of people. Such life in Poland often continued irrespective of tragic and important historical events: war, extermination, occupation, or revolution. It rolled along with the mundaneness of everyday issues – caring for children and the elderly, work, and attempts to maintain a home – often in spite of the eagerness to fight or the feelings of injustice that family members and friends often experienced. However, an important fight was fought in this everyday life – the struggle to keep one's national and religious identity and, above all, the fight for wisdom and truth.

The book chosen for this analysis is one of the most important propaganda and quasi-scientific publications in Poland during the Nazi occupation, distributed mainly in the area of the General Government. Today it is difficult to find any information on the subject of the book or its author, hiding under the pseudonym "Władysław Bocquet". In the original edition, the book consists of three parts: "The Rise of the Jewish Nation", "Jewish Statehood" and "Jews in Diaspora". The first part was reprinted in 2001 by Worldmedia in Wrocław<sup>4</sup>. According to the website [www.ksiazka.net.pl](http://www.ksiazka.net.pl), this release was close to becoming the subject of a court case and was withdrawn from distribution. Nowadays the book is most often mentioned in historical or scientific works<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>4</sup> See W. Bocquet, *Przez Morze Czerwone ku gettom Europy. Część I. Okres powstania narodu żydowskiego*, Wrocław 2001.

<sup>5</sup> See L. Jockheck, *Propaganda im Generalgouvernement: die NS-Besatzungspresse*

In online forums there are quite a lot of people searching for this book, some even calling for another edition.

## JEWISH PERSONALITY AND ATTITUDES

The author of the book consistently applies a few linguistic and rhetorical tools in order to evoke in the readers a particular relation to the situation of Jews under Nazi occupation. Relatively rarely do we come across appeals to authority in this book (Lat. *argumentum re verecundiam*), but due to the general subject matter of the volume they are important for my article. Let us analyse the first argument which is somewhat controversial rhetorically. Bocquet writes that: *for the characterisation of the Jews we used the works of Chancellor Adolf Hitler, A. Rosenberg, W. Farago, Rev. Dr. S. Trzeciak and others*<sup>6</sup>. In popular understanding, Hitler was not a moral or scientific authority for a considerable percentage of the readers of the book, which was written especially for Poles, but the psychological mechanism works automatically: the Germans are winning the war and are the invaders of Poland. Their military and political supremacy, as well as the threat to one's life if expressing a different opinion about the Jews, all extort a passive attitude from the reader of the book. The effect is the same as if the readers themselves regarded Hitler as a moral and scientific authority. It is not important here that the authority mentioned stems from indisputable military capability (as showcased by the course of the war until 1942). The authority of Hitler in these fields is being mindlessly and unwittingly transferred to other spheres of life: morality, ethical evaluations, and scientific knowledge<sup>7</sup>.

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*für Deutsche und Polen 1939–1945*, Osnabrück 2006; K. Woźniakowski, *Prasa, kultura, wojna: studia z dziejów czasopiśmiennictwa, kultury literackiej i artystycznej lat 1939–1945*, Kraków 2005.

<sup>6</sup> See W. Bocquet, *Przez Morze Czerwone ku gettom Europy. Powstanie...*, op. cit., p. 8.

<sup>7</sup> The confidence in the actions and views of Adolf Hitler is strengthened by a repeated belief in his good intentions. Here moral evaluation stops at the level of wishful thinking and the principle “the end justifies the means” comes to life. Today perhaps this might seem to be an unreasonable belief in the puerility of the reader, but let us remember that the book wasn't written for people who had easy and unrestricted access to information concerning the scale of damage caused by World War II. Its readers were cut off from objective or alternative sources of information, and thus became an easy target for propaganda. Let us recall two of Bocquet's statements referring to Hitler's intentions: “Chancellor Adolf Hitler has decided to devote all his powers to save for the country those people who could and should

Similarly, putting the names of Adolf Hitler and Stanisław Trzeciak side-by-side is a useful rhetorical trick. The reader does not question what actually links these two figures. His attention is directed subtly, on the basis of the quiet and false assumption about the similarity of outlooks between the Nazis and the Catholics, the latter being represented here by the world-famous expert on the Talmud, doctor of theology and professor. Bocquet passes over in silence all the ideological disagreements between the two figures. The sole purpose of his words is to instil in his readers, at the very beginning of the book, the belief that, fundamentally – as the authority of the priest-professor is supposed to confirm – the world view of Catholics matches that of the Nazis. And thus, if you are a Catholic, you are also a Nazi and, as shall come to pass soon enough, also an anti-Semite.

Bocquet's opinion is backed up by the thesis about the Aryan origin of Christ. Fundamentally, one should describe such an argument as manipulating the ignorance of the readers (Lat. *argument re ignorantium*). As a matter of fact, such a view found many supporters amongst German scientists and was widely used by the Nazi propaganda. Its influence deepened the already wide gap between the two social environments. This argument was used by Bocquet in the following statement:

How could Christ come from this nation! How many more thoughts he had in common with the Samaritans! The entire life of Christ and his teaching contradicts the theories of the Jews stating that reputedly the Mother of Christ, Mary, was Jewish and directly descended from the line of David. If it had been so, her Son could not have [...] propagated ideas standing in such contradiction with the Jewish character and the Jewish world view. How much closer to the Aryan psyche is the teaching of Jesus, a fact proven by its dissemination amongst Aryan nations. Since we also know that in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC the entire land of Chanaan, especially the later Galilee, was under the influence of Aryan strangers from the north, we can't see a heresy in the statement that Jesus could have come from those Aryans<sup>8</sup>.

Here Bocquet puts himself in the position of a scientific authority and so his statements are supposed to be treated as a distanced and cool evaluation of both the words of the Bible and the social situation in the 20th century. The reader is not aware that this Bocquet-scientific-authority never actually

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become the foundation of the might of the German nation [...] and So chancellor Adolf Hitler has become the scourge of God for Jews in Germany and has given others an example of how to properly act in order to get rid of these vermin [...]". See *ibidem*, p. 523–524.

<sup>8</sup> See *ibidem*, p. 298.

existed, and that the book could have been written by a group of a dozen or so efficient anti-Semites, whose surnames most probably will never be revealed. Without this information it is not possible to make an appraisal of the value of this scientific authority in a deliberate and responsible way.

Bocquet does not avoid using the term “anti-Semitism”: he treats it as the appropriate and rational world view for every Christian. He, however, consistently remains only a theoretician. In the context of the twentieth-century situation, he does not directly incite violence or encourage mob rule, but he does so indirectly, since he recognises such actions as rational and right. With subtler tools of persuasion, he achieves the same effect. Bocquet refrains from engaging with the topic of action, since he prefers not to put the question of how anti-Semitism would be carried out in practice before himself or the reader. This is simply not necessary, since Bocquet’s main task is to change the attitude of his readers, to “prepare” them for action should the need arise. Existing exclusively on the theoretical plane is the best method for freeing the reader from the weight of the moral evaluation of the tragic situation of the Jews at the time of the *Shoah*. Anyone can regard himself as, indeed, an anti-Semite, but never call for a massacre of the Jews or take an active part in such events. A considerable section of the Polish population held such a position before the war, which was made possible by the fact that the Jewish population was never actually closely assimilated. Bocquet decides the question explicitly: “Our aspiration should be to become independent from the Jews. That should be the real result of the so-called «anti-Semitism»<sup>9</sup>.

Bocquet argues repeatedly that throughout history Catholics made repeated attempts to assimilate or socialise with the Jews, giving them a helping hand and encouraging them to live together within one society. Irrespective of the correctness of this statement, the author unjustifiably identifies historically distant actions as the grounds for present-day attitudes: we (as a race, a social group, a society) helped you a lot of times, and now I (as an individual) am feeling exempt from the duty to help you. With this Bocquet convinces the reader that he has “clean hands” and should not become involved in the matters of the Jews, because – as history supposedly shows – this unnecessary commitment will again be fruitless:

Edifying the Jew, according to our Christian notion, is not possible to achieve. It is impossible to win their recognition or appreciation; they accept benefits provided to them, but simultaneously plot to cheat and use their benefactor. [...] The Jew is the biggest enemy of mankind and is not only an exploiter, but, what is worse, a demoral-

<sup>9</sup> See *ibidem*, p. 514.

iser. The Jew deliberately degrades the population with alien faith, in order to derive bigger profits from it. He corrupts and degrades following the imperative from the rabbis and hints of the Talmud<sup>10</sup>.

Levelling the entire Jewish milieu under the joint term “the Jew” is a simple identification and stigmatisation that we often find in Bocquet’s deliberations. Jews are deprived of individual features, treated as an amorphous mass, and subjected to extreme dehumanisation. He objectifies people, thanks to which the problematic human relationships can be solved with systemic, automated, and non-human tools, without the need to subject them to the moral judgment of the conscience. A general and universal tendency for lying, fraud, and the exploitation of infidels is the main character trait that Bocquet assigns to the Jews. Moreover, there is

Human trafficking of people of all faiths and nationalities, practicing usury, taking others’ property by means of swindle, gaining seniority thanks to intrigues and bribery, purchasing Church property from the hands of the sacriligious, and finally, committing ritual felonies in order to get Christian blood for the period of Passover, as well as committing other innumerable misdeeds<sup>11</sup>.

These are the main, but not the only charges against the Jewish community, which Bocquet tried to brand with one keyword, making it the epigraph of the entire book as well: *Truth is the biggest enemy of the Jewry*<sup>12</sup>. Of course, such an explicit judgment against a different belief system could be taken as problematic and too straightforward even for the most persistent reader; therefore one should add something about what anti-Semites considered the “Jewish attitude”. In order to do so, Bocquet tries to prove that it is particularly characteristic of Jews to feel congenital superiority and uncompromising dislike for infidels:

Jews, whether speaking or writing about themselves, do not call themselves anything other than noble, highly regarded, gentle, clever, charitable, loving their neighbours, pious, adoring God, chivalrous. In other words – a Jew is God’s beautiful creature, personifying all virtues on Earth, a contrast to the “rotten Catholicism” or “fanatical Lutheranism” – these are the two measures that Jews apply to themselves and to Christians<sup>13</sup>.

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<sup>10</sup> Ibidem, p. 512.

<sup>11</sup> Ibidem, p. 393.

<sup>12</sup> See ibidem, p. 7.

<sup>13</sup> See ibidem, p. 456.

The argument used here is an argument appealing to racial prejudice (Lat. *argumentum re invidiam*). Its effect is strengthened by the emphasis put on the division between the Semitic and Christian circles and the slandering of Christians by Jews. Numerous general expressions referring to Jews are supplemented with several expressive examples. One of the more interesting statements is that the Jews were to blame for the Black Death, the pandemic of plague that rolled across Europe in the 14<sup>th</sup> century<sup>14</sup>. What is more, the Jews apparently encouraged the actions of the Inquisition, since they were supposed to have informed on other Jews and Catholics, providing numerous victims for the religious courts<sup>15</sup>. Even more interestingly, through their treacherous interference in international politics they were also supposed to be the perpetrators of the crusades. The influence of the Jews on the world and on local politics is one of the more important issues that Bocquet wants to analyse from an anti-Semitic point of view. In *Through the Red Sea Toward the Ghettos of Europe* there are many fragments like the one below:

The support offered to Jews by monarchs was mainly the result of marrying a Jew or taking a wife with a mixture of Jewish blood, and of supporting Jewish women as concubines at their courts, and of taking the Judas money from the Jews. Those Jews, having won influence in this way, then led the Christian nations to weakness, ruin, and many times to the disintegration of the state<sup>16</sup>.

The idea of the destructive and corrupting influence of Jewish women on Catholic, Protestant, as well as Muslim monarchs comes from the figure of Esther, who is treated by Bocquet as the archetype of Jewish femininity. Her history described in the Book of Esther is an example of introducing deceitful, beautiful Jewish women to royal courts in order to agitate, cause disruption and anarchy. The Book of Esther was supposed to become a model for many Jewish women interfering destructively in the history of royal families and governments.

This theory expressed by Bocquet concerning the Jewish nation is accompanied by the image of the centuries-old fight between Aryans and Jews, which in the political dimension ends only with coming of the Saviour of the German nation – Adolf Hitler. Bocquet stresses national solidarity, common spirit, and the intellectual dominance of Germans over the rest of world in order to slightly obscure the rather strong and poetic thesis about the significance of the chancellor of the Third Reich:

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<sup>14</sup> Ibidem, p. 390.

<sup>15</sup> See ibidem, p. 412–414.

<sup>16</sup> See ibidem, p. 375.

On the road to further subordinating the German nation to Jewish businesses stood the healthy national instinct of the German workers. These patriots could not reconcile themselves to the idea that Jews rule their national possessions, so they organised an assault on Rathenau in 1922. The man who brought this mass of people to the fight against the Jews, pointing out to them the harmful activity of the Jews, was Chancellor Adolf Hitler<sup>17</sup>.

## EMBLEMS AND GHETTOS

Bocquet's disquisition concerning these forms of alienation and extermination should interest both researchers dealing with the issue of the Holocaust and ghettos, as well as those investigating the broadly understood introduction of obligatory emblems for the members of the Jewish community. The author uses here two arguments: the first has an exclusively rhetorical value, while the second aspires to be more scientific. The one with mostly rhetorical impact is the argument often repeated by Bocquet: supposedly the creation of ghettos has a long history. Bocquet writes:

The Jewish stigma is not the Pope's invention. It was imposed by Muslim masters. Jacob Almansor in southern Spain ordered Jews to wear ugly clothes with long sleeves, and, instead of the turban, a roll of an atrocious shape. In 1010, the Egyptian caliph Omar gave orders that the non-Islamic Jews wear an image of a calf around their necks, as a reminder of the golden calf worshiped by their ancestors. Apart from this, they were supposed to differ in their external appearance from all others, in accordance with Omar's restrictions. Having learnt after some time that Jews were getting around his order of carrying small golden calves, he issued a regulation stating that they had to wear round their necks a six pound log, and small bells on their feet, announcing their approach from a distance. One of the Egyptian caliphs, after occupying Jerusalem (around the year 656) reduced the freedoms of the Jews painfully. They had to wear different clothes, distinguishing them from the rest of the population. Already almost 1500 years ago masters of states and legislators, in order to defend their nations and protect them against the Jews and their exploitation and depravation, issued laws stigmatising the Jewish people. [...] <sup>18</sup> Emperor Frederick II (1215–1250), in his inherited lands of Naples and Sicily, ordered the Jews to wear an emblem. <sup>19</sup> Not only did he remove Jews from public offices, but he also enclosed them in a ghetto in his capital city of Palermo<sup>20</sup>.

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<sup>17</sup> See *ibidem*, p. 522.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 383–384.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 384.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 385.

Bocquet tries to prove that the situation during World War II and the Shoah is not extraordinary, but is a repetition or even a continuation of something that has been going on since time immemorial. Such an opinion lulls the reader's attention: if such situations have practically always taken place, we are not facing a new, dangerous occurrence of extermination, but simply a continuation of the old world order in which condemning Jews is "natural" and "obvious". Here the invocation of tradition assumes the form of argumentation appealing to universal agreement (Lat. *argumentum e consensu gentium*), propped with the familiar philosophical maxim: *consensus omnium* – universal agreement as the criterion of truth. This principle comes alive thanks to tradition, since behaviours gain legitimacy through reference to tradition. If they were assessed irrespective of that tradition, they could be rejected or at least regarded as pointless, and finally rejected as a consequence.

The second argument that defends the existence of ghettos runs as follows: the Jews themselves wanted the ghetto. In *Through the Red Sea Toward the Ghettos of Europe* we read that:

The separation of Jews from the rest of the population was at first completely voluntary. When Jews first came to Europe nobody forced them to live in ghettos, they united in them voluntarily in order to cultivate their customs without any obstacles, since their law forbade them from mixing with infidels, so that they would not spill out into the surroundings and stay as one nation<sup>21</sup>.

It would be possible to consider and to treat this argument as valid, if not for the fact that it appeals to Old Testament times and, as a result, loses its importance and validity. Moreover, generally speaking, such an argument should not be summoned as the basis for moral and ethical evaluation of actions taken to separate the Jews from the general population. It is necessary to note that ghettos during World War II were not used to stabilise and harmonise social life by designating separate municipal spaces for independent social or religious groups, but simply for the extermination of – according to the Nazis – an unnecessary and harmful national-religious group. Finally, using the argument about the characteristic Jewish social tendencies (for example, secluding themselves, dislike for mixed marriages, etc.) is also inadmissible if we add the fact that moving into ghettos was compulsory. Every compulsion that touches another man and restricts his freedom and rights to decide about himself cannot be justified by the need to co-exist with others within a defined area.

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<sup>21</sup> Ibidem, p. 385.

*Through the Red Sea Toward the Ghettos of Europe* is not an example of a scientific dissertation on what is right and real. The author issues subjective judgments that suggest that we collectively have reached the conclusion with which everyone must agree:

And so there will never be agreement between the Poles and the Jews. Either we will let the Jews take control of the economic life of Poland, and then they will relegate us to the role of paupers feeding the Jewish parasites, or the Jews need to leave Poland<sup>22</sup>.

With such solemn words, Bocquet builds up an emotional and demagogic statement, appealing to the masses (Lat. *argumentum re populum*). To an overall description of his language we should also add a subtler argument that suggests financial benefits (Lat. *argumentum re crumenam*). Getting rid of Jews from Poland is in the best interest of the reader.

Amongst the many issues which one could consider while analysing the language of Nazi propaganda used in Bocquet's book, there is one more matter we still need to focus on – the issues of art and artistic work, particularly music, and the position Bocquet takes on these.

## ART CREATED BY JEWS

Bocquet did not devote much attention to the matter of art and music created by Jews. He was too consumed by matters of politics and detailed dissections of the contents of the Old Testament to notice the significance of Jewish cultural achievements and – in accordance with the aim of his book – to make an attempt to undermine it. In *Through the Red Sea Toward the Ghettos of Europe* there are only a few fragments where Bocquet refers to art and culture. His remarks had to remain vague, as entering a deeper reflection on Jewish culture would challenge his anti-Semitic theses. The subtle comments he does make concerning art are woven into the text discretely and are almost indiscernible for the reader; however, they make their way into his awareness and are remembered.

Even the slightest mention of the theme of fine art and Jewish music has a strong propaganda effect, because every artistic creation is an excellent subject for rhetorical and political endeavours. Art has too strong a relationship with national and religious identity to become the subject of an exclusively scientific discussion, without encouraging the formation of opinions. Art is,

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<sup>22</sup> Ibidem, p. 511.

after all, the realm of the spirit, very important for identifying oneself with a nation, a social or religious group. But the permanence of artistic forms and themes within one identity does not change the fact that, on a subjective level, the questions of taste and preference always arise when it comes to art, and those can easily become the target of propaganda campaigns.

In works of art coming from different cultures it is easy to notice meaningful differences both in the form as well as in the theme of the work. These differences become the basis for cataloguing, comparisons, and sometimes ineffectively detached reflection. Bocquet's book is an example of a one-sided use of art by propaganda. It is not about promoting positive attitudes (forms, subjects, views promoted by the Nazis), but the more rarely encountered negative presentation. Bocquet argues above all the imperfection of form, the corruption of contents, and other deficiencies of Jewish art. His rhetoric on artistic creativity met with a favourable response among journalists, writers, and readers raised on 19<sup>th</sup> century Romanticism, theses of German idealism, and the definition of an artist as a genius and God's anointed one.

In spite of its great propaganda potential, the issue of art and music wasn't elaborated on by Bocquet. The author's general conclusions about art are actually limited to the fact that he consistently and obstinately underlines that:

We often encounter praise of the extraordinary creative faculties of Jews. However, if one watches Jews more closely, one will be convinced that they actually created nothing, and can only seize values and fortunes of others into their hands. Jews aren't the authors of national wealth. They can only concentrate the wealth of others in their hands. In addition, they have no scruples; every method is good for them, provided it leads to the right result (money)<sup>23</sup>.

A few pages later, he adds:

Even though the outlook and character of the Jew developed throughout centuries, his intellectual development is not the result of his independent work, but of studying the works of non-Jews. [...] The mind of the Jew developed only thanks to the observation and assimilation of the cultural achievements of others, since he did not have his own spiritual food, not having an idealistic outlook on life. [...] The alleged cultural achievements of Jews are the property of other nations, warped by the Jews. There was never Jewish art, because everything created in this field is only empty babble or spiritual theft<sup>24</sup>.

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<sup>23</sup> Ibidem, p. 510.

<sup>24</sup> Ibidem, p. 524.

We will leave both of the above fragments without any deeper comments – Bocquet doesn't refer here to any sources, materials, or observations which could become the object of our verification or allow us to examine the legitimacy of his arguments. Bocquet makes an unauthorised generalisation concerning the works of Jews and, by not referring to even one single example, he denies the reader the chance to build his own position. Therefore Bocquet's claims are mainly opinions, not scientific thoughts or inferences.

In the above quotations, the author claims a rather surprising thing: he thinks that culture developed in Europe along at least two separate paths: the Jews did not contribute to European culture, but they had their own. This was and it still is an effect of copying the creative work of Slavs and Aryans. Here again we find a reference to the solidarity of the Christians and a marked separation from Semitic circles. In the words concerning the "mind of the Jew" one can find the thesis of the genetic and racial superiority of the Slavs and Aryans.

Bocquet answers the question of why Jews do not have their own culture and aren't contributing to the European culture in a simple way: Jews do not have "spiritual food" or "an idealistic outlook on life". These notions are very ambiguous and troublesome even for an art expert and philosopher. The former should probably be linked to the teachings of Christ and Christianity, whereas the latter with some peculiar mental retardation that prevents the Jews from abstract thinking and limits their creative powers (it is another appeal to the anti-Semitic theory of races).

These reflections on art and the works of the Jews were written by Bocquet in the last pages of his book. They are a consequence and perhaps a recapitulation of the discussions around socio-political and religious affairs – they dot the i's and cross the t's of Bocquet's work. This is why amongst statements on art and music we often find his earlier words repeated: "It is a false statement that Jews created something original and beneficial for mankind – claims Bocquet – they are able only to destroy, deprave, and degrade the cultural achievements of non-Jewish societies"<sup>25</sup>. On the last pages of *From the Red Sea Toward the Ghettos of Europe* its author wants to leave a strong emotional impression and influence the reader, therefore the language of propaganda is thickened: arguments appealing to passion and prejudice are interspersed with those emphasising the solidarity and rationality by which Christians are supposed to be guided.

At the end Bocquet uses a strong reference to authority. We return here to the already mentioned and still valid in the 21<sup>st</sup> century romantic ideal of

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<sup>25</sup> Ibidem, p. 548.

the artist-genius. Bocquet summons two figures: Johann Goethe and Johann Fichte. He writes:

Two stars of the first magnitude, the biggest poet and the biggest thinker of this time, Goethe<sup>26</sup> and Fichte<sup>27</sup> shared the German antipathy toward the Jews and made no secret of it. Goethe, a representative of the aristocratic world view, and Fichte, a spokesman for the democratic direction in Germany, both wanted to isolate Christian society from the Jews, as from the plague-stricken. They both admittedly fell out with the Church and were both regarded as atheists, yet they were disgusted with the Jews in the name of Jesus. Fichte proposed firmly against granting the Jews citizenship<sup>28</sup>.

Bocquet cites Goethe:

This serpent nation has one path,  
In times of peace it sinks,  
It keeps setting fires here and there,  
Until the whole country is burning<sup>29</sup>

This appeal to authority is a substantial argument, since without a doubt both Goethe and Fichte were major figures in European culture. Today, however, it is not common to discuss their anti-Semitic roots and opinions. Their “sin” is said to be the result of their warped personalities, or else dismissed on account of their great and indisputable contributions to culture. However successful this strategy may be, it does not solve the problem of argumentation. Goethe and Fichte, just as many other outstanding artists and philosophers, are often brought up as supporters of anti-Semitism and remain a useful tool of propaganda.

Bocquet repeatedly links music with the Old Testament parables about Jewish women. The most important example is obviously Esther. Bocquet writes that Jewish women are taught coquetry and wiliness since early childhood and are able to combine music, dance, and singing in order to infatuate and capture the affections of trustful Christians. This way they gain influence on the decisions and actions of rulers in order to drive countries and kingdoms to disaster.

Krakow, May 2013, on the Anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising

<sup>26</sup> See K. L. Berghahn, J. Hermand, *Goethe in German-Jewish Culture*, Camden House, Rochester 2001, p. 13–43.

<sup>27</sup> See P. R. Sweet, *Fichte and the Jews: A Case of Tension between Civil Rights and Human Rights*, “German Studies Review” 1993, Vol. 16, No. 1, p. 37–48.

<sup>28</sup> W. Bocquet, *Przez Morze Czerwone ku gettom Europy. Powstanie...*, op. cit., p. 464.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 529.

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